



Sermon Notes from 24 November

The Parable of the Talents (*Matthew 25:14-30*)

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The process of reflection and change is a challenging one; we are faced with many doubts and decisions to make. As Christians, we wonder whether we are walking in line with the will of God. The word 'parable' gets its meaning from 2 Greek words: '*para*' (alongside) and '*ballo*' (throw). They are told to illuminate one core truth. The parable of the talents is meant to illuminate us in the matter of stewardship. What kind of questions does stewardship teach us to ask about our vocations?

The Right Questions

1) What is my role?

Mt 24:3b – Jesus responds to His disciples' question with a stream of parables, including the parable of the talents. From it, we see 2 fundamental roles: **master** and **servant**. Jesus takes the role of the Master (Mt 25:14); we are to play the role of a servant (*doulos* – Greek) submitting and being accountable to the Master, looking to Him to define success for us, as well as being rewarded by Him. Jesus is the one true Master over everything (Job 38:4, 8, 29). *Are we behaving like servants, or masters, as we reflect on our vocations?*

2) What is my responsibility?

Mt 25:14 – The point of the talents is not what it represents, but that the servant's main responsibility is to adopt a posture of stewardship. The center and heart of stewardship is seeking the Master's interest (Mt 25:16). He desires for us to bear much fruit (Jnh 15:8), our sanctification (1 Th 4:3a) and to give thanks in all circumstances (1 Th 5:18). These are our Master's interests. *Are we evaluating our vocational lives in light of the Master's interests?*

3) What has been my response?

The parable shows two possible responses: either we actively seek the interests of the Master (Mt 25:16b), or we passively bury our stewardship responsibilities (Mt 25:18b). Jesus warns us not to be like the 'one talent' servant, who saw his Master as an unprincipled, unjust tyrant (Mt 25:24b-25). Often, the lie of Satan is not that Jesus is not the Master, but it's that Jesus is a bad Master who does not care about us. The Master sees through the heart of the servant's response (Mt 25:25c) and calls him out as wicked and slothful (Mt 25:26b-27) Mt 25:26a). Effort matters to the Master! *Have we been living out our vocational lives like the good and faithful servant, or the wicked and slothful servant?*

4) What will be my reward?

Mt 25:21 – The Master gifts the servant a 3-fold reward: lavish praise, greater responsibility (an elevation in status) and eternal joy. A 3-fold punishment is inflicted upon the wicked and slothful servant: condemnation (v26a), humiliation (vv28-29) and eternal misery (v30). Despite us being a failed race of wicked and slothful servants, Jesus the Master, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant in our place to fulfil the full responsibility of stewardship we could not fulfil.

We must meet the goodness of the Master. He calls us not just as friends (Jn 15:15) and family (Ga 4:7) members, but also as co-heirs (Rom 8:17) with Him, sharing in His joy and glory as our Master. Put in effort to maximize the Master's interest and glorify Him!