

# Parable of the Talents

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Matthew chapter 25. We have been working our way through the Gospel of Matthew, and lately we have been in the Olivet Discourse.

And now we're in the part that really began in chapter 24, verse 36, that addresses Jesus' second coming and the end of the age. And unlike the destruction of the temple, what we've seen is that no one will know when he will return, and there will be no sign given of the end of the age.

We've seen that Jesus teaches about this by using historical events, he uses parables, and he uses various illustrations. And today we're going to be looking at a parable that you're probably quite familiar with, the parable of the talents.

So if you look with me there, Matthew chapter 25, beginning in verse 14 and reading down to verse 30. Verse 30. for it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

[ 1 : 25 ]     So also he who had two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now after a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents here.

I have made five talents more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.

And he also who had two talents came forward, saying, Master, you delivered to me two talents. Here I have made two talents more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

[ 2 : 33 ]     So I was afraid. And I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours. But his master answered him, You wicked and slothful servant.

You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers. And in my coming, I should have received what was my own with interest.

So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given. And he will have an abundance.

But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Let's pray together. O Lord, we again ask for your spirit's help to understand your word. Thinking of both the subject matter of it being language speaking of Christ's return and the end of the age.

[ 3 : 34 ] But also, Lord, understanding that this is a parable. And this is not meant to be readily understood. And so, Lord, we pray for your spirit to help us to understand it. That you would make your word clear. And that you would be glorified in the preaching of it.

We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So we have this parable of the talents that I really want us to look at in each part. And consider the meaning of it.

And then for us to draw some application of. If we look at verses 14 through 15, we get a sense of the responsibility that was laid on those who received the talents. For it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. And then he went away. So, to begin with, it will be like a man going.

We know, again, as I've said, Jesus is speaking of his return. And what it will be when the kingdom is fully consummated. And at the end of all time.

[ 4 : 35 ] And so, here's what it's like. The master's going away. And, of course, we understand that this is going to be realized for those who are hearing it. Jesus is going to ascend into heaven soon.

And there will be a delay before he returns. And so, we've talked about that in a great deal. I won't belabor that point. But Jesus here is explaining that he's going away and he will leave his servants to go about the work.

And the master, then, obviously, is Christ, who really is the owner and master of all things. All things belong to him, by him, and through him.

All things were made that exist. And so, he really is that master. The servants. Now, this is a little bit difficult. Let me say that my conclusion of the servants is that the servants really represent all humanity.

Now, we talked about last time that the parable was dealing with the visible church. And that's possible here as well, although I think this could extend easily to all humanity. But if we think about the visible church, let's say, as we look at the parable, I think the conclusion is pretty obvious.

[ 5 : 38 ] And maybe you've seen this already. But the one who was given one talent, what he has is taken from him. And we see there at the very end, and we'll talk about this later. It says, cast a worthless servant into the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, which we've seen already is speaking of hell and eternal judgment. So, we cannot interpret all of these to simply be Christians.

It could be that they're professing to be Christians, but they're not. The three servants here aren't just Christians. It goes beyond that. Probably to all humanity if we understand that all of us people on earth have been given stuff from God, and God expects something from us.

Which I think is actually a major point. That God does expect that. And that's really my first point, the responsibility. Before I do that, let me just say, what is a talent? Now, probably in English we have a struggle that many people don't have in other languages.

In Jesus' day, a talent was the largest unit of money, of currency. So, it was the largest unit of currency. So, you think of, in our day, maybe if we think in terms of official currency from our government, the \$100 bill is the biggest bill, right, for us.

[ 6 : 51 ] And so, that would be much more clear for us than using perhaps the word talent. But we've already spoken a great deal about talents when we looked at the parable of the unforgiving servant way back in Matthew 18, 21 through 35.

And in that message, I tried to explain what the value of a talent is. One talent equals 75 pounds or 6,000 denarii.

And we talked about a denarius is one day's wage. And so, one talent is equal to 6,000 days wages. So, just quickly in your head, you can understand that's something like 18 years of working time.

