

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection is a parable— an earthly story with a heavenly meaning; an illustrative story Jesus used to teach important spiritual truths. In fact, prior to our text Jesus had spoken another parable, which we considered in a sermon a number of weeks ago, that being, the parable of the ten virgins, five of which were wise while five were foolish. As we pondered the parable of the ten virgins, we noted the vital importance of keeping the light of faith in Jesus Christ burning in our hearts, because we “know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 25:13)

Indeed, a living faith in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, as one’s personal Savior and Lord throughout one’s life in this world is necessary if one would enter heaven when one departs this temporal life, for John 3:36 clearly states: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Yes, hell awaits all unbelievers; and, Mark 9:44 describes hell as the place: “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Our Scripture selection further emphasizes the truth that a LIVING faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is vital if we would be saved. Therefore, we can benefit from pondering:

#### “THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS”

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What we need to know about talents and their source
- 2) What we need to know about accountability in relation to talents

Verses 14 & 15, ----- (Matthew 25:14-15)

Observe the phrase: *the kingdom of heaven is as*. That phrase indicates Jesus was entering upon a parable in which He was likening the kingdom of heaven – His holy Christian Church and its rule by Him – to what is subsequently described.

A man about to travel far away into a distant country, *called his own servants*. This pictures to us the Lord Jesus Christ, who upon finishing His saving work in this world removed His visible presence from this earth when He ascended into heaven— a far away country.

Note that the man about to travel into a distant country, after calling his own servants, his own bondmen or slaves, *delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey*. Notice it was the man’s own goods, his own property and possessions, which he gave to his servants for them to manage in his absence. Additionally, the man was well aware of the abilities each of his servants possessed, for he only gave them as much of his goods as he knew each person could properly handle. One servant was given five talents, about \$10,000; another was given two talents, about \$4,000; and, the other was given one talent, about \$2,000. Subsequently, the man took his journey into a far country.

Now let’s apply the parable to spiritual things as Jesus intends. The man is representative of the Lord Jesus Christ whose *own servants* are His Christians, for 1 Corinthians 6:20 says to all Christians: “ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Thus, we Christians – purchased with Jesus’ own blood (Acts 20:28) – are to use any and all talents Jesus dispenses to us in His service to His glory, whether such talents are money or goods or various skills.

Verses 16-18, -----. (Matthew 25:16-18)

Consider how each of the three servants handled their lord's money entrusted to them. The servant who was given \$10,000 to manage, worked with those funds and gained another \$10,000, thereby ending up holding \$20,000 for his lord. The servant who was given \$4,000 to manage, worked with those funds and gained another \$4,000, thereby ending up holding \$8,000 for his lord. However, the servant who was given \$2,000 to manage, simply buried the money out-of-sight, hiding it, thereby only holding on to the original \$2,000 which his lord had given him to manage.

Now, the spiritual points concerning the foregoing part of the parable are these: every Christian is given a talent or talents by the Lord Jesus Christ to be managed in His service while He is visibly absent from us.

Fellow Christians, you and I have ALL been given a talent or talents by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we are to use in His service! Perhaps the Lord has blessed us financially; or, maybe we have been given musical talents from the Lord; or, maybe the Lord has gifted us with the ability to faithfully preach His Word or to teach His Word to children; or, maybe, the Lord has given us the talent of managing funds well in a Christian congregation; or, maybe the Lord has blessed us with abilities in building and grounds maintenance, and so forth. In any case, the talent or talents each of us Christians have been given are to be faithfully used in the Lord's service to benefit His Church. We are NOT to bury the talent or talents we've been given from the Lord and let the talent or talents remain idle and unused.

The Holy Bible clearly states in Ephesians 2:8-10, "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Fellow Christians, observe that we would not be Christians if God Himself did

not gift us with faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord, for our own works do NOT bring us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in whole or in part since we are saved by God's grace through God-given faith in Christ, for Romans 10:17 relates: "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Nevertheless, note well that we Christians who are God's workmanship are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Yes, good works are to be done by all Christians as fruits of a living faith in the Lord Jesus.

Consider the following words from James 2:19-26, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Hence, a saving and living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will always be accompanied by good works—works done in full accord with God's Word. And, what does God's Word say to every Christian? We read in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Colossians 3:16-17, 23-25 instructs: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for

ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

Furthermore, 1 Peter 4:10-11 declares: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Psalm 100:2-3 adds: “Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” And, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:16 commands each and every Christian: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Thus, we Christians are certainly NOT to simply bury our talent or talents which the Lord has graciously given to us.

Let us remember that any and all talents we have come from the Lord and are to be used by us in His service, not buried and hidden away.

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see what we need to know about accountability in relation to talents.

Verse 19, ----- (Matthew 25:19)

The servants were answerable to their lord regarding how they managed the talents he had entrusted to them, for *After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.* Indeed, the lord of those servants eventually returned from the far country to which he had gone, and consequently a time of reckoning was upon his servants.

