

INTRODUCTION: Chapter 24 is a difficult passage to interpret. A few more reminders from chapter 24.

- It will be like the days of Noah.
- One will be taken in judgement, as in the days of Noah, vs. 39, “**the flood came and took them away.**”
- No one knows when the thief will come, if you did then you would not have been away.
- An hour you do not expect, be ready if He comes sooner or later than you expect.

As we consider these things, many of us are likely just living as in the days of Noah. Consumed with everyday things and not concerned about fearing God and His judgment nor His holiness. Not concerned about standing before Him at any moment.

POINT 1 - THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS (VS. 1-13)

The overall point of this parable is for you to be ready at all times. Even if He doesn't come today or tomorrow, don't stop looking. The context of this parable was easily understood at the time. According to John MacArthur's commentary concerning the bridesmaids, “**The wedding would begin at the bride's house when the bridegroom arrived to observe the wedding ritual. Then a procession would follow as the bridegroom took the bride to his house for the completion of festivities. For a night wedding lamps which were actually torches, were needed for the procession.**”¹

1A - Five were wise, five were foolish. The foolish ones took lamps, but no oil. What good is a lamp with no oil? What good is a car with no engine? What could they be thinking? That they would have time to prepare once they knew the bridegroom was coming. Maybe you are waiting on the right moment to “decide” or the right time. You may have the lamp and the external righteousness, but any atoning blood?

Application of this parable: you can't borrow oil from another. You can't make it right when the bridegroom has come. The thrust of this parable is vs. 10. The shutting of the door is significant because when the Lord shuts the door no one can open. When Noah entered the ark, Genesis 7:16, “**And the Lord shut him in.**”

1B - Let's not overlook this statement. When the bridegroom seemed to take longer (vs. 5) they “**got drowsy and began to sleep**” or as the authorized translates it “**slumbered and slept.**” We all know the saying referring to someone not paying attention, “asleep at the wheel.” Can we say that this is a major issue within the church today...a comfortable position with God? In other words, we feel no need to fear Him or please Him or give holy honor to Him. I have said before, I think one of the greatest dangers we face today in the church is the lack of discernment. We think God operates

¹ The MacArthur Study Bible; Revised and Updated; pp. 1441

based off our desires and thoughts. Lack of discernment brings about a glossy spiritual eye and isn't concerned about pending judgment.

POINT 2 - THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS (VS. 14-30)

The parable of the talents illustrates the tragedy of missed opportunity.² We can outline this parable as the one who goes on a journey is Christ, and the servants are those professing believers who have different levels of faithfulness, but one is unmasked as a hypocrite.

- One was given five, two and one
- The accounting of what they were given

The illustration is that judgment is coming for what you have been given to manage and do. A talent (at the time) was worth about 15 years of wages. Overall we can say this parable suggest to those that are faithful will be faithful to some degree. A talent was a considerable sum of money. It is estimated a talent was about 15 years of wages.

2A - The one with five returned five more and the one with two returned two more. However, the one with one talent buried his. **Those that have so much work to do, as every Christian has, need to set about it quickly, and lose not time.**³ Cf. Ephesians 5:15-17, **“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is”**. As Christians we want to make much of Christ. We want to make Him known.

It seems from our text he knew (the one with just one talent) about his master but did not know him. He did acknowledge him as a hard man (vs. 26). The response was if you truly knew me you would have at least put the money in the bank.

2B - I want to break down this parable and explore it in some detail. First, there is a day of accounting, 1 Peter 4:5, **“but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”** You will not escape a holy, righteous, sovereign God. A seemingly correct theme in this parable is all will give an account. You may think you will have time to get your account settled before the bridegroom comes...but.

2C - Concerning the two faithful servants. Matthew Henry makes this comments, **“For the truth is, the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for making use of us, and enabling us, for his service.”** The faithful servant produces evidence of faithfulness. James 3:13, **“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of**

² The MacArthur Study Bible; Revised and Updated; pp. 1441

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_025.cfm

wisdom.” What will be obvious to those around you is what you do, is it for the glory of self or God? It is true that if we are “careful” in our walk, our works, which are based upon us knowing God, will follow us, Revelation 14:13, “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on! Yes, says the Spirit, so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.” It’s not our own works we are bragging on nor our own efforts, but because we are His we want to be faithful to Him, 1 John 4:17, “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.” See the implication? Because we are His, we will be faithful to do His works and obey His law.

2D - The one who had two talents used what he had and was faithful in that. He didn’t seem concerned with the one who had five or one. Matthew Henry again comments, “For our comfort, in the day of account, will be according to our faithfulness, not according to our usefulness; our sincerity, not our success.”⁴

POINT 3 - THE REWARD OF THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS

The words of reward, “well done, good and faithful servant.”⁵ These words and our faithfulness to our King aren’t something we are doing to elevate ourselves, but so that others may see our great and glorious God! This is the point of 1 Peter 1:7 (which is written to scattered and persecuted believers), “So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” When your neighbors condemn you, mock you, when the world laughs and scorns, but for the words which we long to hear, well done.

What we have been given, recipients of divine grace and salvation, more will be given. In other words, the blessings of God are immeasurable as a child of God. Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Do not try to interpret this as material things as the prosperity gospel does, the blessings of eternal life, joy, hope and everlasting eternity are ours.

POINT 4 - THE ACCOUNTING OF THE UNFAITHFUL SERVANT

Overall I believe this servant thought his account would do and pass well enough for the master. I suppose the same idea in the garden of Eden was used as well, for they made for themselves coverings. Romans 2:4 seems to cover this account well as Paul was dealing with the self-righteous Jews, “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”

⁴ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_025.cfm

⁵ ESV

4A - Let us take an overview of this servant. He acknowledged him as a hard man (vs. 24-25). He had some general knowledge but simply buried his talent instead of being faithful. You can have hard thoughts of God. You can acknowledge some sort of respect. But he buried this and continued to live his own life justifying himself. Knowing He was a hard master, he should have been more concerned with the day of accounting. **In the day of account, wicked and slothful servants will be left quite without excuse; frivolous pleas will be overruled, and every mouth will be stopped; and those who now stand so much upon their own justification will not have one word to say for themselves.**⁶

4B - The slothful servant is sentenced. Take the talent from him. We see in vs. 29, **“For to everyone who has more will be given”** is obviously a responsibility for us to be good and faithful to what God has given us. What we have been entrusted to care for we should be faithful to do so. And do so for our Lord. It seems the ones who have, that is divine saving grace, will have blessings and hope for eternal life and joy in the midst of trial, Romans 8:32, **“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”** But there are those who despise the goodness and mercy and riches of God’s grace. They bury them. Many cling to the things of this world. The hope in substance. John 12:25 is never more clear than here, **“he who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”**

Matthew Henry also comments, **“A slothful servant is a withered member in the body, a barren tree in the vineyard, an idle drone in the hive, he is good for nothing.”**⁷ In one sense we are all worthless and unprofitable, Job 22:2, **“Can a vigorous man be of use to God, Or a wise man be useful to himself?”** One final note: outer darkness represents the farthest from the light. And the weeping and gnashing of teeth is inconsolable grief and unremitting torment. Today is the day to be a faithful servant of the most high God. Don’t bury God’s immeasurable grace in the ground.

⁶ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_025.cfm

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