

## What Will You Do with Your Talents?

### *Parable Explained*

- “Talent?” Skill or ability, you or someone else. Talented person; something you’re talented at. Might know, “America’s Got Talent.” Might not know: English word “talent” comes from directly from our lesson. My 5 inch dictionary: borrowed from Mt 25. So famous is parable about master who entrusts wealth to servants, that today when we speak about skills, abilities, we call them talents.
- But in parable, talent is not skill, ability; it’s a sum of money – very large! What word actually means. Notice 3<sup>rd</sup> week sermons on ancient money? 2 weeks ago: forgiving 10,000 talent debt (billions!); last week: worker’s denarius. Today: talent (huge sum!), something like annual income x20. Lot of money! NIV 2011: not talents but “bags of gold.” Huge!
- In parable, incredibly wealthy master entrusts talents of his wealth to his servants. **Vs. 14-15.** Didn’t give to keep, as gift; gave to use, invest and increase, put money to work, because going on journey. When he got back, expected to find talents put to good use.
- Not difficult to see what Jesus is driving at, esp when realize told Tues before died. It’s Holy Week; Jesus getting ready to go on journey; die, rise, ascend, and not come back again until Last Day. So Jesus tells this parable to teach disciples and us what he expects us to be doing until he comes back. Expects us to be making good use of talents, bags of gold entrusted to us.
- In parable: **vs. 16-18.** First two put money right to work: started business here, invested in company there, employed workers, sold products. Whatever: took assignment seriously, put money to work, and increased master’s wealth. Two things to note: 1) Master’s money, not theirs! Didn’t blow it on whatever they wanted; didn’t bury it in ground. Didn’t waste or hoard it. They said, “Master has entrusted this wealth to us to use faithfully. That’s what he wants while gone; so that’s what we’ll do.” Master’s money. 2) Amount didn’t matter. 5, 2, 1; all same assignment – put money to work. Master gave different quantities to different people; didn’t give different assignments. First two followed assignment; third did not. Just buried money, did nothing with it, didn’t even try, considered that good enough.
- What happened: **vs. 19** – time to review investments. 5 gained 5; Master: **vs. 21.** Same: 2 gained 2. These two servants were faithful stewards of wealth entrusted to them. Then we come to man given 1 and buried it. To him Master said, **vs. 26,** threw out into darkness – not because just couldn’t turn profit. Because: didn’t try, didn’t put talent to good use, ignored assignment, was unfaithful.

### *Parable Applied*

- Again, not like parable is hard to understand or to apply. Very clear: Jesus is master; we servants. Entrusted to us incredible wealth, amazing resources. Given us task of faithfully putting resources to good use in Kingdom of God. Now, Jesus away on journey; coming back soon. When does, expects to find faithful stewardship of his wealth. Faithful are rewarded; unfaithful cast out. So, two ways to live before Christ returns: as lazy servant or faithful steward. One or the other; no third option.
- So question becomes: what will you do with your talents? With bags of gold God has entrusted to you? That is the question, because if we don’t want to be thrown into darkness, then we have to realize, God expects faithful stewardship from his people. This is a parable about ST. ST is not church word for fundraising. ST is taking honest look at bags of gold God has entrusted to you and commanded you to use, and faithfully putting that wealth to work in best way you can. That’s ST.
- What exactly are these bags of gold God has given? 3 Ts of ST: time, talent (skill), treasure (money). Time/talent interrelated. If God has blessed you with certain skill-sets and time to use them in God’s Kingdom, then God expects you to put time/talent to good use. This doesn’t exclude anyone – God has given time/talents to everyone, maybe some more than others – but quantity doesn’t matter, as parable proves. No one can say, “I have nothing to contribute; not talented.” God’s gives wide variety of gifts. This is where **Romans 12 (2<sup>nd</sup> lesson)** comes in. God made you unique so that you can make unique contribution to his Kingdom with time/talents. That’s ST. ST is also includes financial

contributions. Where treasure comes in. Seems to be something taboo about talking money at church. But this is parable about money. Shame on us if we refuse to see church offerings as part of God's expectations for us. Shame on us if we say, "God, I'll give you time/talent; don't touch treasure," as if we can offer God some gold, bury the rest. God has given us financial wealth (for many, in remarkable abundance), and expects us to put it to good use. Again, doesn't exclude anyone – no one can say, "I'm not in financial position to contribute;" or, "My measly offerings won't accomplish anything." Think of widow at temple, 2 copper coins; think of time Jesus said, **"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"** (Mt 6:21). Faithful ST, even of \$, is what God expects.

- So what will you do with your talents? Question you have to wrestle with. You've been given unique gifts, varied skills – how will you use them for Kingdom? Whatever you do, don't settle for mediocrity, for interest with bankers; be a faithful steward of wealth God has entrusted to you!
- What will you do with your talents? I think about that question for myself, and what God has given me: cross (faith); stole (pastorate); checkbook (finances); watch (volunteerism); keys (church). I could bury it; "whatever." Or I could use it! If you've been given this, how can you use it to serve God's Kingdom? What will you do with your talents?
- That's question Jesus asks in this parable. Where we have failed to be good stewards of our talents (certainly have!), there we beg God's forgiveness: "I'm sorry for being wicked, lazy, self-centered, miserly, uncaring servant who has buried your gold instead of putting it to use." Then remember what Jesus did after parable. Made contribution of his life to service to us; he who was rich made himself poor so that we through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor 8:9). Now all our sins are forgiven, including our sins of poor stewardship, which means that someday we will hear our master say, "Well done...master's happiness!" God considers you good and faithful servant; entrusted you with talents, bags of gold to use in his Kingdom. So what will you do with your talents?

#### **Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV 1984)**

<sup>14</sup> "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. <sup>16</sup> The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. <sup>17</sup> So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. <sup>18</sup> But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

<sup>19</sup> "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

<sup>21</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>22</sup> "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

<sup>23</sup> "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

<sup>24</sup> "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

<sup>26</sup> "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? <sup>27</sup> Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

<sup>28</sup> "'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup> For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>30</sup> And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'