

LIFE ILLUSTRATED: HIDDEN TALENTS?

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- A master at teaching with parables, Jesus spoke about 35% of his recorded words in parables. So Christ's parables were more than just illustrations for his preaching, they were his preaching to a great extent. Their purpose was to focus the listener on God and his kingdom..
- *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.."* John 15:11
- The chance to learn from Him and to live like this is the opportunity of a lifetime, so I build my life around what he says. I won't miss this chance."
- But the truth is it comes down to more than talk – it comes down to the walk – to actually doing it and when we are faced with why we didn't actually do it we think we can worm our way or charm our way or excuse or way out of it.
- But there is one before whom the Bible says we will all stand, every one of us. This one is loving and holy and gracious and just, but he intends for us to understand that we really will give an account of our lives to Him and there will be no room for excuses.

A. The Master Giver

- *"Again, it (the Kingdom of Heaven) will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 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."* Matthew 25:14-15
- Talent is:
 - In Jesus day: One talent was equivalent to 20 years worth of wages.
 - In our day: anything that God has given to me and entrusted to my care.
 - Your mind, your talents, your gifts, your body, your money, your will, a church to be a part of, the gift of Scripture, the gift of salvation...
- *"The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."* Matthew 25:16-18
- **This is a parable about the kingdom of God.** Jesus comes and says, "The kingdom of God is now accessible. Act now. Walk right in!"
- *"We each have been given different gifts according to the grace given us."* Rom. 12:6
 - Note:
 - There are no "no-talent" people in this story.
 - All talents given by God.
 - Comparing my talents with anyone will only make me miserable.

B. The Master Accountant

- *"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them."* Matthew 25:19
- *"So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God."* Romans 14:12
- There is an inescapable truth conveyed here that The Master Accountant is coming back, and he is going to settle accounts with every investor, all of us.
- *"The man who had received the five talents brought another five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' 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!'"* Matthew 25:20-21
- *"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.' 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!" Matthew 25:22-23

- Note:
 - The results are different but because they gave it their best, gave it 100% which incidentally matches their returns - their reward is treated the same.
- *"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. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'* Matthew 25:24-25
- *I was afraid of you:* Three kinds of buried fear will prevent you from becoming all that God wants you to be:
 - 1. Self-Doubt
 - 2. Self-Pity
 - 3. Self-Consciousness. *"The fear of man lays a snare."* Proverbs 29:25
- B-Lame [be lame] excuses,
- *"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? 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.'" Matthew 25:26-27*
 - You may get away with giving excuses to your boss, your parents, your pastor but do not think that you can get away with giving excuses to God. It will not work. And that is graphically illustrated in this parable for this servant does not hear the words well done but rather...
- *"Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 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. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* Matthew 25:28-30
- *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."* Hebrews 11:6
 - God would rather have you try to serve Him and blow it, than not even make an effort. In other words it's much better that you attempt something great and fail than attempt nothing and succeed."
- *"Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise."* Philippians 4:8
- *"The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need."* Psalm 23:1
- *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."* Galatians 6:7
- What if each of us accepted the gift of salvation from the Master and then identified the talents He gives to each of us, cultivated them with relentless perseverance, deployed them with unstoppable vigor, submitted them with sacrificial humility, celebrated them with raucous joy?
- Investing all you have in the kingdom of God is the greatest opportunity we will ever know.
- Assess your own life, what has the Master Giver given to you that He expects you to invest in the kingdom?

C. Master Rewarder

- *"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!"* Matthew 25:23
 - 1. Affirmation: *"Well done, good and faithful servant"*
 - 2. Promotion: *"I'll put you in charge of many things."*
 - 3. Celebration: *"Come and share your master's happiness"*
- *You have been faithful with **a few things**; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"* Matthew 25:23
 - Jesus' audience knows that the master had given the two servants each an enormous amount of wealth - more than anybody listening to this parable had ever dreamt about. To the one – at least 100 years worth of income!

- The master says, "*You have been faithful.*" *In a few things?*" It doesn't even compare to what's coming next for you. You're going to partner together with me in the work that I perfectly made you for in the first place."
- God's issued you an engraved invitation to the party written on the palms of His Son and it has your name on it. It's yours to accept and open today. Let's go for it!!