

Message Nine

Being Faithful in Service

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:14-30

I. The Lord likened Himself to a man going abroad (into the heavens) and delivering to his slaves his possessions—Matt. 25:14:

- A. Slaves signify believers viewed from the aspect of service—1 Cor. 7:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1; James 1:1; Rom. 1:1.
- B. *His possessions* signifies the church (Eph. 1:18) with all the believers, who constitute God's household—Matt. 24:45.

II. To one of his slaves he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to each according to his own ability—25:15:

- A. A talent, the largest unit of weight, was worth 6,000 denarii; the denarius was the chief silver coin of the Romans; it was considered good pay for a day's labor—cf. Matt. 20:2.
- B. Talents signify spiritual gifts (spiritual skills and abilities)—Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6.
- C. All the members of the Body of Christ are gifted, and all are gifts—Rom. 12:6a; Eph. 4:7-8.
- D. The filling of the Spirit in life enables us to use the spiritual gift in service (work), and the spiritual gift in service matches the filling of the Spirit in life, that we may be a perfect member of Christ—cf. John 7:38; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- E. *Own ability* signifies our natural ability, which is constituted of God's creation and our learning—cf. Acts 7:22.

III. The five-talented one traded with his talents to gain another five talents, and the two-talented one traded with his talents to gain another two talents—Matt. 25:16-17:

- A. Trading with talents signifies using the gift the Lord has given us—cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6.
- B. Gaining other talents signifies that the gift we received from the Lord has been used to the fullest extent, without any loss or waste—cf. 2 Tim. 4:5b.

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IV. The one-talented one went off, dug in the earth, and hid his master's money—Matt. 25:18:

- A. The main emphasis in this parable is on the one-talented one, who received the smallest gift; it is very easy for the least gifted ones to mistreat or ignore their gift.
- B. The earth signifies the world; thus, *dug in the earth* signifies becoming involved in the world to bury the gift we have received from the Lord.
- C. *Hid his master's money* signifies rendering the Lord's gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses; to make any excuse for not using the Lord's gift is to hide the gift.

V. When the master returned to settle accounts with his slaves, the five-talented one and the two-talented one both received a reward—vv. 19-23:

- A. The Lord will settle accounts with us at His judgment seat, where our living, conduct, and work will be judged for reward or punishment—1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 3:13-15.
- B. Although the gift given to the two-talented one is smaller than that given to the five-talented one, the Lord's appraisal and reward to both are the same—"Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master"—Matt. 25:21, 23:
 - 1. *A few things* signifies the Lord's work in this age—cf. Mark 14:8; Rev. 3:8.
 - 2. To be set over many things signifies the ruling authority and the responsibilities in the coming kingdom—Rev. 2:26; Luke 19:17-19.
 - 3. *The joy of your master* signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom—cf. Phil. 3:14.

VI. The one-talented one was rebuked by his master and was punished—Matt. 25:24-30:

- A. The one-talented one said that he was afraid and went

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off and hid his master's talent in the earth, telling his master that he kept his gift:

1. To be afraid is negative; we should be positive and aggressive in using the Lord's gift—cf. 1 Thes. 2:2; Col. 1:29.
 2. To go away and hide the Lord's gift is to be too passive; we should be active in the Lord's work—1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10.
 3. From generation to generation, all the difficulties lie with the one-talented ones, and as a result there is the weight of death in the church.
- B. The master told the evil and slothful slave, "You should have deposited my money with the money changers; and when I came, I would have recovered what is mine with interest"—Matt. 25:26-27:
1. To deposit the master's money with the money changers, the bankers, signifies the use of the Lord's gift to save people and to minister His riches to them.
 2. *Interest* signifies the profitable result we gain for the Lord's work by using His gift.
- C. In the coming kingdom the Lord's gift will be taken away from the slothful believers, and they will be cast into the outer darkness, but the faithful believers' gift will be increased, and they will enter into the uttermost enjoyment of Christ—vv. 28-30.

VII. "All the problems in the church today issue from the one-talented ones. The Lord has shown us that there is not one whose gift exceeds five talents. For a span of twenty years the church may have only one with five talents, but every day the church can have five persons, each with one talent. Any one of the children of God, even the one in the poorest condition, still has one talent; and when you put five of the one-talented ones together, it equals one who has five talents. If all the one-talented ones in the church today would bring forth their talents, there would be no need of so many great gifts among us.

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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**Just by the coming forth of the one-talented ones,
let me tell you, the whole world will be conquered”—
W. Nee, *Further Talks on the Church Life*, p. 143.**