

Lighthouse Bible Church

July 6th, 2014

‘Ready for Him, Working for Him’ *Scripture Reading: 2nd Peter 3: 1 - 13*
Matthew 25: 14 - 30

Stand – Read – Pray

We are going to take a break from the book of John this week so we can prepare our hearts, once again, as we come to the Lord’s table this morning.

Jesus had just finished sharing several parables dealing with His second coming. As a matter of fact, in **Matthew 24: 4 – 31** Jesus tells His disciples what things will be like before He returns to earth. *Brief overview*

Then He begins to share several parables dealing with the kingdom of heaven and His return. He shares ‘the Parable of the Fig Tree’, in Verses 32 – 35, showing that when the fig tree produces leaves you know that summer is near and so when you see all of the things I have told you, know that My coming is near.

He tells them next that no one knows the day or the hour but everything will be like it was in the days of Noah in verses 36 – 44. Then in Verses 45 – 51 Jesus gives them an analogy of two servants, the faithful and the evil, which represent believers and unbelievers, and their response to the promise of the return of Christ, represented by the Master.

Then in Chapter 25 Jesus gives the ‘Parable of the Ten Virgins’; five were wise and five were foolish. The wise virgins took oil for their lamps and the foolish did not. The parable of the 10 virgins shows the readiness and waiting of the 5 for the bridegroom, which, again is Christ and His return.

Then we have the ‘Parable of the Servants and Talents’ in our passage here that shows the readiness and waiting of two of the three that had received talents, but also what they did with those talents while they were waiting.

Both of those attitudes are to be present in the life of every Christian, even today. We are to be ready and waiting for Him and look forward with anticipation to His return, and yet we are to continue working for Him and serving Him and not sitting back doing nothing.

You have those today who, like some of the false prophets, are setting dates for His return and they are selling everything and just waiting for it to happen. Then you have those like in **2nd Peter 3: 4** says **where is the promise of His coming, all things continue as they always have..**

This parable in Matthew 25 gives us a good balance of watching and waiting and yet working and serving until the time comes. And if you think about that as it applies to the Lord’s table; we are to eat the bread and drink the cup, as an act of worship and service to Him. We are to proclaim the Lord’s death, as an act of sharing the gospel; and we do all of this ‘until the Lord comes’. So Let’s look briefly at it before we come to the Lord’s table.

Verse 14: for the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country who called his own servants and delivered his good to them.

By the way, like the parable of the 10 virgins, this parable too is a depiction of believers and unbelievers who are both identified with Christ. It is about those genuine converts of Christ and those false converts that are being compared here and what they are doing with what they have been given.

This **man**, left for a **far country** which sometimes land owners would do and would leave their goods entrusted to certain people while he was away. This man represents Christ here and His ascension after His death leaving this earth for a time.

His own servants would be those slaves that he knew well enough to entrust certain of his goods too. His own servants, represent all who have identified themselves with Christ, whether believers or unbelievers.

Verse 15: and to one he gave five talents to another two and to another one, to each one according to his own ability.

When He talks about ‘talents’ here He is talking about money, in particular, as a measure of weight. For instance; one talent may equal 60 minas or 3000 shekels. The weight of a talent is about 75 to 100 pounds. But for purposes of the parable, a talent here represents the responsibility given to each one of the people, some given more than others.

Notice that these talents were **given according to his own ability**. In other words, the Master, in this case Christ, knows His servants well enough to know what responsibility they can handle. That is why He gives us the spiritual gifts and ministries that He does and why He expects us to use them to produce more.

The rest of the parable deals with what each slave, each person does with what they have been given. The desire of two of them is to please his master by investing and **trading** what was given so as to please his master on his return. The idea of the first two is that it was not a one time trade but an ongoing trading to gain more for their master. They took full advantage of the resources the master had given them.

