

“For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance.”

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS, PART 2

Matthew 25:14–30



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Jesus instructs His disciples to steward opportunities and abilities wisely while waiting for His return.

He provides this instruction through the form of a parable, which develops through three scenes:

I. The Talents Distributed (vv. 14–15)

II. The Stewardship Exercised (vv. 16–18)

III. The Rewards Bestowed (vv. 19–30)

Context

- The Parable of the Talents must be read in connection with the previous parable, the Parable of the Ten Virgins in 25:1–13.
 - **25:1–13** – emphasizes *waiting for* the Lord's coming.
 - **25:13–14** – “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. For it is just like a man about to go on a journey”
 - **25:14–30** – emphasizes *working before* the Lord's coming.
- An incomplete view about *waiting* (25:1–13) can lead to indifference in the present; Jesus' Parable of the Talents (25:14–30) excludes this.

I. The Talents Distributed (vv. 14–15)

“For *it is* just like a man *about* to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.”

- “A man *about* to go on a journey” – parallel to “the bridegroom” in the previous parable (25:1, 5, 6, 10) → Jesus.
- “Slaves” – servants within his estate → professing Christians.
- “Talent” – a unit of measurement (60–80 lbs.) used to determine large amounts precious metals → skills and opportunities.

II. The Stewardship Exercised (vv. 16–18)

“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and **traded with them**, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more. But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug *a hole* in the ground and hid his master’s money.”

- Though not mentioned, the expectation was that the slaves were to be *productive*.
- “**Traded with them**” – *literally*, “worked on them”; the first slave put his talents *to work* without delay, with the goal of seeing them produce more.

“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and **gained five more** talents. **In the same manner** the one who *had received* the two talents **gained two more**. But he who received the one *talent* went away, and dug *a hole* in the ground and hid his master’s money.”

- “**Gained five more**” – “to acquire by effort or investment” (James 4:13 – “to make a profit”); the first slave doubled the value of what his master entrusted to him.
- “**In the same manner**” – the second slave also put his talents to work without delay, to honor his master’s intention.
- “**Gained two more**” – he also doubled what was entrusted to him.

“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more. But he who received the one *talent* went away, and **dug a hole** in the ground and **hid his master’s money.**”

- “Dug . . . and hid his master’s money” – the ancient equivalent of a safety-deposit box; a familiar way of keeping money safe (Matt 13:44).
- The third slave did not *risk* his master’s money, but he *resisted* his master’s intention.



III. The Rewards Bestowed (vv. 19–30)

A. The Faithful Slaves (vv. 19–23)

“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ Also the one who *had received* the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’”

- Both slaves are rewarded equally—not for the quantity of their productivity (5 talents vs. 2 talents), but for their equal efforts to multiply what they had been given.
- They were both given three kinds of reward (vv. 21, 23):

1) COMMENDATION – “Well done, good and faithful slave.”



- “Good” – ἀγαθός (*agathos*) → *nobility of character*; the intention of the first two slaves was upright.
- “Faithful” – πιστός (*pistos*) → *consistency of action*; the service of the first two slaves was consistent with the master’s expectation.

“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

—1 Corinthians 4:5



**“Well
done.”**

2) **DELEGATION** – “You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.”

- “Few things” – the talents initially entrusted to them (v. 15).



- “I will put you in charge” – “to assign someone a position of authority.”
- “Many things” – the generosity of the master is shown in his assignment of far greater privileges.
- **Luke 19:17** – “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’”

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.’”

—**Revelation 5:9–10**

“Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. . . . They will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”

—**Revelation 20:4–6**

3) CELEBRATION – “Enter into the joy of your master.”

- Based on the connection with the previous parable (25:1–13), this “joy of your master” is a reference to “the wedding feast.”
- **Matthew 25:10** – “. . . the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.”
- **Revelation 19:9a** – “Then he said to me, ‘Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”



B. The Wicked Slave (vv. 24–28)

“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘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.’ But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no *seed*. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my *money* back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’”

- The lengthiest response is reserved for the slave *who did nothing*.