I did it just translating minimum wage. Which, I'm glad, since last time I did this, minimum wage hasn't doubled because it would make my math harder. But, back from my math from before, here's what I came up with. A denarius, one day's wage was rated at roughly \$60, according to minimum wage today.

And that means that one talent was equal to \$360,000. Five talents, then, would be equal to 1.8 million. And ten talents, 3.6 million.

[ 7 : 58 ] So, Jesus is saying this. He's speaking of a currency. Then that's how they would have understood it. And that's how we have to try to understand this, okay? So, if we were to translate this into direct English without using the currency measurement, maybe we could even say something along those lines.

The first servant received \$3.6 million from his master. The second servant, \$1.8 million. And the last servant, \$360,000. And each of the first two doubled it.

The first servant just hid the money and gave back what he had received. So, you understand these are not small sums. But here's the big thing. Neither are they equivalent to the English word talent.

Right? Because I've heard this explained, probably even preached this way, that God gave talents like special abilities or whatever. That's not what Jesus is saying. He's really speaking of a currency that the master gave to those who were serving him.

To use for him, to grow, to use as part of his service. And so, if we were to define it, and this is what's tricky because in some ways, I know this kind of sounds like talents.

[ 9 : 04 ] But I think we have to understand this in terms of all the gifts that God gives to people to use for his name and for his glory. Now, that would include every talent that we have, as we might say in English.

All the giftings that we have, whatever those may be. Personality, the way God's made us certain ways. He's made us that way that we might use it for his glory. But it could include a lot more than that as well.

It may include your family, your children that are born to you. It may include even that God causes some people to prosper financially. Those things that are gifts that aren't specifically talents.

There are all kinds of gifts. Really, there are ways we could look at our life and realize that everything we have is a gift from God, right? So, as we look at this, what are we seeing?

That God has gifted people. He's gifted them in various ways. And here's the point, I think, the first point of our message. That there's a responsibility upon all men to use what God's given them for his glory.

[ 10 : 09 ] Right? Does that make sense clear enough? The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. That's true for all men. And God has given us things that we're to use to accomplish that purpose.

And even before going further in the sermon, I could ask the simple question. Do all men do that? Do they all do it well? Do they all do it equally well? I think this is what Jesus is getting at in this.

That as Jesus leaves, the master's leaving us with a purpose, a work, right? To extend his kingdom to the ends of the earth. To bring glory to his name. That's true for all people.

It's uniquely true for his people. The church. But the Christian mandate that it sends to all men. We all are meant to spread his image to the furthest ends of the earth.

To have dominion over the world for his glory, for his name. And we still have dominion. We do a poor job with it. And so, to begin with, Jesus is saying, there's responsibility. As I leave, know that I'm leaving you with responsibility.

[ 11 : 09 ] Here's what you're to do. Note as well that the talents are not only from Christ, they are actually his that he's giving. It says in verse 14 that the master entrusted to them his property.

So something that belongs to him, he gives to us to use for his glory. Again, we know that our Lord owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Someone else has the deed to those.

They'll say they're mine, but we know that they belong to the Lord. All that's in the world belongs to him. And so, all that we have received from him is to be used for his profit.

And again, I would just interpret that as for his glory. We use that that it may bring some return to him. It's not meant to end on us or to be buried or to be hidden.

Peter applies this specifically to believers in 1 Peter 4, 10-11. He says, As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

[ 12 : 13 ] Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves is one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Now, Peter, who heard this, I think is really interpreting that to the church and saying, Whatever you receive, use it to build others up. Now, is that the ultimate end?

No. What is he going to say? He says, In order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. And he even says, Be good stewards of the varied grace.

They're different. God's gifted all of us differently, both in the church and in life in general. And maybe we despise our gifts or are envious of others' gifts, but the reality is God's made us different to serve his body.

You know the body analogy of the church that God's word speaks of. Each of us has a part to play in his service. And so we're not to undermine or in any way diminish the gift that God has given us.

