THE PARABLE OF THE BAGS OF GOLD (TALENTS)

Matthew 25:14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them."

The focus of this parable is not on the unexpectedness of the Master's return, but on the evaluation of what we have done with what the Master has given us.

The Giving of the Bags of Gold

Matthew 25:15 "To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey."

"Bags of gold" translates the Greek word *"talanton"* which is usually translated "talent." It was a sum of money worth 15-20 years of a day laborer's wage.

The amount given varied according to the recipient's ability.

What Each One Did with What He Was Given

Matthew 25:16-18 "The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money."

"His master's money." Verse 25, "See, here is what belongs to you."

The Commendation of the First Servant

Matthew 25:19-21 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. 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!' "

The Commendation of the Second Servant

Matthew 25:22&23 "The man with the two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; 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 in your master's happiness!' "

Notice that the commendation and reward of the first two servants are identical.

The Condemnation of the Third Servant

Matthew 25:24&25 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I know 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 gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you."

Notice that other than the effort required to bury the gold, the gold given to the third servant did not change his life in the least.

Matthew 25:26-28 "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. So take the bag of gold from him and give it the one who has ten bags.'"

Whether the third servant actually thought this, or it was just the best excuse he could come up with, it is obvious he did not have a love relationship with the master.

Understanding the Underlying Principle

Matthew 25:29 "For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Matthew 13:10-12 The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Mark 4:10-12 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!' "

Mark 4:25 "Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

Luke 8:18 "Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them."

Luke 19:26 "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away."

The one who has a relationship with Christ will receive more, the one who does not have a relationship with Christ will lose everything. Going back to the parable of the ten virgins, the one who has the Spirit will go to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the one who does not have the Spirit will be shut out.

Matthew 25:30 " 'And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "

In the parable of the ten virgins, the foolish virgins thought they were ready, but they were not. The foolish virgins did not have oil, which symbolizes the Spirit. The lazy, wicked slave made a show of accepting what the master offered, but really did not want it and buried it, probably as soon as possible.

Things to Remember

Everyone of us will give an account of what we have done with what God has given us.

It is not how much we have done, but how faithful we have been with what we were given that will be evaluated.

From last week: Unto whom much is given, of him will much be required. (Luke 12:48)

In the parables of Jesus, it is the sphere of profession, as in the parable about the different kinds of soil and in the parable about the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13, that is being talked about.

There will be those who have made a public profession of accepting what God wants to give who in reality did and do not want what God is offering. They will "bury" it and it will not affect their life in any meaningful way. A public profession that changes nothing does not change a person's eternal destiny.