

## The Parable of the Talents

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Text:** Matthew 25:14-30

**Key Verse:** Matthew 25:14-15 *"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and **entrusted** his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another he gave two bags, and to another one bag, **each according to his ability.**"*

\*The NIV uses the phrase "bags of gold" instead of the term "talent" used in other translations (ESV, NASB). The NLT translation uses "bags of silver" instead of "talents". Therefore, this parable may be called The Parable of the Bags of Gold or The Parable of the Three Servants. The thing to note in this parable is that the monetary component is not the focus of the teaching – It is just the setup.

### Basic Outline for a 1-hour of study

**Introduction:** This is the beginning of the second part of Jesus' teaching on the encounter with the teacher of the law in Matthew 22:37-40. Last week – the Parable of the 10 Virgins was the first. What is important to note is that this is a two-part parable. The parable of the talents is the setup and the Sheep and the Goats is the understanding. It is much like when we use an analogy to explain something and then we have to come back and define terms within our analogy. Jesus was using something they all understood – how a ruler would treat a servant who didn't do his job well to explain how heaven operates.

**Teaching:** Understanding the parable of the talents for what it is.

- ❑ **Setting the Scene:** A well to do person called his servants together and told them that he was going on a journey and that his wealth would be entrusted to them. To us, reading this today, it might seem strange to trust your servants with your wealth. However, it was not uncommon during that time to entrust your servants with what you had.  
So, the well to do man distributed talents to three of his servants. Each received **"according to their ability"** (Matt. 25:15). The expectation was that each servant would put what was entrusted to them to work and increase the master's wealth.  
The first and second servants doubled their money, while the third did nothing with what was given. The result is that the first and second servants are invited to share in the master's happiness, while the third servant, who did nothing with his gifts is tossed outside into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- ❑ **Jesus' expectation** is for the disciples listening to this story to agree that this makes sense. If you trusted a servant with stewarding your wealth, but they did not live up to his expectation, then they would have been dealt with severely. ESPECIALLY if they had the ability to.
- ❑ **Our misunderstanding** comes from a western reading of the text. We like sound bites and stories so we take them out of context and try to make application with incomplete truths. If Jesus is saying "this is what the kingdom of heaven is like, but he is not done

with his explanation, who are we to decide that we can take that explanation and treat it as a complete thought? This way of thinking leads to a misapplication of this parable

- ☐ God takes into account our effort and usage of our abilities on if we get into heaven.
- ☐ God is a merciless master who, in the end, is focused on our productiveness more than his grace and our faith.
- ☐ Someone who has less giftings is less valuable in the kingdom of Heaven.
- ☐ In the end we get this picture of God the Father that does not line up with the rest of scripture.

**Table Time:** How do we implement this teaching in our everyday lives?

- ☐ How have you heard this parable interpreted in the past? How many times does it have to do with Stewardship?
- ☐ If the point of Jesus' story wasn't about money, then what is it about?
- ☐ What expectations do you feel God has in relation to how you use your talents?
- ☐ How is that an expression of grace in our relationship with God? (If we have to make sure we are using our talents and abilities in a way that is responsible enough or we get thrown into "Utter Darkness where there is weeping and Gnashing of Teeth" then what happened to Jesus paid the price for my salvation?)