[ 13 : 12 ] But we're to use whatever he's given for his glory, that there may be some return to him. Why? Because to him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. They're his.

They're his anyway. And so we're to use it for him. Another observation that I would make in the parable is that every servant is given some. Even if I'm right, and I think we have to conclude based on verse 30, that the last servant is not a Christian.

Every person is given gifts by God to use for his glory, even if they're not Christians. And we've noted already that these gifts differ from each other.

But what distinguishes one from another? Inability is owing to good gifts that God has given. It's nothing for us to brag about or to boast in. Yet we see there's a great distinction in how many make use of their gifts.

There's difference in how they go about it. And so the master gives these gifts before going on a long journey, which we've talked about already in the other ones. And so we see Jesus repeating again in this teaching.

[ 14 : 23 ] He's going away on a long journey. Jesus' ascension and the delay before his return, I think, is what it's spoken of here. Ephesians 4, 7 through 8 says, But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

Therefore, it says, when he ascended on high, he led a host of captives and he gave gifts to men. So Ephesians 4 actually draws a connection between his ascension being or corresponding with his giving gifts to men.

When Jesus ascended to heaven, he equipped it. He equipped his church and people with what was needed while he was away. And in both letters to Timothy, Paul tells him to guard the deposit entrusted to him.

And so, again, perhaps more in a spiritual nature as a Christian, but guard what's been entrusted to you. God's deposited something. That same kind of financial language that we might think of.

Guard the deposit that's been entrusted to you. So the first point is that we all are given a responsibility that we're to use what God's given us to work and use that for his glory.

[ 15 : 28 ] Secondly, we see the return on investment that's discussed in verses 16 through 18. I won't read that again, but we know the first two doubled the amount.

The last one hit it. So two servants did well by Jesus's judgment. And that's really going to be my third point, his assessment of them. But the first two servants, they put the gifts to use as was intended.

They worked at making a return on what was given. They traded. They did whatever they could to make some return on what was given. They were not idle, nor did they neglect or despise the gift that God had given them.

They valued it, and they made some return on it. So they both had a return to show for what was entrusted to them.

And in fact, with both of them, it was proportionate to what was given to them. Someone even preemptively asked me last week. We see at the end, it's taken from the third servant.

[ 16 : 29 ] It's given to the first servant. I don't know if there's any significance in that. I tried to come up with a good answer. I think the reality is that both of the first two servants did well in that they had a return on the investment that was given to them proportionate to what was given to them.

Does that make sense? They both did equally well, I think, even though the one with the most is given to the one who has more will be given to them, we're told. So they're given in proportion to, or they return in proportion to what's given to them.

Luke 12, 48 records Jesus saying at this very point, everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

And so even in terms of the five versus the two, we might make the distinction that what God says is to the one who's given more, there will be greater requirement. There's a greater expectation.

You've been given more. You have the ability, the capability to do more. And so in terms of the judgment, which I think it's significant, Lord willing, next time we're in Matthew, that's what we'll be looking at.

[ 17 : 39 ] That's where Jesus is moving us toward. You see, look at verse 31 and following. We see there, speaking of the final judgment. And really, that's what this parable is getting at, isn't it?

How will God judge men when Christ returns? And so those who are giving greater gifts, there's going to be a greater expectation from them. They ought to do more.

But yet the realization is this. Those with lesser gifts also should have made a proportionate return on what was entrusted to them. So we see that two did well because they did some kind of proportionate return on the investment.

One did poorly. He hid what he was given and he did not use it at all for the master. He didn't mispend it. He didn't abuse it.

I think this is significant, right? He doesn't come back and say, I've got nothing for you. It wasn't some abuse of it. He just neglected it. He hid it away. I think the reality is that many have gifts that they will make no use of for God and for his kingdom.

[ 18 : 48 ] As we try to interpret these servants, we're going to look in a second of how God judges them. But let me just say, what does this mean for the first servant? What does it look like to hide it?

