

“Eschatology”
(Part 41: The Olivet Discourse, Part 8)

V. The Olivet Discourse.

H. Warnings to Be Ready, Part 4 (25:14-30).

1. This morning we come to the last of the three parables Jesus gave His disciples to prepare them for His coming in 70 AD, and to His church to prepare us for His Second Coming at the end of history: the parable of the Talents. Since this parable is primarily pointing the disciples beyond 70 AD, that will be our focus.
 - a. In the first parable – the Parable of the Faithful Slave – He warned us to be prepared for His Coming by faithfully doing what He has called us to do while He was gone.
 - b. In the second parable – the Parable of the Ten Virgins – He warned us to be ready by making sure our hearts and lives are filled with His Spirit – that we are truly converted.
 - c. In this last parable – the Parable of the Talents – Jesus will tell us to be ready by wisely using what He has given us to advance His kingdom.

2. Our Lord has given each one of us some of His possessions, something precious to steward, or to use to bring glory to Him, until He returns for us at our death or at His Second Coming, and we need to be faithful in that stewardship. Let’s consider three things:
 - a. That Jesus has given each of us a stewardship.
 - b. That we are to be faithful with that stewardship.
 - c. That one day we are going to be called to give an account for that stewardship.

3. The Parable of the Talents.
 - a. First, let’s look at the fact that the Lord has entrusted to each of us a stewardship.
 - (i) The Lord Jesus is addressing His church in these three parables: His people and not the world.
 - (a) In the parallel passage of the ten minas, not everyone is given a mina or a talent. There were those who were enemies of Christ, who hated Him and didn’t want Him to reign. These enemies are the world, those He will destroy when He returns.
 - (b) The slaves are in the Master’s household, have been given charge over His possessions, and are to be faithfully serving Him, waiting for Him, and using their stewardship for the Master.
 - (c) We are the slaves in His household. We are the virgins waiting for His return. We are the slaves to whom He has entrusted His possessions.
 - (ii) Jesus is the Master:
 - (a) He left this world to receive a kingdom.
 - (b) He was to be gone for a long time – between His first and Second Coming.
 - (iii) Before He left, He entrusted His servants – the church – with His talents, or possessions, so that we could use them to profit Him while He was gone.

- (a) We're not told specifically what these talents are, but it's not hard to figure out.
 - (b) They refer primarily to the Holy Spirit – that infinitely precious gift our Lord poured out on His church on the day of Pentecost, which He purchased with His own blood – the gifts/abilities the Spirit gives to each one of His children, and the particular callings or responsibilities He places on us.
- (iv) These talents are given to each of us according to our own abilities (*i.e.*, our natural gifts, resources and opportunities).
- (a) The fact that the Lord gives these talents according to our ability means He won't give us more than we can handle. He won't expect a person who can handle only one talent to handle five.
 - (b) In other words, He doesn't expect us to be as effective as George Whitefield in our evangelism, or to have the insight into the Scripture of Jonathan Edwards or John Calvin, or the leadership of Joshua or King David.
 - (c) He doesn't give us more than He has equipped us to handle. We are simply to be faithful in ministering what He has given to our brethren (in fellowship) and our neighbors (in evangelism), so that we might promote Christ's interests in this world.
- b. Second, the Lord expects us to be faithful with this stewardship.
- (i) In the parable, Jesus tells us that two of the slaves went out immediately and began to use what their master gave them to make a profit.
 - (ii) But the third went out and hid his master's money in the ground, where he believed it would be safe, so that he would be safe; but he was wrong.
 - (iii) When the Lord calls us into His kingdom and gives us His talents, He expects us to use those precious gifts for His glory.
 - (a) As money is profitable only when invested, so we must also invest our gifts.
 - (b) We need to use them to minister to others, to save them or build them up.
 - (c) If the Lord has given us the gift of teaching, we need to use that gift faithfully, according to our particular calling.
 - (1) If He has called us to be an elder, we must use that gift publicly to teach the Lord's flock.
 - (2) If He has called us to be husbands, we must use it to teach our wives.
 - (3) If He has called us to be parents, we must use it to teach our children.
 - (4) If He has called us to be members of a church, we must use it to instruct and admonish our brothers and sisters one on one as the situation requires, just as Aquila and Priscilla used their gift to admonish and instruct Apollos (Acts 18:24-26).
 - (d) The same thing holds true with the other gifts the Lord has given, whether the gift of preaching, teaching, exhorting, serving, giving, leading or showing mercy; whether it is a spiritual gift or a natural gift; we must use these gifts according to our ability and our calling to minister to those around us.
 - (e) Like the craftsman or musician who is constantly trying to improve his skill, we are to seek to become better and more effective with what the Lord has given us, so that we might better benefit God's people and advance His kingdom.