That is the way we are as we wait for our Master, the Lord Jesus to return. We are constantly using what He has given us to gain more, produce more fruit as it were, for His kingdom. To take full advantage of what He has given us by way of gifts and abilities and fruits of the Spirit and people in our lives and opportunities He gives us. And, by the way, we do it at different times and in different ways and with differing results, some more than others, but results none the less. One gained 5 talents and one gained 2 talents more.

Verse 18 says but he who had received one, went and dug in the ground and hid his lord's money.

It was common in that day to bury valuables in the ground; they had no vaults or safe's to put money or possessions into. You see that in **Matthew 13: 44** with the Parable of the Hidden treasure in a field.

But to hide your resources in the ground is not good business sense, because it will do nothing, it will gain nothing, there would be no profit. He was given the talent to use wisely for his master. Although he had less than the other two, he still had a responsibility and obligation to use what was given to him for the maximum benefit; and he didn't do that.

Verse 19: after a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

At an unexpected time, after a long time, the master came back to **settle** His **accounts**. And of course, this is talking about the 2nd coming of Christ back to earth; to settle His accounts *sheep – goat, gathering elect – destroying ..*

Verses 20 & 22: He talks with the first two servants who tell him **Lord you delivered to me five talents and two talents and I have gained five more talents besides them and I have gained two more besides them.**

They did exactly what their master expected them to do. They were obedient to their master's commands and with the right attitude of desiring to please him while doing it and while waiting for him to return.

And the masters response to both of them in **Verses 21 & 23** is the same; **well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.**

The master commends the two for their faithful actions and attitude and service in what was entrusted to them. And the reward for their faithfulness will be **entering into the joy of the Lord.** An eternal divine joy because they are in the presence of the Lord where there is no more sin, no more pain, no more death, no more tears as **Revelation 21 – 22** talks about.

And He says their will be an increased responsibility in proportion to their faithfulness on earth. They were faithful over a few things, relatively speaking, so He will **make them rulers over many things.**

This is talking about the millennial kingdom; the time when Jesus comes back to this earth, **Revelation 19: 11 – 21, Matthew 25: 31 – 46, Zechariah 14** and many other places. *Rapture and remaining people.*

Verses 24 – 28 then deal with the third servant who did nothing with what he was given. He said **Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where You have not scattered seed and I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.**

This masters servant is telling his master that he is not merciful but **hard**, tough, fierce, severe or harsh. He is also telling him that he is dishonest by saying **you reap where you didn't sow and gathered where you did not scatter seed**. In other words, you are taking from someone else.

This is the professing believer who views God as distant, uncaring, unmerciful; because he does not know God. This is the person who justifies themselves at God's expense by demeaning and degrading God. It just shows how little they know about their master's character and about the master himself.

This is the unregenerate person who has no spiritual fruit in their life and no spiritual worship in their heart and is blinded to the Lord's kindness, grace, mercy, compassion, and has never surrendered their life to Him. His view of God is skewed because his unregenerate heart can only see God through the lens of his own depravity. *People today have skewed view of God.*

In **Verse 26** the servant is described as **wicked and lazy**. And in **Verse 27** the master says **you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed so you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.**

The master is really saying, 'if I reap where I had not sown, as you say, if I gather where I have not scattered, as you say, which I haven't, then why didn't you take my money and put it into the bank and get me some interest.'

The Roman Empire had a banking system that you could deposit money into and gain interest from. The master is saying 'the least you could have done was give my one talent to the bankers and made me a little interest on it.'

The fact that he did nothing with what was given him and made no attempt, even something as easy as taking the money to the banker to get interest, shows his irresponsibility and indifference and lack of concern for his master and his lack of concern or readiness for his return and the accountability that return entailed.

The master is in essence saying ‘listen, if you think that I demand a return on that which I did not sow or scatter, then how much more do you think I would demand a return on that which is mine. Did you not think that I would demand more of that which belongs to me?’