I think first and foremost, it's a denial of it even belonging to the master. They don't acknowledge that this is a gift from God at all. Maybe they boast in their own talents what they have.

Maybe they use it even quite profitably. I think there will be plenty of people in this world who will deny God, who will not put their faith in God, and yet will use the talents that he's given them to great return for themselves.

And I think this is really key, is that when the master came, there was nothing for them to give to the master other than what he had given to them in the first place. They returned only what they had. And that's taken away from them and given to someone else.

And so even what giftings they had, all the blessings that God had bestowed on them in common grace to the unbeliever is taken from them when they're cast into hell and given to those who inherit the kingdom.

[ 19 : 49 ] And so it's probably not best for me to name names, but I think some of the richest men in our world will stand in this very judgment one day before God.

What about the giftings I gave you? What return did you have on investment? Well, look what I did. I made a fortune off of it. For your own name. For your own glory, but not for mine.

There's no return to be given to God. And I think that's part of the judgment here. And so when we think of hiding it, it may be that they choose not to use it at all. But I think we have to understand as well, it may be that they choose to use it not for God, but for their selves.

But either way, what God has given them, it makes no return to God. God's not glorified in it. God's made us for his glory. And when we take what he's given us and we use it for our own selfish endeavors, or we deny it altogether, then we don't bring return to God.

We don't glorify him in it. And then by contrast, the other two are gifted by God in various ways, one way more than the other, more than twice as much as the other. But both of them use what God's given them to bring God glory in this world.

[ 20 : 58 ] And we're going to see, how does God judge them? That's really what I want to look at next, verses 19 through 30. We won't go back and reread them all. Let me just point out in verse 19.

Now, after a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. Something I've been building on in each message, trying to say that the distinction being made, Jesus speaks of the judgment on Israel as something imminent that's going to happen soon within this generation.

And every time, everything we've seen so far where Jesus speaks of his second coming or the end of the age, it's after a long time. There's some delay. And here again, we see the master's gone and after a long time, he returns.

And so again, I think we see he's not speaking of 70 AD and the destruction of the temple, but he's speaking of some future return or the end of the age that hasn't yet come to happen. And though delayed, the judgment is sure.

It will be a long time before we have to give an account for how he handled what the Lord has entrusted to us. That's been true in history. It may be that Christ could return at any moment.

[ 22 : 03 ] It may be that we die, but at some point in the future, this is certain, sure that what God has given, we will give an account for what he's entrusted to us. How have you used what I gave you? Did you use it for my name, for my glory?

And the delay, just like we've seen in the other parables, the delay may make us think we're going to get away with it. That it's okay that I'm not actually using it for God or for his glory, that I can use it for my own selfish endeavors.

Or it may seem that faithfulness is not rewarded. Maybe it does the opposite. For those of you who are using what God's given you for his glory, maybe you feel like, well, does God really care?

Does it really matter? Is God going to reward that? But one thing we see in this message is that the judgment is certain. All of us will give an account, positively or negatively, of how we've handled what God's given us.

Even though there's a delay, it's certain. And in the day of judgment, those good servants have something to present to the Lord. Both of them received the same commendation from him when they presented.

[ 23 : 09 ] Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. Both of them received that.

Again, it's not conditioned upon the amount that they returned, just that they were faithful with what God entrusted to them. They used what was given for God's glory. Again, I think it's significant.

We see here, you've been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. And so for those of us who think, well, there's been a great delay.

Does God really reward faithfulness? Here's the reward for those of us who remain faithful. The joy of your master. And really, that's what we're to live for, and that's what we're to long for.

I know there are some who want to treat the Christian life like it's purely altruistic. I don't buy that because God promises blessing.

[ 24 : 16 ] Here's what awaits the faithful servant, the joy of the master. Who doesn't want that? Who wouldn't want that? Even though it's delayed, we know that it's certain that those who are faithful will receive the joy of the master.

We'll talk more in a minute. What does that mean, the joy of our master? But all the faithful servants are Christians, and all their servants will be accepted on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ.

