

# Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

## 25:14-30

by J.C. Ryle

### Transcript

The parable of the talents which we have now read is near akin to that of the ten virgins. Both direct our minds to the same important event: the second advent of Jesus Christ. Both bring before us the same persons: the members of the professing church of Christ. The virgins and the servants are one and the same people—but the same people regarded from a different point, and viewed on different sides. The practical lesson of each parable is the main point of difference: vigilance is the keynote of the first parable, diligence that of the second. The story of the virgins calls on the church to watch; the story of the talents calls on the church to work. We learn in the first place from this parable that all professing Christians have received something from God. We are all God's servants: we have all talents entrusted to our charge. The word "talents" is an expression that has been curiously turned aside from its original meaning. It is generally applied to none but people of remarkable ability or gifts: they are called "talented" people. Such a use of the expression is a mere modern invention. In the sense in which our Lord used the word in this parable, it applies to all baptized persons without distinction. We have all "talents" in God's sight: we are all talented people. Anything whereby we may glorify God is a "talent." Our gifts, our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our reason, our intellect, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of Christ's church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible—all, all are talents. Whence came these things? What hand bestowed them? Why are we what we are? Why are we not the worms that crawl on the earth? There is only one answer to these questions: all that we have is a loan from God: we are God's stewards; we are God's debtors. Let this thought sink deeply into our hearts. We learn in the second place that many make a bad use of the privileges and mercies they receive from God. We are told in the parable of one who "dug in the earth and hid his Lord's money." That man represents a large class of mankind. To hide our talent is to neglect opportunities of glorifying God, when we have them. The baptized Bible-despiser, the prayer-neglector and the Sabbath-breaker; the unbelieving, the sensual and the earthly-minded; the trifler, the thoughtless and the pleasure-seeker; the money-lover, the covetous and the self-indulgent—all, all are alike burying their Lord's money in the ground. They all have light that they do not use: they might all be better than they are. But they are all daily robbing God: he has lent them much, and they make him no return. The words of Daniel to Belshazzar are strictly applicable to every unconverted person: "The God in whose hand they breath is and whose are all thy ways hast thou not glorified." (i.e. Daniel 5:23 ). We learn in the third place that all professing Christians must one day have a reckoning with God. The parable tells us that after a long time the Lord of those servants came and reckoned with

there is not, them.ï»¿ There is a judgment before us all. Words have no meaning in the Bible: if there is none it is mere trifling with Scripture to deny it. There is a judgment before us according to our worksâ€”certain, strict and unavoidable. High or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, we shall all have to stand at the bar of God and receive our eternal sentence. There will be no escape: concealment will be impossible. We and God must at last meet face to face. We shall have to render an account of every privilege that was granted to us, and of every ray of light that we enjoyed; we shall find that we are dealt with as accountable and responsible creatures, and that to much is given, of them much will be required. Let us remember this every day we live: let us judge ourselves that we be not condemned of the Lord.(ï»¿ 1 Corinthians 2:31 ). We learn in the fourth place that true Christians will receive an abundant reward in the great day of reckoning. The parable tells us that the servants who had used their Lordâ€™s money well were commended as â€œgood and faithful,ï»¿ and told to â€œenter into the joy of their Lord!ï»¿ These words are full of comfort to all believers, and may well fill us with wonder and surprise. The best of Christians is a poor frail creature, and needs the blood of atonement every day that he lives; but the least and lowest of believers will find that he is counted among Christâ€™s servants, and that his labor has not been in vain in the Lord. He will discover to his amazement that his Masterâ€™s eye saw more beauty in his efforts to please him, than he ever saw himself; he will find that every hour spent in Christâ€™s service, and every word spoken on Christâ€™s behalf, has been written in a book of remembrance. Let believers remember these things and take courage. The cross may be heavy now, but the glorious reward will make up for all. Well says Leighton, â€œHere some drops of joy enter into us, but there we shall enter into joy.ï»¿ We learn in the last place that all unfruitful members of Christâ€™s church will be condemned and cast away in the day of judgment. The parable tells us that the servant who buried his masterâ€™s money was reminded that he â€œknewï»¿ his masterâ€™s character and requirements, and was therefore without excuse. It tells us that he was condemned as â€œwicked,ï»¿ â€œslothfulï»¿ and â€œunprofitableï»¿ , and â€œcast, into outer darkness.ï»¿ Our Lord adds the solemn words, â€œThere shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.ï»¿ There will be no excuse for an unconverted Christian at the last day. The reasons with which he now pretends to satisfy himself will prove useless and vain: the judge of all the earth will be found to have done right; the ruin of the lost soul will be found to be his own fault. Those words of our Lord, â€œthou knewest,ï»¿ are words that ought to ring loudly in many a manâ€™s ears, and prick him to the heart. Thousands are living at this day â€œwithout Christï»¿ and without conversion, and yet pretending that they cannot help it! And all this time they â€œknow,ï»¿ in their own conscience, that they are guilty. They are burying their talent: they are not doing what they can. Happy are they who find this out betimes! It will all come out at the last day. Let us leave this parable with a solemn determination, by Godâ€™s grace, never to be content with a profession of Christianity without practice. Let us not only talk about religion, but act; let us not only feel the importance of religion, but do something too. We are not told that the unprofitable servant was a murderer, or a thief, or even a waster of his Lordâ€™s money: but he did nothingâ€”and this was his ruin! Let us beware of a do-nothing Christianity: such Christianity does not come from the Spirit of God. â€œTo do no harm,ï»¿ says Baxter, â€œis the praise of a stone, not of a man.ï»¿

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