

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz Production
Week 22

Joseph Smith Matthew 1; Matthew 24-25, Mark 12-13, Luke 21

At the end of Matthew 24 Jesus says this:

“44 Therefore be ye also **ready**: for in such an **hour as ye think not** the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:44)

A lot of what we are going to study this week has to do with the end of times. It can seem like doom and gloom. It might make you want to run for the hills and build a bunker.

However, for those with faith and trust in God this is a very exciting time. Because, this hour is near and the Son of God is going to come in glory and it is going to be magnificent.

To help us prepare Jesus shares 3 parables. They all lead to one very important point which is for us to be ready for His coming. I would like to focus on the parable of the talents for our time today because I believe it teaches a very important lesson that we might sometimes overlook:

This is how it starts:

Jesus says: “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man traveling into a far country.” (Matt 25:14) Before he leaves he calls his 3 servants together and gives them each a certain number of Talents. Now, it's important to understand what a talent is. It is not talking about a talent referring to a skill or ability. I have heard many teach and even lecture using this parable as their ammo to get someone to do something. Saying something similar to: If you don't join the choir and share your voice which is a talent that God gave you He is going to take it away. Let's be very clear that this is NOT what Jesus intended with this parable. We know that because if we jump down to verse 30 Jesus says:

“30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

So, if we used this parable to get someone to use their talents we are saying that if they chose not to they are going to Hell. If they don't choose to sing in choir they are going to be cast into outer darkness. Which is not what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is about. It even seems silly when we think about it. Not to worry though, we are going to uncover what Jesus means in this parable.

A talent in the times of Christ was a large sum of money. Money in that day was measured in weight. And a talent was about 75 pounds of gold. Or, about 20 years of an average man's wages. That's a pretty big deal. Depending on your economical status we could assume it is about \$1-\$2 millions dollars in our day. For the sake of easy math lets say that 1 talent is equal to \$1 Million dollars.

To the first servant the Master gave 5 talents. Or \$5 million dollars. To the second man 2 talents, and to the last servant 1 talent.

Now, We may look at this and say that it is unfair. Why didn't he just divide the 8 talents evenly among his servants, why such a difference in these servants. Well, if we take a very close look we can see that each servant was given an amount according to their several abilities. (Matt 25:15) If we consider what we would do in this situation. If you were to divide your wealth among investors that showed a history of very different returns you would probably make a similar choice. The reality is that this Master is showing grace and compassion for his servants that he knows so well. If he were to give a huge amount of money to someone that didn't know what to do with it, it would actually be a detriment to that servant. So in this case the master is being very kind and loving by giving what he has to accordance with what his servants are able to bear.

So the Master leaves, and the two servants go and do as the master asks them to do. The first went and used the money to gain an additional five talents. The second servant did the same and turned his two talents into four talents. But, the third servant took the money and buried it in the ground. Meaning he wanted to keep it safe and not expose the master's money to risk or the opportunity to lose it.

Now, let's pause here a second and look at why these 3 servants did very different things with the Masters' money.

It doesn't tell us how the servants were feeling. Was the first guy with 5 million dollars terrified that he would make a mistake and possibly lose the Masters money? I would think that it would be safe to say that, sure he was a little nervous. I certainly would be. I think that if I was entrusted with any amount of money I may have the same thoughts as the third servant and just hope to keep it safe and return it whole to him that gave me the money.

But it is clear that that was not the Master's intention when he returns to reckon with his servants.

“20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou **deliveredst** unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful **servant**: thou hast been **faithful** over a few things, I will make thee **ruler** over many things: enter thou into the **joy** of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and **faithful** servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (Matt 25:20-23)

Notice that the Master doesn't take the talents back from the servants. That is a clue to what Jesus is referring to in this parable. All the Masters wanted to know was what they had done with the money. It was never his intention to take the money back with interest. That realization will change how we look at the beginning of this story. It also helps us realize our relationship with everything that we own. Sure we may have many earthly goods, you may be wealthy or you may have only a little. In either case just as in this parable, they all belong to the Master. It is not important to Him how much you have, only what you do with it. Just as in the story of the Widow's mite. Do you remember what Jesus said about this woman?

“He said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.” (Luke 21:3-4)

The amount of our possession is relevant to God. What is truly important is what we do with them. That is lesson number one from the parable of the talents.

Lesson number two is found in the response to this last unfaithful servant:

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an **hard** man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was **afraid**, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine. (It's important to understand here that this servant really didn't know the Master. Maybe he was new or maybe it was so self centered that he didn't care to understand who it was that he served. In either case it is clear that this man was essentially a stranger to the Master.)

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and **slothful** servant, thou knewest that I **reap** where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

(this comment is not an admission of those character traits that the faithless servant assumed, what the Master is saying here is that; if you thought those things about me then why did you do what you did. If you thought I was one to be feared why didn't you do as the other servants)

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with **usury**. (Or interest)

28 Take therefore the **talent** from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be **given**, and he shall have **abundance**: but from him that hath not shall be **taken** away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt 25:24-30)

Now we may look at this and assume that this is unfair. At least until we understand what is the Talent that Jesus is referring to in this parable. Obviously it isn't about money or skill or abilities.

What is the most precious gift that God has given us that He wants us to go out and multiply. What is the number one most important thing that we have that we should never bury or hide? What is it, that God will want a reckoning for as you stand before His judgment seat at the last days?

It is the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The most precious of all gifts! God will not tolerate any who buries or hides that gift, which cost so much and which He gave so freely.

The Atonement of Jesus Christ is meant to be shared and multiplied a hundred fold. It is what God expects us to reckon at the end of our life. Were you afraid to talk about Jesus with your friends? Scared that they may judge you and not want to be friends with you? We can focus on the punishments of burying the gift of the atonement, but what is more magnificent is the word of Jesus to those who share His gift:

“His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful **servant**: thou hast been **faithful** over a few things, I will make thee **ruler** over many things: enter thou into the **joy** of thy lord.” (Matt 25:21)

What is the Joy of the Lord? It is the peace and gladness of heart that comes from knowing the only True God and our beloved Savior, and being filled with the Holy spirit. When we receive that joy there is nothing that could ever compare.

So as we study this parable this week, I pray that we may receive the revelation that will show us how we can share the gift of the atonement with others who are prepared to receive the Savior in their lives.

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.