So even though they present something to him, what are they returning back to God? Remember whose possession it was? God entrusted what was his to them, or the Lord did.

And this may specifically be speaking of Christ. And so, this is so hard for us to get sometimes, that there will be some varying degrees of judgment based on what we do in life.

It matters. And yet, even the good things we do are still owing to God giving us the gifts, equipping us, enabling us, and guiding us in using those gifts for his glory.

[ 25 : 18 ] And so, even on that day, there won't be one of us who will stand before the judgment and receive the praise of our master for us ultimately to be glorified. But that glory will be returned back to Christ, who gave the gifts in the first place that we use for his glory.

And so, the commendation that we ought to long for, that which we ought to desire and live for, is well done, good and faithful servant.

That ought to be what we long for. We ought to live our lives with the understanding that we are servants of God, and on the day of judgment, we want to hear well done. We don't want to hear what the last servant receives, and we'll talk about it in a second.

We want to receive the commendation well done. And so, along those lines, what does it matter what the world thinks of us? What does it matter if we receive the world's praise?

There will be many men in this life who will receive the praise of the world, only to get to that judgment and hear, throw them out into the outer darkness. And there will be plenty, as we read in Hebrews 11, plenty who will be men and women of faith.

[ 26 : 32 ] Who will live their life for the glory of God and be despised by this world, hated by men. Spit upon, stoned, sawn in two, of whom the world's not worthy.

Who will receive that commendation on that day, well done, my good and faithful servant. And we see, not only did, understand in this life, all of us have received gifts from God.

All that we have is a gift from God. But we see in the judgment that those who are faithful are given more. And so, we rightly understand the blessing, the thankfulness that we ought to have to God.

Understand that there will be greater things given to us in eternity. And we understand that. There will be a new earth. There will be new skies. There will be no more sin in this world. And the blessings will be far greater than what we even know in this life, as good as they are in this life.

But the nature of God's judgment shows us that all that we have is not ultimately ours, but the Lord's. And it matters how we use it. Even we are not our own. 1 Corinthians 6, 19-20.

[ 27 : 42 ] Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. Now, the other servant comes to judgment.

And he gives his excuse. Look at verses 24 and 25. He also had received the one talent came forward, saying, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed.

So I was afraid. And when it hid your talent in the ground, here you have what is yours. Now, I imagine that this servant thought that sounded pretty good to him when he was working it up in the mirror before he faces God, right?

He's thinking about this beforehand in his life. He thinks, this is actually a pretty good defense. It sounds pretty good. I'm just going to give God back what he gave to me. And the reason I didn't return it to him is it's his fault.

Right? I know we all know people like this, and it's not us, which proves it probably is us. That every time something goes wrong, it's always someone else's fault. I'm not the one who did it.

[ 28 : 47 ] You know, if so-and-so wouldn't have left that that way, then it wouldn't have happened to me. Well, here they are before the judgment of God. And, okay, okay, I know I didn't make a return on investment, but really it's because you're such a hard man that I was afraid of you.

And so, you know, I just, I didn't do anything with it. So it's ultimately God's fault, or he blames God for. And so as we think about this, this may represent a religious person who offers their good life, but nothing that he did was really for the Lord.

It was only for themselves. Hebrews 11 says, So maybe it's that they offer back only what he gave them.

I used it in this life, but it wasn't for God. And again, they may not have abused it. It just wasn't for him. And as I said already, they blame the wickedness of this on God's characters because he's a hard master.

And rightly so, the Lord condemns his servant. He makes at least two judgments upon him. He says he's a wicked servant, which is a moral judgment, right? He's done what's wrong, what's evil, what's sinful.

[ 30 : 01 ] He's a wicked servant, and he's slothful. He's lazy. What he knew of the Lord should have led him to do better with what he had. If he knew God to be the type who gathers where he did not sow, he should have worked to make some return for him.

