

## **PARABLE OF THE TALENTS: TIME, TALENTS, TOIL, TURN-a-PROFIT**

*Matthew 25:14-30*

*“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, each according to his ability. Then he went away.*

*16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also he who had the 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.*

*19 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.’*

*21 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 the 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.’*

*24 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, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’*

*26 But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? You ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.*

*28 So take the talent from him and give it to him 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.’*

**Time, Talents, Toil, Turn a profit**

## TIME

*“A thousand years are like a day to you”* (Moses in Psalm 90)

Time is a significant factor in Jesus’ plans concerning His coming and the end of the age:

- Jesus made it clear that His return would not be immediate, but after much trouble and the passing of a considerable period of time (Matthew 24 first half)
- Neither the day nor the hour would be known (Matthew 24:32-36, 42)
- His return would come at a time when it was not expected (Matthew 24:44)

In the parable of the talents, there are two clear references to time.

- First, the master stayed away for a long time (Matthew 25:19).
- Second, the faithful servants didn’t waste time: they immediately got to work (25:16-17).

We manage time; we waste time. We spend time; we save time. We wish the time would come; we wish the time would pass. We see time fly; we feel time drag. We watch clocks and carry calendars, creating the illusion that we somehow control time, yet all the while moments flow forward like a mighty river that cannot be stopped, harnessed, or re-routed.

Yet, God controls time. He created time and we, his creations, are fenced by his time, directed and guided by his holy and loving hand. The year 2012 is a gift of time from God.

How will you use it?

What do you think God wants you to do with the 365 days of this next year?

### **God’s Timing requires us to...**

- Work immediately
- Work as if He were here
- Trust His ultimate timing

Matthew 25:13

Watch for you do not know the day or hour when the Son of Man returns.

# TALENTS

Talents and abilities are different here:

- Talents are a measure of money or resources that God gives us
- Ability is a reflection of those resources, a measure of God's blessing in our lives:
  - Faith (Lk 17:5 – disciples: increase our faith; Mk 9:24 – I do believe, give more)
  - Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:12-13: work out salvation, God gives)
  - Upbringing or background or experiences (Jeremiah 1:5)
  - Ability to obey God (coachable) (2 Co 10:4-6 – take every thought captive to obey)
  - Being faithful to Him (Pr 3:5: trust in Lord w all heart, lean not your understanding)
  - Obedience to authority (Romans 13 – obey your rulers and authorities)

Ability at the very least is that which God invests in us throughout our lives in order to serve Him when He calls us to the vineyard to labor in order that we might be profitable servants.

We should be careful to recognize that in this parable the **mere possession** of a talent is not **evidence of salvation**. The one-talent slave is clearly condemned to hell.

UNBELIEVERS are ENTRUSTED with certain things, and they will also GIVE ACCOUNT for their STEWARDSHIP.

- God has entrusted (by common grace, in some cases) certain assets to all men, and that all men are accountable to God for how they use (or do not use) these resources which God has entrusted to them
- Paul speaks of the things God has entrusted to the nation of Israel in Romans 9:1-5
- Our Lord's rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees is often couched in "stewardship" terms. God entrusted Israel, especially its leaders, with the truth, and they did not use it properly

## Lessons about TALENTS:

- Everyone starts out with ONE talent
- Possession of a talent does not mean salvation
- Proper resource management results in a stronger relationship with the Master
- HIS resources and OUR God-given abilities are reflections of each other

## TOIL

Initiative, action, effort

It is the 1<sup>st</sup> servant (and 2<sup>nd</sup>) who immediately sets to work with his master's money. It is not the money that goes to work, as such, but the worker.

When the 3<sup>rd</sup> servant's excuses are set aside, it's evident this man is lazy – he didn't do any work. He didn't even hand the money over to bankers to let them go to work with it.

The success of the rich did not come at the expense of the poor. His toil and effort did not cost the lazy servant his chances of success.

These are moments of decision: we must choose to play it safe and get what we can for ourselves

OR

risk our reputation or even our life in order that God may have what He wants

Will this give me what I want

OR

will it only make possible for Jesus to do what He wants to do through me?