(iv) The Lord doesn't give us the option to sit on our gifts and do nothing with them, as we will see in the next point. He has given to each of us a stewardship, and He expects us to be faithful with that stewardship.

c. Finally, the Lord will call us to account for our stewardship and will reward or punish us according to how well we have managed it.

(i) After the Master returned from His long journey, He called His slaves and told them to give an account of their stewardship.

(ii) When He did, He found that the one to whom He had entrusted the five talents, made five more talents. The one to whom He had entrusted the two talents, made two more talents. But the one to whom He had entrusted the one, made nothing.

(iii) The Master commended the two profitable servants for their work – “well done” – and for their character – “good and faithful slave” – and they were richly rewarded – “You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Master.”

(iv) But the one who made nothing was reprimanded – “You wicked, lazy slave” – and severely punished – “Take away the talent from him . . . and cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

(v) On the last day, when Jesus Christ returns, the Bible says He will raise all the dead, translate all the living and bring them together for judgment. When He does, everyone who has ever lived will give an account of their lives.

(a) Those outside the visible church, who never believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation, who never lived the life that the Lord called them to live, will be judged and condemned.

(b) But those who were in the visible church who never believed in Christ, will also be condemned.

(vi) In this parable, the Lord shows us the difference between them:

(a) The genuine believer, the one who will be commended and rewarded by the Lord, is the one who worked for Him, who used his gifts, talents, resources and abilities to bring glory to Him and to advance His interests in this world.

(b) The false believer, the one who will be rebuked and cast out on that day, is the one who sat on his gifts and abilities, and didn't use them to glorify God and advance His kingdom: An unbeliever isn't simply one that does sinful things; he also does no good. It's not enough just to keep from sinning, the Bible says we must also do what is right. We must repent of all of our sins – both of commission and omission.

(vii) There are other differences here as well.

(a) The unbeliever has a false view of God – that He is hard, that He wants to profit from the labors of others. Believers know this isn't true. God isn't hard. He is infinitely gracious. He doesn't take what isn't His. Everything belongs to Him, and He gives to all everything they have to enjoy.

(b) The unbeliever also blames God for his own sins.

(1) When the wicked slave used this as an excuse for why he didn't do what his master commanded, his master turned it back on him.

- (2) He said, “If you thought I was a hard man, why didn’t you at least serve me out of fear, if you couldn’t do it out of love? If you thought that the work I gave you was too hard, why didn’t you take the easier option, such as putting my money in the bank, so that I would at least gain interest?”
 - (3) He had no excuse, and neither will anyone on the Day of Judgment.
- (viii) On the Day of Judgment, the Lord will take away what these false professors thought they had – which really wasn’t the saving work of the Spirit, but only the common gifts which He gives to all men – and cast them into the lake of fire.
 - (ix) But His children, who wisely stewarded their gifts and resources, He will receive into heaven, where they will be filled with joy and love in His presence for the rest of eternity.
- d. And so we have seen that the Lord has entrusted each of us with a stewardship, that He expects us to use this stewardship for His profit, and that He will one day call us to account for our stewardships.
 - (i) For the immediate audience, Jesus was encouraging them to be faithful in their responsibilities as they looked forward to 70 AD and beyond.
 - (ii) For us, He is telling us to make sure we’re using the things He has entrusted to us to glorify His name by building up His people and advancing His kingdom.
 - e. So let’s consider this morning:
 - (i) How well we have been doing with our stewardships – whether we have been using our gifts, abilities, resources and opportunities wisely; whether we are using them to profit the Lord; or whether we have buried them in the ground, thinking that it’s really not important how we use them.
 - (ii) What we do with what we have indicates what is really in our hearts. It shows us what the outcome of our lives will be, where we will be spending eternity.
 - (iii) Is the Lord saying that a true Christian will never go through times where he doesn’t appear to be bearing any good fruit? No. Nor is He saying that the Christian will never bear any evil fruit. What He is saying is that a Christian, because he is a good tree, will bear good fruit as the general pattern of his life (Matt. 7:17). A mere professor, who doesn’t bear any good fruit at all, will be cut out of the vine and cast into the fire (John 15:6).
 - (iv) The Lord calls us to examine our lives. Are you using your gifts to serve the Lord, as best you can? Are you using your time, your energy, your finances, your opportunities to glorify Him?
 - (v) If so, the Lord says that He has a great reward waiting for you in heaven – an eternity of love, joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.
 - (vi) But if upon an honest examination, you aren’t, this passage warns you there is danger ahead. You will be cast into the outer darkness, into the place of pain and weeping, into the eternal fire, unless you repent and turn to Christ in faith.
 - (vii) If that is the case, don’t wait until that day to hear God’s judgment pronounced against you. Turn to Christ now and let Him take away your sin and judgment, so that you will be ready to give a good account.