

Matthew 25:14-30

The parable of the talents

Introduction.

1. **Theme of 'being ready'** – ready for One who is coming. There are also consequences for those who are not ready.
2. **What is 'readiness'?** = responsible activity producing results which the coming master can see and approve. Period of waiting = a period of opportunity to put to good use the 'talents' entrusted to his 'servants'.
3. **The English use of 'talent' comes from this parable** - applying it to the idea of 'living up to our full potential'.
4. **But Greek 'talent' = a sum of money.** In the context of the parable, talents entrusted to 'servants', are not natural endowments given to people in general, but the specific privileges and opportunities (responsibilities) given by the master. So, each disciple's opportunities may differ in character and magnitude but they are all to be faithfully exercised before Jesus returns.
5. In the parable the master allocates roles and 'servants' are to faithfully carry out the roles entrusted to them.

So 'readiness' consists in having already faithfully discharged our responsibilities as disciples – small or great.

Vs. 14-18. 'For' = indicates a close link with 24:36-25:13, developing the same theme of readiness. While some 'slaves' in the 1st Century rose to positions of great importance, the sums in the parable are unusually large – a talent = 6000 denarii (thousands of dollars today), this may support the translation of 'servant'. The third 'servant' misunderstood the masters' intent and substituted security for service.

Vs. 19-23. The 'servants' had been given the money to trade and gain profit for the master. 'Reward' = greater responsibilities. Two of the 'servants' receive identical commendations, despite a different scale of responsibility. 'Enter into the joy of your master', is not commercial language, so application is creeping into the telling of the story.

Vs. 24-28. The third 'servant' failed to grasp the nature of his responsibility. His response reflects a form of religious orientation based on a fatalistic perspective. He also has a warped view of the master. [This is not an allegorical description of God see also Lk. 1:5-8; 16:8; 18:2-5]. This is a discipleship which played safe, achieving nothing (contrast 10:39) = 'a religion concerned only with not doing anything wrong'. 'Being ready' = being active (taking risks?), responsible and exercising faithful service leads to results.

Vs. 29-30. V. 29 is a repetition of 13:12. In both 25:30 and 24:51, the story has been invaded by the application. The traditional description of the fate of the 'wicked', shows that the parable is to be understood in terms of salvation or condemnation.

Reflection/Response:

The parable challenges us to look at our state of readiness – our actions, our life-style. Real choices are to be made now, taking into account the eternal consequences. Christ, our master, has called us to serve him now. Christ will return. How will he find us? BB