Jeremiah 1:5-9, 17-19

*The Lord said: "Jeremiah, I am your Creator, and before you were born, I chose you to speak for me to the nations."*

*I replied, "I'm not a good speaker, Lord, and I'm too young."*

*7 "Don't say you're too young," the Lord answered. "If I tell you to go and speak to someone, then go! And when I tell you what to say, don't leave out a word!*

*I promise to be with you and keep you safe, so don't be afraid."*

*9 The Lord reached out his hand, then he touched my mouth and said, "I am giving you the words to say, and I am sending you with authority to speak to the nations for me. You will tell them of doom and destruction, and of rising and rebuilding again."*

*17 Jeremiah, get ready! Go and tell the people what I command you to say.*

*Don't be frightened by them, or I will make you terrified while they watch.*

*My power will make you strong like a fortress or a column of iron or a wall of bronze.*

*You will oppose all of Judah, including its kings and leaders, its priests and people.*

*19 They will fight back, but they won't win. I, the Lord, give my word—*

*I won't let them harm you! (CEV)*

Principles about TOILING for God:

- Work immediately, as though the Master is there
- IF God called you TO IT, He's called you THROUGH IT!
- External action isn't what the Master wants: Internal trust (take it away from him)
- Selfishly hiding your talent or abilities hurts everyone (Master, servant, banker)
- Feel the fear, and do it anyway. You'll be terrified if you don't

## **TURN A PROFIT (growth, success)**

“For the one who has will be given more.

But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him” (Matthew 25:29).

How is it that the one “who does not have” has something taken from him?

How can you take something away from a person who has nothing?

- The one “who does not have” but yet does “have” (because what he has is taken away) is the one who has his master’s money, but has made no profit from it
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> servant has no profit, no gain, to give his master, so his talent is taken away and given to the one who went to work with his master’s money and made great gains for him

?IS THIS GREED?

- When turning a profit is the goal of using the entrepreneurial talent, it is not greed
- It is the proper use of the gift

The basic purpose in life is growth, to increase, to transform, to turn-a-profit

- To fail in this purpose is to be fundamentally unprofitable
- All life grows: if it does not, it has already ceased to live and is no longer worth keeping

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> servant, there was no increase because there was no investment.

He had one great opportunity to risk himself on behalf of his master, but he **DELIBERATELY IGNORED** it.

He buried it so he could forget about it.

**It was out of his HEAD, and therefore, out of his HEART and his HANDS as well.**

It wasn’t there to make him uncomfortable –  
constantly reminding him of his Master’s expectations

“I was afraid to risk what you gave me lest I should lose it and would have to face your wrath when you return. But I have outwitted you. I have kept your talent safe for your return. Here is exactly what you gave me. You and I are even.”

The real problem was that he had no intention of serving the Master.

He only looked the part; he was a pretender, a hypocrite.

Don’t get comfortable with your gift, and thereby cease to stretch it. We must **RISK** in order to **TURN a PROFIT**.

In a similar way, in the parable of the soils (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23) the mere germination of the seed does not seem to represent salvation.

- Only the fourth soil represents the true believer
- The second and third soils represent those who initially show some interest in the gospel, but then reject it when the meaning of the gospel becomes clear
- The true believer is represented by the seed that grows, that endures and that bears fruit.

Jeremiah 6:13-15:

*“For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain;  
and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely.  
They have healed the wound of my people lightly,  
saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ when there is no peace.  
Were they ashamed when they committed abomination?  
No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush.  
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;  
at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown,” says the Lord.*

Like a medical doctor who told the man suffering from a fatal disease that he is in full health, the prophet has in his mind false encouragements. In fact, he should have in his heart the spiritual welfare of those God has put in his path.

Hebrews 4:2

*We have heard the message, just as they did. But they failed to believe what they heard, and the message did not do them any good.*

**THE PROFIT IS:**

- Your relationship with him – HEAD (know), HEART (trust), HANDS (obey)
- We were created, like Adam, to KNOW, TRUST, and OBEY GOD.