



Around the Word  
**Bible Study**  
 Trinity, 2015

# Parables: "A Fool and His Talent are Soon Parted" Matthew 25:14-30

## Formula of Concord:

"In these last times it is certainly no less needful to encourage people to Christian discipline <to the way of right and godly living> and to do good works. We need to remind them of how necessary it is that they exercise themselves in good works as a declaration of their faith [Matthew 5:16] and gratitude to God [Hebrews 13:15-16]. But works should not be mingled in the article of justification. For people may be just as damned by an Epicurean delusion about faith as they are by papistic and Pharisaic confidence in their own works and merits.

~**Epitome, Article IV, 18**

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**Introduction:** This parable is often used to teach good stewardship. However, this is not truly the subject. It is clear from the context that this is another parable describing the Kingdom of God and, like the last Kingdom parable (Mt. 25:1-12), is couched in the admonition to "watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." (Mt. 25:13) All of that said, this parable **does** serve the purpose of admonishing Christians to good works, but only and always in their proper relationship to faith. Disconnecting good works from faith or emphasizing the former at the expense of the latter defeats the source and purpose of good works.

The previous parable (of the Ten Virgins) emphasized wisdom which relies upon the Grace of God vs. the foolishness which disregards it. While the words "wisdom" and "foolishness" are not found in this parable, the theme is still present as we see a comparison made between servants whose talents (faith) produce more (good works) and the one whose talent produces nothing. By the end of this parable we shall see that wisdom and faithfulness and foolishness and faithlessness each go hand in hand.

### Opening: Psalm 90

<sup>1</sup>Lord, you have been our | dwelling place\*  
 in all gener- | ations.

<sup>2</sup>**Before the mountains were brought forth,  
 or ever you had formed the earth | and the  
 world,\*  
 from everlasting to everlasting | you are God.**

<sup>3</sup>You return | man to dust\*  
 and say, "Return, O chil- | dren of man!"

<sup>4</sup>**For a thousand years in your sight  
 are but as yesterday when | it is past,\*  
 or as a watch | in the night.**

<sup>5</sup>You sweep them away as | with a flood;\*  
 they are like a dream,  
 like grass that is renewed in the | morning:

<sup>6</sup>**in the morning it flourishes and | is renewed;\*  
 in the evening it fades and | withers.**

<sup>7</sup>For we are brought to an end by your | anger;\*  
 by your wrath we | are dismayed.

<sup>8</sup>**You have set our iniquities be- | fore you,\*  
 our secret sins in the light of your | presence.**

<sup>9</sup>For all our days pass away un- | der your wrath;\*  
 we bring our years to an end | like a sigh.

<sup>10</sup>**The years of our life are seventy,  
 or even by reason of strength | eighty;\*  
 yet their span is but toil and trouble;  
 they are soon gone, and we | fly away.**

<sup>11</sup>Who considers the power of your | anger,\*  
 and your wrath according to the | fear of you?

<sup>12</sup>**So teach us to number | our days\*  
 that we may get a heart of | wisdom.**

<sup>13</sup>Return, O LORD! | How long?\*  
 Have pity on your | servants!

<sup>14</sup>**Satisfy us in the morning with your | steadfast  
 love,\*  
 that we may rejoice and be glad | all our days.**

<sup>15</sup>Make us glad for as many days as you have  
 af- | flicted us,\*

and for as many years as we have seen | evil.  
<sup>16</sup>**Let your work be shown to your | servants,\*  
 and your glorious power to their | children.**

<sup>17</sup>Let the favor of the Lord our God be up- | on us,\*  
 and establish the work of our hands upon us;  
 yes, establish the work | of our hands!

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\*  
 and to the Holy | Spirit;  
 as it was in the be- | ginning,\*  
 is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### Read Matthew 25:14-30

**v.14-15: "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, to each according to his ability. Then he went away."**

Read Matthew 20:18-19 and 26:64. How do these verses inform us as to whom the "man going on a journey" refers?

Read Matthew 28:18-20. All authority has been given to Jesus, but what is the work of the kingdom of God that Jesus entrusts to his apostles? How might this relate to the talents (the things of his household/property) with which the man entrusts his servants in this parable?

The talents are entrusted to each servant in different amounts, perhaps each according to his particular abilities. To whom do the talents still belong? How can this, along with Ephesians 2:8-10, inform us of how we should understand the gifts described by Paul in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-11?

**v.16-18: "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."**

Revisiting the previous question and recognizing to whom the talents belong and Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:5-10: to whom should the real credit go for the increase in the talents entrusted to the first two servants?

**v.19: "Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.**

The master returns "after a long time." What might this detail in the parable indicate to the disciples (and to us) concerning the time of Jesus' return? Taken with Matthew 24:21-22 and 45-51, what does this indicate concerning how thoroughly the delay will test the faithful? In light of 2 Peter 3:9, what does it say concerning God's patience with the unfaithful?

**v. 20-23: "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.' 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.'"**

Understanding to whom belongs the credit for the increase in the talents entrusted to the first two servants, who is/are receiving the benefits of the increase? How might this relate to Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:19-21?

The first servant was entrusted and proved faithful with much. The second servant was entrusted and proved faithful with little. Did the benefits they were given differ from each other? What does this tell us about God's grace and the nature of His kingdom? How does this compare with the conclusion of the first parable in this series from Mt 20:1-16?

**v.24-25: "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.'"**

In burying the talent entrusted to him, who and/or what was the third servant failing to trust?

## Bible Study

Parables

## Matthew 25:14-30

How does the fact that the third servant was entrusted with only one talent (as opposed to the five and two talents given to the first two servants respectively) prevent him from having any excuse concerning the talent being too much burden for him?

**v.26-27: "But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.'"**

How does the master's response expose the fact of the third servant's failure to know and trust the master and the power of the stuff of the master's household/property?



**v.28-30: "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.'"**

How does Jesus' explanation of the purpose of the parables in Matt. 13:10-17, especially v. 12, reflect upon the conclusion and purpose of this parable?

Read James 2:14-26. How does this inform us as to the difference between the third servant

and the first two? What is it that makes the third servant "worthless?" How does this correspond with the two groups of virgins in the previous parable? (cf. Matthew 25:1-13)

Read The Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11-27. There are some similarities between it and this parable from Matthew, but there are also significant differences. Not only are there differences and additional factors in the parable in Luke, but a different placement in the timeline (note what event comes immediately after the parable in Luke yet occurs prior to The Parable of the Talents in Matthew). How do these differences indicate that these are actually two different parables?

**Closing: We Give Thee But Thine Own (LSB, 781)**

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