The difference between the first two servants and the last was that the first two used their opportunity to serve Christ before His return, which they did eagerly while waiting for Him to return. The third servant put aside what God had given him with no thought about serving Him but serving himself.

Those kinds of servants represent people in the churches of today. Those who are using what God has given them for His glory, all the while looking for and hastening the day of His return as **2nd Peter 3: 12** says. Bearing fruit and being used to further His kingdom.

And there are those who profess faith in Christ and may even do some works for Him but are spiritually unproductive because it comes from a heart devoid of His Spirit and thus are lawless deeds that have no value as **Matthew 7: 21 – 23** says. These servants are like the wheat and the tares that grow together until the harvest.

So **Verses 28 - 29** the master says **take the talent from him and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.**

Jesus said a similar thing in **Matthew 13: 11 – 12** He said **because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given and he will have abundance but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.**

Those who are true born again believers and followers of Christ who are awaiting His return and producing spiritual fruit for His kingdom will be given even more opportunities to bear more fruit.

Those who are just professing believers that bear no fruit and are unproductive in their life will have whatever blessing they could have had given to others who will experience those blessing of true heart felt spirit filled service for God.

The fate that awaits those who profess to be Christians but don't possess His Spirit because they have never been born again, is seen in Verse 30.

Verse 30: and cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Only God knows the hearts of those who are true servants of His and those who are **unprofitable** or worthless. Those who are Christ's enter into the joy of the Lord in heaven and those who are not are cast **into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Outer darkness is a common description of hell as seen in **Matthew 8: 12, Matthew 22: 13.** It is the place where no light dwells, and of course **God is light and in Him is no darkness** as **1st John 1: 5** says.

And the result of being in that place of torment is commonly described vividly as **weeping and gnashing of teeth** as seen in **Matthew 8: 12, 22: 13, 24: 51** and **Luke 13: 28**

Revelation 14: 10 describes this place as being **tormented with fire and brimstone forever and ever**. **Revelation 20: 10** describes it as **the lake of fire and brimstone ... where they will be tormented day and night forever and ever**.

And that passage goes on in **Revelation 20: 15** to say that **anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire**.

The only way your name is written in the Lambs Book of Life is when you repent of your sin and put your faith and trust in Christ alone to save you from the penalty of your sin, which is death and hell, and use what He has given you in service for His glory as you anxiously await His soon return.

Where are you today? Are you the possessor of faith like the first two servants because you know Him and He knows and love you, or are you a professor of faith that claims to know Him but He does not know you because your heart is empty and sinful.

When we come to this table, we do so looking forward with anticipation to His return and we are ready for it, like the 5 virgins were with their oil. We also come to this table, not only looking forward to His return but serving Him and bearing fruit for His kingdom until He does return.

As we approach this table, in light of His soon return, it ought to motivate us to be spiritually alert, be missionary minded, be willing to forgive and ask for forgiveness and in the midst of suffering, rest in the hope of His return.

Approach the Lord's Table

Lighthouse Bible Church
July 2nd, 2014
Matthew 25: 14 - 30
‘Ready for Him, Working for Him’

Introduction:

Matthew 24: 4 – 31, 2nd Peter 3: 4

The Parable of the Servants and Talents:

What the Kingdom of Heaven is like	
The Man (master)	Jesus
Far Country	Heaven
Goods/Talents	Gifts, Service, Ministry
Faithful Servants	Believers
Unprofitable Servant	Unbeliever
The Lord of the servants came	Jesus’ return
Few things	Faithful service
Many things	Rewards/responsibilities
Joy of the Lord	Mill. Kingdom / Heaven
Outer Darkness	Eternal pain / Hell

Matthew 13: 44, Revelation 21 – 22, 19: 11 – 21
Matthew 25: 31 – 46, Zechariah 14, 2nd Peter 3: 12
Matthew 7: 21 – 23, 13: 11 – 12, 8: 12, 22: 13, 24: 51
1st John 1: 5, Luke 13: 28, Revelation 20: 10, 15

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