

The Parable of the Lord and the Servant

by Julian of Norwich

The parable of the lord and the servant illustrates the lord's loving watchfulness and desire to reward his servant despite the servant's fall and suffering, teaching us the importance of understanding and taking heed to the qualities and conditions shown in the illustration.

Scripture: Psalm 103:13, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, Hebrews 6:10, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Gods Compassion", "Faithfulness"

Description

Julian of Norwich shares a vision where God reveals a mysterious illustration of a lord and his servant, symbolizing the relationship between God and His people. The servant, out of love and good will, eagerly follows the lord's commands but falls into deep distress. Despite the servant's suffering, the lord watches tenderly and desires to reward him for his faithfulness and willingness to serve. The vision serves as a reminder of God's compassion, faithfulness, and desire to bless His faithful servants, even in times of trial and suffering.

Transcript

Our gracious Lord answered in showing very mysteriously a wonderful illustration of a lord who has a servant, and He gave insight to my understanding of both of them....For the first was thus: I saw two persons in bodily form, that is to say, a lord and a servant; and with this God gave me spiritual understanding.

The lord sits solemnly in repose and in peace, the servant stands near, before his lord reverently, ready to do his will. The lord looks upon his servant most lovingly and sweetly, and humbly he sends him to a certain place to do his will.

The servant not only goes, but he suddenly leaps up and runs in great haste because of his love to do his lord's will. And immediately he falls into a deep pit and receives very great injury. Then he groans and moans and wails and writhes, but he cannot rise up nor help himself in any way.

In all this, the greatest misfortune that I saw him in was the lack of reassurance, for he could not turn his face to look back upon his loving lord (who was very near to him and in whom there is complete comfort), but like a man who was feeble and witless for the moment, he was intent on his suffering, and waited in woe....

...I watched deliberately to see if I could discover any failure in him, or if the lord would allot him any blame, and truly there was none seen--for only his good will and his great desire were the cause of his falling, and he was as willing and as good inwardly as when he stood before his lord ready to do his will.

And in the same way his loving lord constantly watched him most tenderly....

Then says this gracious lord in his meaning: "Behold, behold, my beloved servant! What harm and distress he has received in my service for my love, yea, and because of his good will! Is it not reasonable that I reward him for his fright and his dread, his hurt and his wounds and all his woe? And not only this, but does it not fall to me to give a gift that is to him better and more honorable than his own health would have been?"

....The wonder of the illustration never went from me; for it seemed to me it was given me as an answer to my desire, and yet I could not perceive in it a full interpretation for my comfort at that time....

Twenty years after the time of the showing (short three months) I received inner teaching, as I shall say: "It is right for thee to take heed to all the qualities and conditions that were shown in the illustration even though thou thinkest that they are obscure and uninteresting to your sight."

I assented willingly with great desire, looking inwardly with deliberation at all the points and aspects that were shown at the previous time....

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/julian-of-norwich/the-parable-of-the-lord-and-the-servant/>

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