Likewise, fellow Christians, the Lord Jesus Christ

will visibly return on Judgment Day which will be a time of reckoning, for 2 Corinthians 5:10 declares in no uncertain terms: “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” Oh, Jesus will NOT be visibly returning to earth to rule for 1,000 years and give folks more time to repent and amend their lives, for the Bible never teaches the foolishness the millennialists dream. Rather, Hebrews 9:27-28 clearly states: “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” And, Jesus says in John 5:26-29, “as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” Indeed, when Jesus visibly returns to earth it will be to judge the world; and, those with a living faith in Jesus Christ will have eternal life, while those without a living faith in Him will be damned. The judgment will NOT be preceded by 1,000 years of good-times. NOW IS THE TIME TO REPENT AND BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!

Verses 20-23, ----- (Matthew 25:20-23)

The day of reckoning had come, and the servants who had been given five talents and two talents respectively had both used those talents in faithful service to their lord in accord with their abilities. The servant given five talents had gained five talents more; and, the servant given two talents had gained two talents more. Notice that the lord was equally pleased with both of the servants who had managed his talents well in his absence, for he pronounced the same generous reward to both those servants when he said to each: *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many*

*things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

It's interesting to observe that each of the faithful servants received the same wonderful, gracious reward which far exceeded the value of the talents they were given to manage.

Now, consider the spiritual application. If we Christians are faithful servants of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by being fruitful in the faith He has given us, using the talents He has given to us in His service, we will receive a wonderful reward of grace that far exceeds the value of the talents we have been given to manage during our life here on earth, for we will be graciously gifted with eternal life in the mansions of heaven!

Oh, our works do NOT earn us heaven in whole or even in the least part, because Jesus Christ has Himself earned heaven for us, for Holy Writ relates in Titus 3:5-7, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ in John 15:5 says to all of His followers: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ enables us Christians to continue in the faith and to be fruitful in the same in service to Him. Additionally, the Lord Jesus will on Judgment Day say to each of us Christians, if we have remained faithful to Him: *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* Let us thank and praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for ALL that He has done for us, all He still does for us, and all He will yet do for us by His grace, mercy, and power.

Verses 24 & 25, ----- (Matthew 25:24-25)

Observe that the servant who had received the

one talent had a very low opinion of his lord, and therefore no real love for his lord, but only fear of his lord, for our text reports that *he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.*

Think of it. The servant with the one talent simply buried the talent he was given and never even attempted to use it in service to his lord, for he acknowledged that his lord is who ultimately reaps and gathers from what he has entrusted to the care of his servants. Hence, the servant was selfish, self-centered, and spiteful toward his lord.

Now let's think about the spiritual lesson to be learned from the one servant who simply buried the talent he was given by his lord. Take it to heart that there are Christians, "which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away," as Luke 8:13 teaches us. Such folks are then Christians in name only; consequently, they are without faith and therefore never bring forth fruits of faith, that is, they never do any truly good works in using the talent that the Lord Jesus Christ had given them. The nominal Christians talk the talk without really walking the walk: they bury any talent the Lord Jesus has given them, rather than using it to serve Him, since they do not see any personal worldly gain in it for themselves.

Verses 26-30, ----- (Matthew 25:26-30)

Consider the words the lord spoke to his servant who had buried the one talent given to him, for the lord answered and said unto him, *Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* Wicked and lazy was the servant who had buried the talent entrusted to his care, for at the very least he could have deposited the \$2,000 in the bank so it could earn some interest; but, the servant instead chose

to simply bury the talent given into his care, and that action indicated the servant was both wicked and lazy— no true servant of his lord.

Likewise, Christians who are Christians in name only show themselves wicked and lazy since they do not use the talent the Lord Jesus has entrusted them with; consequently, by their lack of fruit they show they are NOT true servants of the Savior who is Christ the Lord.

Observe that the lord in the parable also said: *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Thus, the unprofitable servant was left with nothing of his lord's, while the most profitable servant of the three was given yet more of his lord's wealth to work with.

In like manner, spiritually speaking, false Christians will have any talent the Lord Jesus Christ gave them to use in His service taken away from them and given to those Christians who are faithful to their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the faithful Christians will be even more blessed.

In the closing verse of our text we see that the unprofitable servant had a worse situation coming upon him than having the one talent taken from him, for his lord commanded: *cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Thus, painful punishment was the unprofitable servant's reward for his wickedness.

Likewise, all pseudo-Christians, all those who are Christians in name only, will be sentenced by the Lord Jesus Christ to the darkness of hell to suffer pain forever according to soul and body, for Mark 16:16 plainly states: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Fellow Christians, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and

confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; let us go forward striving to be fruitful in the faith, using the talent or talents the Lord has given us to the best of our ability in His service as we keep in mind what Jesus teaches us in the parable of the talents. Amen.

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