He should have lived his life for his glory. And we see that what he has was given, excuse me, what he was given is taken from him, and it's given to the faithful servant. Maybe there's some explanation of this in verse 29.

For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will be given in abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has not will be taken away.

Then we see in verse 30 that he's not brought into the kingdom with the others, but he's cast eternally into hell. I've said already, but I think we see universally that this is what's meant by the outer darkness in that place where we'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And so, again, we see the close relation, don't we? Jesus returns, and what happens when Jesus returns is the end of the age. The end of all time happens when Jesus comes.

[ 31 : 09 ] And what follows with that, or what happens simultaneous with that, is the judgment of all men. Jesus returns, this world comes to an end, and it ends with God's judgment upon both the world by consuming it in fire, and the individuals by coming before the judgment of God.

And when that judgment happens, and we're going to see this more Lord willing next time in Matthew, but when that happens, that great separation that we've talked about already, we've seen in the other parables, it happens again.

We've just seen in this parable. Two servants enter into the joy of their master. One servant's cast out into the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth. Really, he's cast into hell.

And so, we understand that Jesus is returning, and when he returns, there will be the judgment of all people.

Some will receive reward, others will be judged eternally. The basis of that, we see in this is the return they made on what God gave them. But what I want you to understand is that return even is dependent upon what?

[ 32 : 13 ] It's faith in Christ that enables us to bring return on him. Back in our passage in Hebrews 11, 6, without faith it's impossible to please him. We're going to be judged on, were we pleasing to him with what we were given?

Did we bring him glory in what was given to us? Well, we bring him glory by faith, and using what's been given to us by faith for his glory.

And so, ultimately, even that judgment, although it will be contingent upon the return made, even that's contingent upon the faith that God has given us in Christ Jesus.

But I want you to realize as well, think about the one who received only one talent, faced so severe judgment. Just imagine, Jesus' parable is meant to teach a lesson, but understand that there will be some people who will be given more.

There will be some servants that perhaps were given two talents, and some given five, who face a judgment. And if it's so severe for the one who had one talent, imagine how much more severe for those of you perhaps in this room who have been given great gifts by God, and are yet using none of those for his glory.

[ 33 : 24 ] And so what does this all mean for us? How should we apply this parable that Jesus is giving us? First, every one of us should count the blessings that we have and understand that they all come from the Lord.

Everything good that we have in this life that we enjoy is a blessing from God that he's given us. It's a gift to us. We need to understand that first and foremost, that he might be glorified, that we might give him praise and worship, that we might have hearts of thankfulness throughout all of our lives.

I think that's at least a first step in terms of giving God glory. Right? We pray for the blessing. We give the blessing before we eat our food.

And that becomes so normal and regular that sometimes we just spit the words out. But what does that mean to symbolize? Again, that everything we have, this food that we have, we're thankful that God's given us this food.

But God gives us everything. And we've got to be careful not to fall in the trap of thinking, I have this because I earned it, because I'm so great.

[ 34 : 32 ] We have to be careful not to return the praise back to myself, but know that it all is meant to go to God. It's meant to be upward or toward him. But first, if we're going to be worshipful, if we're going to use our lives for his glory, we need to understand that everything we have is from him.

He's entrusted to us what is rightfully his. Secondly, we should see in this parable, in this teaching of Jesus, a warning to those who profess to follow him, yet show no fruit.

We need to be careful. If you say you're a Christian, but you're not bearing fruit, do we make excuses for our idleness or our lack of productivity for the kingdom?

Do we do that sometimes based on our lack of perceived gifts? Well, you know, God really didn't give me gifts to do that. So he just wanted me to stay home and do nothing and not really be a part of the church or the advance of his kingdom.

If he did, he would have given me more talents. What does the parable tell us? God's given gifts to all people. And whatever he's given us, no matter how much we view it or what it is, we're to use it for his glory.

[ 35 : 42 ] Some of those things may be a lot less visible than other things. It's not about do people see us doing it. Are we using what God's given us for his glory? Just for a second, consider all the time you have is a gift from God.

