

## **Wicked Lazy Slave**

### **Matthew 25**

In Matthew 25:14-30 contains the parable of the Talents. Anyone who has been going to church for some time have read, listened to sermons, or maybe even studied these verses of Scripture. Jesus is talking to His disciples after leaving the Temple for the last time, the fulfillment of His mission is just a few days away. He sat on the Mount of Olives looked at the Temple and told them not one stone would be left upon another, false teachers would come, perilous times lay ahead, that after days of tribulation He would return, His coming would be like the days of Noah so be ready. He emphasizes His point by telling them two parables, the parable of the ten virgins and the parable of the talents. Jesus closes what is known as the Olivet discourse by addressing the judgment to come. Quite a bit of information given to his disciples in a very short period of time.

Before we get started, let's define what the slaves had been given. A talent was not a measure of currency, but mass measured with water that filled an amphora or a large two handled storage jar. If the measurement of a talent was via a Roman amphora, they were given 71 pounds of gold or silver. If the measurement was Greek, they were given 57 pounds of gold or silver. That means they were given the equivalent of 6,000 denarii for each talent they received.

In the parable of the talents, the one who was given five and the one who was given two talents were both commended for their use of what had been provided to them. But when the one, who was given one talent came to settle his account, his answer was, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 'And I was afraid and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'" He had done nothing but hide the talent he was given in the ground. His report was one of excuses and blame shifting designed to mitigate the focus on the production of the other two slaves while minimizing the impact of his slothfulness. He is so deceived that he excuses his lack of action and blames his master, who he categorizes as "hard man" as part of the problem.

This parable is not about money, return on one's investment, or finances, it's about being ready, preparing for what is to come, and the diligent use the time given to us by the Lord until we meet Him in heaven or see Him coming again. The master in the parable knows His servants, knows their skills and ability, and provides them with a portion He knows they can handle. The text says he gave, "each according to his own ability." He does not frustrate his servant by giving the one who can handle five talents one or overwhelm the one who can handle one talent by giving him five.

The obvious master is the Lord, Jesus Christ, who returned to heaven and is sitting at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty. One day He will return, and when He does, He will return, "in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne". Until then, we have been entrusted with talents of our own, each specifically given according to our abilities to serve the Lord. Jesus wants us to be faithful, wise, productive and purposeful with what we have been given, to preach the gospel, to grow in grace and knowledge, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, progress toward holiness every day we are given to live on this planet. Like the faithful servants, we are to increase what the Lord has entrusted to us through our faithful service and use of the talents we have been given. R.C. Sproul illustrated the point by providing an example of his three-hundred-pound economics professor standing on his desk to announce, "Let me tell you one law of economics, you've got to work.' We must remember we can work and not be good stewards, but we cannot be good stewards without work."

The most frightening person in this parable is the man who received one talent and buried it. The master calls him, "a wicked, lazy servant". The master says you knew all these things and yet you didn't even put the money in the bank that I might receive my talent back with interest. The servants who were faithful received more to work with, increased opportunity but the one who squandered the opportunity his master had given him is cast out, "into outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth". It sounds much like the man who came to the wedding feast inappropriately dressed. When the master returns there will be a time to settle accounts. Many who think they are prepared will find themselves in the same predicament as the slave with one talent. They will be among those who hear, "...I never knew you depart from me, you who practice lawlessness". As we look at this parable and know of the master's expectation, are we faithful, fruitful, productive and steadfast servants? I hope so. If not there's still time.

**1. What does “then” refer to in the opening verse of chapter 25? Is there any significance to the number 10? Outline verses 1-5, what do you learn from these verses. How were the virgins similar and how were they different? What was the bridegroom doing in verse 5?**

**2. When did the bridegroom show up? How did the virgins hear and react? What did they all do? What was the problem with those who were not prudent? Why didn't they share? What is the parable really teaching?**

**3. What “is just like a man about to go on a journey”? What is the word for slave in these verses and what were they entrusted with and what was the basis for what they were given? What did they do with what was entrusted to them?**

**4. How long was the master gone and what happened when the master of the slaves returned? How would you explain, “Well done good and faithful servant? What was the problem with the third slaves actions? Why did he act in that fashion and what should we learn from this parable? Explain verses 28 – 30.**

**5. How do verses 31-46 describe the events “when the Son of Man comes in His glory”? What will He do and why will he do it? What is the basis of the judgment? According to Jesus, what two places does mankind go after judgement?**