

**Parable of the Talents**  
**Stories to Live by—part 3**  
**Matt. 25:14-30**  
**February 28, 2016**

**DAY 1: Entrusted**

1. Jesus' parable of the talents is one of the classic, most well-known parables of all. *Matthew 25:14 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.*
2. Underline the characters in this story.
3. What do we know about the "man" in this story?
4. As you read this parable, it is important to remember to whom the "property" and "talents" (money) **belong**. The "man" is the **owner** of it all, not the servants. What is the difference between entrusting your property and money to someone versus giving your property and money away?
5. Think of the man's servants as trusted employees. He was going on a journey. What did he do with some of his property? (v. 14)
6. A "talent" of money is estimated to be anywhere between several thousand dollars in today's economy to upwards of two decades of wealth, or what many would consider a small fortune. Though each servant received a different amount of money, they also were entrusted a small fortune of money! Why did he give each of the three servants different amounts of money?
7. What do you think he expected them to do with his property?
8. Jesus' parable is illustrating God (as the man) and us (as the servants).
9. Imagine what God has entrusted to you. Jot down what you believe God has entrusted to you.
10. Finish today's devotions with thanksgiving to God.

**DAY 2: Responsibility**

*Matthew 25:16 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.*

1. What did each of the first two servants do with what had been entrusted to them?
2. What thing(s) do you think motivated them?
3. What would have motivated you?
4. What do you notice about the amounts each man earned? (Look back at the amounts each was entrusted with in v. 15)
5. Let's look at the third servant.

*Matthew 25:18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.*

- a. How much was entrusted to the third servant?
- b. What did he do with what was entrusted to him?
- c. Why do you think he acted as he did?
- d. Is that what you would have done?

6. What strikes you most from today's devotional?

### **DAY 3: Accountability**

*Matthew 25:19 After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.*

1. Human nature loves to assume that it can do anything it wants with what it has (not admitting that what it has was entrusted), as if we have not received everything we have from God, and bear no responsibility to Him.

2. What do you think motivates fallen man to act this way, and to think this way? What reasons can you think of as to why we would prefer to believe that we are not accountable to God?

3. When you think about your daily life, how conscious are you of a responsibility to God, to use what He's entrusted to you?

4. Imagine your world if there was responsibility without accountability. Imagine what your workplace would look like without accountability.

*Matthew 25:20 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.'*

*Matthew 25:21 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!'*

5. We usually think of accountability as a "negative" thing. Teenagers often complain, "Why are you always checking up on me?" Software writers invented a computer command that will make a computer game "disappear" when the boss walks through the office.

6. At the end of this parable it is clear that accountability helped the first two servants. In what ways do you think accountability helped them?

### **DAY 4: The third servant (Human nature laid bare)**

1. In the medical world, an MRI exposes what is going on inside our body that we cannot see. The third servant serves to expose our human nature through his deeds, thinking, beliefs his real purpose, and what fuels it.

*Matthew 25:24 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.'*

2. What did the third servant do with all that had been entrusted to him?

3. Jesus told us that the owner was going away on a "journey" and that "after a long time" the owner returned. We know these things about the third man:

a. He did nothing with what had been entrusted to him,

b. This doing nothing went on for a long, long time.

This begs the question, then, just what did the third servant do while the owner was gone so long? If he just “blew off” his assignment, what do you imagine he did do, instead?

4. After hearing the tripe from the third servant, the master speaks.

*Matthew 25:26 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.*

5. The glaring problem that the master spots in his servant is that of wickedness. This is seen in both his actions and his attitude toward the master and his responsibilities.

a. The scripture is clear that we are rebels from God. We do not do what He tells us to do, and

b. We **won't** do what He commands us to do. The problem is a wicked willfulness

c. We are committed to do what we want, when we want, how we want, where we want, etc.

6. The second evidence of wickedness is how the servant thinks of his master. When he tries to excuse himself from his responsibilities he blames his behavior on what *he considers* an unscrupulous, unfair, and malevolent character of the master. He excuses himself while “character assassinating” his master.

*Matthew 25:28 '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.'*

7. Human nature is laid bare in this servant. In what way(s) do you relate to the third servant?

### **DAY 5: The heart of God revealed in the master**

1. While the third servant looked at his master as a ruthless scoundrel, the first two servants certainly didn't see him that way. And neither does Jesus, as portrayed in the master's dealings with the first two servants. His dealings with the first two servants tells us about the heart of God, God's purposes with us, and His long term goals and hopes for us.

2. The response of the master to the first two servants is identical. Both men doubled the investment. They were equally rewarded.

*Matthew 25:21(and v. 23) 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!'*

3. How would you characterize the *attitude(s)* of the master?

4. Jesus gives us five snapshots of the master. Next to each of them, expound on each of them:

a. “Well done” -

b. “good (servant)” -

c. “faithful (servant)” -

d. “I will put you in charge of many things” - (hint: think of reward and privilege earned)

e. “Come and share your master's happiness” -

5. Jesus is “pulling back the blanket” on God’s heart through the heart and character of the master. It is diametrically opposed to how the third servant **wanted** to see the master in order to justify himself.

6. What is your biggest takeaway from this parable?