

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 27

Introduction: Last week in our study we were in Matthew 25 and we started to look at the Parable of the Talents. Tonight I want to look back over some of what we considered because there is so much more to see within this parable.

Now as we look at this parable starting in Matthew 25:14 we must also see it in the light of the Parable of the Ten Virgins. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins we saw there were 5 wise virgins (bridesmaids) and there were 5 foolish virgins. The wise virgins came with oil in their lamps but the foolish virgins came with no oil. In the Parable of the Talents we find 2 wise servants and 1 evil servant.

The overall picture here is very important. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins we see the virgins waiting and in the Parable of the Talents we see the servants serving. The application for us is clear. We are to be waiting for the return of our Lord but while we are waiting we are to also be serving. There needs to be a balance within our lives. The believers at the church of Thessalonica were "unbalanced" in their lives. They were living in expectation of the return of the Lord to the point that many of them had stopped working.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

Here we see that these people believed they had entered into the Great Tribulation. Now notice how this affected their lives.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-11

¹⁰ *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

¹¹ *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.*

Some of the believers at this church had stopped working completely in anticipation of the Lord's return. They were waiting but they were not serving. There was no balance in their lives.

Luke 19:12-13

¹² *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.*

¹³ *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.*

Jesus says that we are to "occupy" until He comes. The word "occupy" means "to carry on the business of a banker or a trader". The idea is that we are given many spiritual opportunities and God expects us to use and invest the opportunities which He gives to us.

Now last week we looked at several points about the talents:

I. The Talents

1. The Value
2. The Picture
3. The Dividing

I want to go back to the "picture" which is seen in this parable again because as I looked at this parable closer there are some things which I did not touch on last week and they are points which we need to see.

Last week I told you that in this parable the "talents" can be seen as many things within the lives of all people. They can be opportunities to be saved, to serve, to reach out and help others. They can represent finances, a profitable job, good health, sharp minds with the great ability to learn, free time, and the list goes on and on. But the point is that God has given to all people what I will call "common gifts". Along with this thought is the Biblical Truth that every person will one day be held accountable for the "common gifts" which God has given to them. We can see a glimpse of this in Romans 2.

Romans 2:4

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

God shows goodness, forbearance and longsuffering to ALL people for the purpose of bringing them to repentance. Therefore there will be a day when all who have suppressed God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering will be held accountable. Notice what Paul says in the next verse in Romans.

Romans 2:5

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Here he explains that those who harden their hearts toward God's goodness are treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath and **REVELATION** of the judgment of God. I emphasized the word "revelation" because it speaks of how God will reveal just how He poured out His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering in the lives of all people and thus they will be held accountable.

Now let us get back to the Parable of the Talents again. Here in this parable He is being more specific when He talks about the talents. In the Parable of the Talents Jesus is not addressing all of mankind but He is addressing those who are saved and those who are RELIGIOUS. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins all of the virgins looked the same on the outside. They all had lamps and they were all waiting but only 5 of them were prepared. The same can be seen in the Parable of the Talents. On the outside the servants all look the same but their hearts are not the same and this is manifest in their actions.

But there is something else here that we need to see which is taught throughout the Bible:

Notice Matthew 25:14

The words "*the kingdom of heaven*" are in italics which means they have been added by the translators. But that does not mean the words should not be here. This parable is a continued thought of our Lord from the previous parable and He already stated these parables pertain to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Notice Matthew 25:1

I just wanted you to see that both of the parables are pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven. Now we need to understand that when Jesus uses the term the Kingdom of Heaven here He is using it in a general sense. This is not referring to the physical Kingdom which our Lord will set up on the earth. This is speaking of the Kingdom realm which exists today and will exist in the Great Tribulation. He is using the term in a general sense.

He is using the term like we use the term "church". The True Church consists of all people today who have been saved. But there are many times when we use the term in a general sense. We will often use the term "church" to refer to people who gather here for the am and the pm services. But the sad truth is that there are people who attend here who are not of the TRUE CHURCH. They are under the umbrella of the "church" title but they are not of the body of Christ because they have not been saved. In the same way there will be people in the tribulation who will call themselves believers and will even gather together with the true believers. They will be under the "umbrella" of the Kingdom of Heaven but they will not be True Kingdom residents. They will be religious but not saved.

This is the point which Jesus is making here in both of these parables. He is giving these parables so that people who see themselves as "Christian" will take the time to look deeply into their own lives to be sure their faith is real.

Now this frightening Truth concerning how many who see themselves as Kingdom residents, but have in some way been deceived, can be seen in several other places in the Bible.

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ *Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

²⁵ *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.*

²⁶ *But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

²⁷ *So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?*

²⁸ *He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?*

²⁹ *But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

³⁰ *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

Here we see the same Truth in the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

¹⁴ Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

We remember in these verses there are 2 groups of people who both believe they are on the path which leads to heaven. But it is only those who have entered through the strait gate who are on the true path to heaven. All the others have been deceived by the enemy who has marked the path they are on "This Way to Heaven". These people are religious but they are not saved.

Matthew 7:21-23

*²¹ **Not every one** that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

*²² **Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Here again we can clearly see that these people who have been deceived are religious people. They are mixed right in with the True believers and therefore they are under the "umbrella" of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now coming back to Matthew 25 these false believers will be separated from the True believers starting in Matthew 25:31 where we will see the separation of the sheep from the goats.

Getting back to Matthew 25 and the 2 parables Jesus is making a clear statement that all who call themselves "Christian" need to be sure they are truly saved. Let us remember that both of these parables are given out of concern for what we read in Matthew 24:40-41.

Now let us consider the talents in light of all that we just looked at. The "talents" then would be opportunities which are received while under the "umbrella" of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let me give you an illustration to help you understand what I am saying:

There are many people who come here on Sunday mornings and some of them are not saved. They are under the "umbrella" title of the church but are not of the True Church. Then there are those of us who are saved sitting in the same service under the same "umbrella". Every time we gather here God places a "talent" in your basket. He gives to those of us who are Truly saved and even to those who are not saved. He will reveal a Truth to us who are saved and then He expects us to take that "talent" and invest it. The unsaved person also receives "talents". You see the unsaved person is also hearing the Truth of God's Word.

This will work the same way in the tribulation period when people gather together to worship the Lord and there will be unsaved mixed in with the True saved.

Notice Matthew 25:16-17

Here in these verses we see that the man who received 5 talents and the man who received 2 talents both invested them and doubled what they had been given.

This is a picture of those who are Truly saved. They will take the "talents" which God places in their basket and they will use it for the Kingdom.

Notice Matthew 25:18

Here is a picture of someone with a false faith. This man buried what his lord had given him and there were 2 reasons:

1. He did not want to give up his personal time.

In order for this man to invest his lord's talent he would need to sacrifice his own time. He did not care to do that but desired to live for himself.

2. He desired to keep the talent for himself.

Notice the words of John Walvoord on this man's actions;

"The man reasoned this way, "If my Lord returns, then I will be able to give him back his talent and cannot be accused of being a thief, but if he does not return, there will be no record that the money belongs to him, such as would be true if I deposited it in the bank, and then I will be able to use the money myself." His basic problem was a lack of faith."

If this man really believed his lord would return he would have invested his money. This is the point of the parable to show the difference between true faith and false faith.

Conclusion:

It is very easy to see in this parable that True faith will invest the "talents" which God gives to us. But a false faith will manifest itself in living for self and not for the Lord.

James 2:14-19

¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

¹⁹ Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.