

Parable of the Pounds (Conclusion)

by J.C. Ryle

Christians are called to be 'doing' Christians, using their gifts and talents to glorify God and do His work on earth, always looking for His return.

Scripture: Luke 19:11

Topics: "Readiness for Christ's Return", "Faithful Service"

Description

J.C. Ryle emphasizes the urgent call for Christians to actively engage in their faith and responsibilities until Christ's return, as illustrated in the Parable of the Pounds. He stresses that believers are to be 'doers' of the Word, utilizing their God-given gifts and opportunities to glorify Him. Ryle warns against complacency and the danger of being unprepared for Christ's second coming, urging self-examination and readiness. He encourages those who are ready to continue striving in their faith and to use their talents for God's glory. Ultimately, Ryle invites those unprepared to seek reconciliation with Christ and to embrace the hope of the Gospel.

Transcript

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten pounds, and said to them, Occupy till I come." (Luke 19:11-13)

The third and last question I wish to consider is: What is the present duty of all Christ's professing disciples? When I speak of present duty, I mean, of course, their duty between the period of Christ's first and second advent. And I find an answer in the words of the nobleman to his servants: he "delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come."

Reader, I know few words more searching and impressive than these four: "Occupy till I come." They are spoken to all who profess and call themselves Christians. They ought to stir up all hearers of the Gospel to examine themselves whether they are in the faith, and to prove themselves. Listen to me for a few minutes while I try to impress them on your attention.

The Lord Jesus bids you "occupy." By that He means that you are to be "a doer" in your Christianity, and not merely a hearer and professor. He wants His servants not only to receive His wages, eat His bread, dwell in His house, and belong to His family, but also to do His work. You are to "let your light so shine

before men that they may see your good works." He has given each one of His people some opportunity of glorifying Him. Everyone has got his own sphere, the poorest as well as the richest. Everyone has an open door before him and may, if he will, show forth his Master's praise. Your bodily health and strength, your mental gifts and capacities, your money and your earthly possessions, your rank and position in life, your example and influence with others, your liberty to read the Bible and hear the Gospel, your plentiful supply of means of grace--all these are your "pounds." Oh, see to it that you pay out your Lord's money well and honestly! Take heed that you do not bury your pound!

But the Lord Jesus bids you also to "occupy till He comes." By that He means that you are to do His work on earth, like one who continually looks for His return. You are to be like the faithful servant, who knows not what hour his master may come home, but keeps all things in readiness and is always prepared. You are to be like one who knows that Christ's coming is the great reckoning day, and to be ready to render up your account at any moment.

How condemning are these words to thousands of professing Christians! What an utter absence of preparation appears in their daily walk and conversation! How thoroughly unfit are they to meet Christ! They know nothing of using the gifts of God as loans for which they must give account. They show not the slightest desire to glorify Him with "body and spirit which are His." They give no sign of readiness for the second advent. Old Gurnal has well said, "It may be written on the grave of every unconverted man, Here lies one who never did for God an hour's work." In a world like this, who can wonder if a minister often cries to his congregation, "Ye must be born again." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

How encouraging are these words to all who seek first the kingdom of God and love the Lord Christ in sincerity. What does it matter if the children of the world regard them as "righteous overmuch!" Those words, "Occupy till I come," are words which justify their conduct.

Let me conclude with a few words of general application. First, there is a word of solemn warning. A great change is yet to come on this world, and a change we ought to keep constantly before our mind's eye. That change is a change of MASTERS. That old rebel, the devil, and all his adherents shall be cast down. The Lord Jesus and all His saints shall be exalted and raised to honour. "The kingdom of this world" shall "become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." Sin shall no longer be made light of and palliated. Wickedness shall no longer go unpunished and unreprieved. Holiness shall become the general character of the inhabitants of the earth. There shall be no more Deism, Scepticism, or Infidelity. All nations shall do honour to the crucified Lamb of God; all men shall know Him, from the least to the greatest.

Second, let me draw from the whole subject a solemn question: Are you ready for the great change? Are you ready for the coming and kingdom of Christ? Every justified and converted man is ready, and if you are not ready, you are not a justified man. This is nothing more than the New Testament standard. The Apostles would have doubted the truth of your religion if you were not looking and longing for the coming of the Lord. The grand end of the Gospel is to prepare men to meet God. What has your Christianity done for you if it has not made you ready for the kingdom of Christ?

Let me offer an invitation to all readers who do not feel ready for Christ's return. That invitation shall be short and simple. I beseech you to know your danger and come to Christ without delay so that you may be pardoned, justified, and made ready for things to come. I entreat you this day to "flee from the wrath to come," to the hope set before you in the Gospel. I pray you in Christ's stead, to lay down enmity and

unbelief and to be this minute reconciled to God. Lay aside everything that stands between you and Christ. Find out the besetting sin that weighs you down and tear it from your heart, however dear it may be. Cry mightily to the Lord Jesus to reveal Himself to your soul. Rest not until you have a real, firm, and reasonable hope, and until know that your feet are on the Rock of Ages.

Last of all, let me draw from the subject an exhortation to all who know Christ indeed, and love His appearing. That exhortation is simply this: strive more and more to be a "doing" Christian. Labor more and more to show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into marvellous light. Improve every talent which the Lord Jesus has committed to your charge to the setting forth of His glory. Let your conformity to the mind of Christ be unquestionable and unmistakable. Let your holiness be a clear plain fact which even the worst enemies of the Gospel cannot deny. Never was there a greater mistake than to fancy that the doctrine of the personal return of Christ is calculated to paralyze Christian diligence. Surely there can be no greater spur to the servant's activity than the expectation of his master's speedy return.

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