

## Episode #925 – Matthew 25 Part 3-The Useless Servant

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. The Lord was telling a parable about the second coming regarding a master traveling to a far country who left money in the responsibility of his servants.

III. Parable of the Slaves and the Talents. Matthew 25:14-30.

- A. Verse 23. Anyone who knows the character of God’s work in the dispensation of grace knows that this is not truth for today. The Lord did not give me five talents or two talents or one talent, or any talents at all. Some in talking of this parable speak of God giving us “talents and abilities,” as if this coincidence of language that makes us speak of “talents” as abilities we all have is relevant to this parable. But talents here, the Greek *talenton*, is a unit of money, something they could barter and trade with and gain more. When God’s kingdom comes, God will give men things that will be committed to them to work with. These might include dominions over certain groups of people, or responsibility for teaching certain people, or the care of certain holy things, etc. Yet this is not truth for the dispensation of grace. We can see this even more when we come to the one who had the one talent: this is all about the servant in Israel of Matthew, not the believer in Christ of Ephesians and today.
- B. Verse 24. “Came” is *proserchomai*, approached again. This was this slave’s assessment of his master, and his own opinion of him. It apparently was the excuse he gave himself for his neglectful behavior toward his trust. “Hard” means harsh or difficult. One who truly reaped where he did not sow, and who gathered where he had not scattered seed, would be a thief, taking what truly belongs to others. He accuses his master of being a crook!
- C. Verse 25. Many claim to be afraid of God. They fear that He is a harsh and demanding God, but the result often is, as here, that they do not serve Him! If He truly were so harsh, would one not be afraid NOT to serve Him? But true love is always the right and better motivation to service, not fear! Too often the claim to being afraid of God is the excuse for simply serving oneself and wasting what He has given. This servant failed in his trust, and then blamed his master for it as if it was his fault! He receives his own back unchanged. Notice that the servant wasted his ability. The lord had entrusted him with a talent, indicating he thought he had the ability to gain with this talent. The servant gained nothing. The problem was not that he gained too little, or that he had no ability. The problem was he did not even try. He wasted his opportunity, the responsibility his lord gave him, and the chance to use what he had been entrusted with.
- D. Verse 26. “Wicked” is *poneros*, bad in nature. Bullinger says one full of labors and pains in working mischief, and evil intent. “Servant” is again *doulos* or slave. He repeats his words back to him, without necessarily admitting to the truth of them.
- E. Verse 27. “Money” is *argurion*, literally “silver.” We might say these “bankers” were loan agents. Bullinger says their name came from the counters or tables at which they sat. “Coming” again is the Greek *erchomai*, indicating a true coming. “Interest” is literally “offspring,” for the money generates more money or “breeds money.”

Hebrews were forbidden to take interest from fellow Hebrews, but could take it from foreigners.

- F. Verse 28. “Take” is the word used in Matthew 24:39, when the flood came and took them all away, *airo*. It is not the word *lambano* or receive. Thus the one who was most faithful gains from what is taken from the one who was unfaithful. God’s rewards will be given, but who will receive and who will forfeit is not determined. Yet the rewards given will be the same. Of course, this applies to the servant of Matthew again, and not necessarily those in Christ today.
- G. Verse 29. “Abundance” means abounding or excess. The same word is used for the twelve baskets left over after the feeding of the five thousand. “Taken” is *airo* again, meaning snatched away.
- H. Verse 30. The “unprofitable” is useless. This has nothing at all to do with salvation or one’s relationship with Jesus Christ. It is not telling us that our future place will depend on just how much we produce for God. Those who would apply this to the dispensation of grace are very mistaken. This has to do with how men served in the kingdom of God, and particularly during the time of testing and the revolt against the kingdom. “Outer darkness” is literally the darkness, the outer (one), the third and last time this phrase occurs. This does not mean the lake of fire, for who ever heard of “dark fire”? This refers to being cast out of the kingdom, which, since the kingdom will be worldwide, can only be by casting into the darkness of death. The point is being cast out of the kingdom into the grave. “There” means not at that time, but in that place. Yet this does not refer to a “place” called hell, but to the place where this punishment will be sentenced and administered. They will be sentenced, they will weep and gnash their teeth, and they will die, all in the same place. “Weeping and gnashing of teeth” means great sorrow and regret, or repudiation of the righteous sentence cast against them. The wicked still refuse to yield.

#### IV. The Sheep and Goat Nations. Matthew 25:31-46.

- A. Verse 31. Now the Lord goes from the telling of a parable illustrating a truth to telling about an actual, future event and what will take place then. The “Son of Man” means, of course, Christ Himself. “Comes” is the Greek *erchomai*, the word for a coming. The word “holy” appears first, emphasizing it, His HOLY angels. He comes in glory and sits on the throne of His glory. He does not empty Himself when He comes this time!

V. Conclusion: The wicked and lazy servant pretended to think his master was a harsh crook, but his actions did not match up with this. We all know people who use the excuse of a harsh view of God to justify not serving Him, yet this is a shallow excuse. We ought to realize the glorious reality of God, and that He is worth serving. This is an illustration of servants in God’s household, not believers in Christ today. Yet we too should take the lesson that God would want us to use the opportunities and abilities we have to serve Him as best we can. Let us not squander the time and chances that we have.