How are we using our time? Is it for God's glory? Now let's stand that outward to everything in our life. So it's a warning to those who profess to know him but show no fruit.

The unfaithful servant will not be saved in the end. The unfaithful servant will not enter into the joy of his master. The unfaithful servant does not go into the new earth with God.

Just understand that for a second. We're not saved by our words but our words do indicate something that's going on inside our hearts.

If we don't want to glorify God, if we don't want to work for his glory, it may indicate that there's something really wrong in our hearts. The return of Jesus and the judgment of certain, you will face both one day.

[ 36 : 53 ] 2 Corinthians 5.10 says, For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. There's not one of us who won't appear before that judgment seat. And again, Lord willing, next time in Matthew, we're going to see in verses 31 and following in this chapter that really a greater picture of that judgment spoken of.

But just know that it's certain and that we can really assess ourselves by fruit. Are we living our lives for God's glory? Thirdly, we are to prepare for Jesus' return by using those gifts.

Now we've seen all along that Jesus says, Be ready for when I return. The master's gone for a long time and are the servants ready when he returns? Well, here's further indication of what it looks like to be ready for the master when he returns.

We are using what he's given us for his glory. So we talked about, I think it was last week, we were saying, what are the things you don't want to be found doing when the master returns? Let's state positively, what do you want to be found doing when the master returns?

Using what he's given you for his glory. There's the positive statement for us. We want to be advancing his kingdom with our lives.

[ 38 : 03 ] And so that means faithful stewardship of all that the Lord places in our hands. We're to be mindful of what we have been given and use it for him and for his kingdom. We don't belong to ourselves, but to the Lord.

We need to have that kind of mentality. Notice again that they're servants of the master. We're his servants. We're to be working in our lives for him and his glory.

We're to be not only prepared, but productive. Our productivity is one way we show that we're prepared for Jesus' return. That we're using what he's given us for his kingdom.

Here's what J.C. Ryle said. He said, Let us leave this parable with a solemn determination by God's grace. Never to be content with the profession of Christianity without practice.

Let us not only talk about religion, but act. Let us not only feel the importance of saving faith in Christ, but do something too. Maybe I could have quoted James as well who said that faith without works is dead.

[ 39 : 07 ] Because there can be no faith that doesn't produce works. And so, let us not just profess to follow Jesus Christ, but work for him. And again, I want to encourage you that fourthly, the reward should motivate us.

Hebrews 12, 1-2. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely. And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

So, let us follow the example of Jesus. Why did Jesus go to the cross? Well, you know there is a whole host of answers that we have been looking at in the Lord's Supper.

But here is one that is given to us here. For the joy set before him he endured the cross. And what did we see was told to the faithful servants.

Enter into the joy of your master. What awaits us as Christians is what in one sense awaited our Lord because we're united to him we receive that same blessing.

[ 40 : 24 ] He endured the cross for the joy set before him. And I think about this life and what we may have to endure. Maybe our crosses that we face. The judgment, the persecution, even the difficulty of just living in a fallen world.

How do we endure that? We live with setting before us the joy of entering into the joy of our master. 2 Corinthians 4, 16-18 So we do not lose heart though our outer self is wasting away.

Our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.

For the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal. So what are we living for? What are we setting our hopes on? We're living for the Lord. We're setting our sights on him and on heaven on eternity on the joy set before us.

And I think as we understand the joy of our master what awaits us when Jesus returns is that we dwell in his presence forever.

[ 41 : 35 ] We looked at that last time with Revelation 21 but that we God says that we are his people and he is our God and we will dwell with him forever. There's the joy of our master.

We enter into his presence unhindered no sin but to be in his very presence and know that joy. Finally I want you to understand that as we look forward to that joy as we set our sights on that remember that even our work that receives a reward is the outworking of his grace and it's for his glory.

It's not ultimately about us. Even though we're working for that joy we know that we're living our lives for his glory and that it's all the results of his grace that he's given us. The gifts that he's bestowed upon us.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together.