- His knowledge of the master was very different than the other slaves: “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 . . .” (vv. 24–25).
 - He believed His master was neither *good* in character (“a hard man” = *strict, cruel, merciless*) nor *virtuous* in action (“reaping where you did not sow . . .” = *predatory, greedy, mercenary*).
- “It was deliberate disobedience and an insult to the master, since he was supposed to use [the talent] to make a profit. He played it safe to avoid taking a loss, but that was distinctly against the master’s wishes” (Osborne, *Matthew*, 924).
- The third slave was given three kinds of judgment (vv. 26, 28, 30):

1) CONDEMNATION – “You wicked, lazy slave” (v. 26).

- “Wicked” – πονηρός (*ponēros*); describes *corruption in character*; the antithesis of “good” in vv. 21, 23.
- “Lazy” - ὀκνηρός (*oknēros*); describes *resistance toward obedience*; the antithesis of “faithful” in vv. 21, 23.
- Although the master does not counter the third slave’s claim, he reveals the error in his argument: if he was opportunistic, the slave could still put the money in a bank to gain interest!
- **Matthew 25:27** – “Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.”

2) **REVOCATION** – “Take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents” (v. 28).

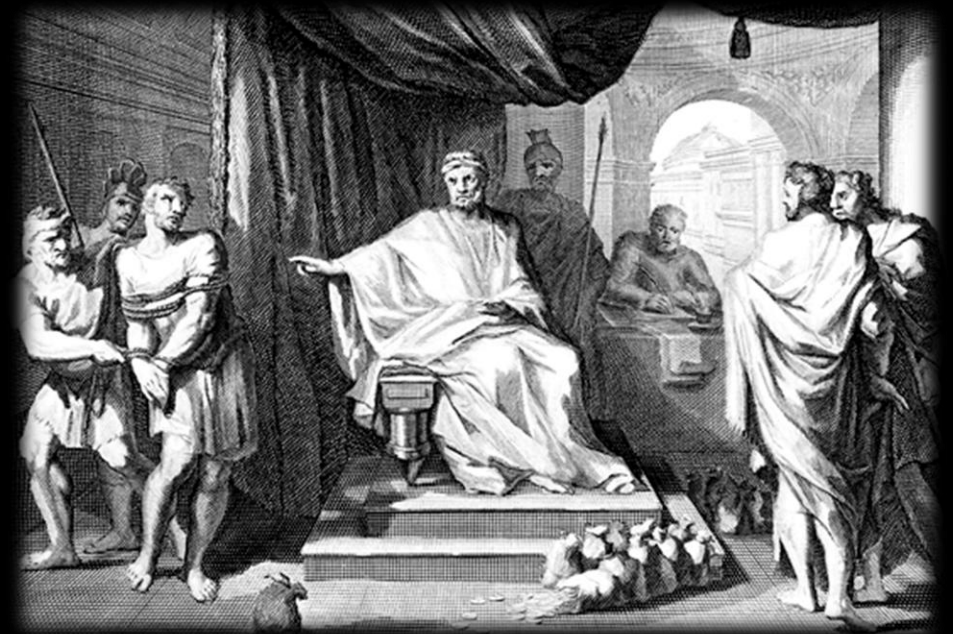
- The master takes back the initial talent from the third slave, removing the opportunity for a second chance.
- The master does not respond with neutrality; he deprives the unfaithful and endows the faithful.
- **Matthew 25:29** – “For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”

3) PUNISHMENT – “Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v. 30).

- According to the Parable of the Wheat & Tares (Matt 13:24–30), those who are of “the kingdom”—the “wheat” (genuine believers)—dwell for a time alongside the “tares” (false believers).

“To make no commitments on religious matters is really to make a damning commitment by default.”

—Blomberg, *Matthew*, 372



- *Question:* Does the third slave in this parable experience the same fate as the one who “suffers loss” in 1 Corinthians 3:14–15?
 - **1 Corinthians 3:14–15** – “If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”
- *Answer:* No—these refer to different outcomes at judgment.
 - The slave is cast into “the outer darkness,” a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 25:30) → he is a *false believer*.
 - The man who “suffers loss” will be saved even after the evaluation → he is a *genuine believer*.

- ❖ Even if it seems that Christ has been gone for a long time, “the day” is still coming wherein He will “settle accounts.”
- ❖ When Christ returns, He will not ask if we predicted the right date, but He will ask if we have been faithful.
- ❖ The test is not how much you show in the end. The test is how you have worked with what you have been given.
- ❖ The reward will more than compensate for the effort and sacrifice you employ in the stewardship of Christ’s gifts.
- ❖ So, what will you do?