

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning
Week 40 (September 29-October 5, 2013)

We will look at two more of Jesus' stories about the Kingdom of Heaven by studying the Parable of the Talents from Matthew's Gospel and the Parable of the Ten Minas from Luke's Gospel. Be sure to read the entire text each day so that you can get the complete story in your mind.

Sunday -- September 29 (Matthew 25:14-30)

The picture being painted in this parable is of Jesus returning to Heaven following His time on earth and leaving us (His servants) in charge of His property (v. 14). The word "talent" is used to describe a certain amount of money, although it can also correctly be used to describe **spiritual gifts** given to Christians (see 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12). The Master is able to trust some workers with more responsibilities than others. This does not mean that He **loves** some more than others, but it should be obvious that some people are more capable of handling larger jobs (v. 15). The servants who had been entrusted with more show immediately why the Lord could trust them because they **double** the investment the Master made in them (v. 16-17). The man with only one talent goes off and hides his Master's investment instead of putting the talent to work (v. 18). We will follow the story in tomorrow's devotions.

Monday -- September 30 (Matthew 25:14-30)

As promised, the Master returns from His journey and settles accounts with those to whom He entrusted His property (v. 19). The man who was given the largest amount reports that he has doubled his Master's investment (v. 20). The Owner compliments him for a job well done, promises him greater responsibilities in the future and invites him to share in His personal happiness (v. 21). The servant who had been entrusted with only 40% of the amount given to the first worker comes and reports on his earnings (v. 22). He earned only **two talents**, whereas the first servant earned **five**; however, he earned the exact same **percentage** of the original investment. Notice that the Master does not mention the amount nor does He compare him to the other servant. He gives him the exact same compliment and promise (v. 23). The parable will take another turn in tomorrow's study.

Tuesday -- October 1 (Matthew 25:14-30)

The third man comes to report on his use of the talent given to him. Sadly, he blames his failure on **the Master** (v. 24). He knows that the Master would profit from his wise use of the money so he simply hid it in the ground. He didn't **lose** the original investment; he merely chose to do nothing with it. Likewise, everything we have is a gift from our Heavenly Father. He gives us spiritual gifts, talents and material blessings so that we can bring glory to Him, not to ourselves. How are you doing with the resources entrusted to you? Are you using them **for His glory** or are you burying them in the ground? Can you report a good return on those things He has entrusted to you? You may have already memorized Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Today's homework is to add verse 10 to the passage you already know. God has saved us so that we can bring glory to Him. Let's do it today!

Wednesday -- October 2 (Matthew 25:14-30)

The Master does not debate the fact that **He** will get the increase from His original investment, but He rebukes the man for failing to put the talent in the bank so it could at least have earned some interest (v. 26-27). Confirming that this man cannot be trusted, He commands that the talent be taken away from him and given to the first worker who already has ten (v. 28). Then He makes an application to the parable He just told: Those who can be trusted will continue to be given more responsibilities, but those who refuse to work in His Kingdom will give back that with which they have been entrusted (v. 29). This is **not** teaching that a true believer can forfeit his/her salvation; rather, it teaches that God blesses all people with life and opportunities, but some never **personally receive Him** and go to work in His fields. Sadly, those people will spend eternity in outer darkness, away from His Kingdom (v. 30).

Thursday -- October 3 (Luke 19:11-27)

In today's text, Jesus uses a parable similar to the one we studied in Matthew; however, some important differences exist. In this parable, each man is given the **same amount** (a mina, which is 1/60 the value of a talent). The man is leaving to go to a distant country to be appointed king prior to returning to His own country (v.12-13). Like the story in Matthew, this parable pictures Jesus' ascension into Heaven where He is crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords (see Revelation 19:16). Like so many church members today, these people do not want Him to have control over their lives (v. 14). Just like in His parable in Matthew, He sends for the men to whom He entrusted the mina to receive a report of their earnings (v. 15). The first man has earned ten more from his original investment (v. 16). The Master praises him and puts him in charge of ten cities because of his faithfulness in this small matter (v.17). We'll see how two of the others fare in tomorrow's study.

Friday -- October 4 (Luke 19:11-27)

A second man comes to give an account and reports a return of **five times** the original investment. He is given responsibility for **five** cities in the Kingdom (v. 18-19). Unlike the similar parable in Matthew, this story illustrates the **rewards** in the Kingdom to those who are faithful on earth to use the total package with which God has entrusted them. The third man reports his failures and proceeds to blame his Master for being such a hard Man. He refuses to do the work because his Master will take the **increase** derived from the use of the mina (v. 20-23). Jesus again makes the application that those who **use** the gifts given to them by God will be given more, and those who refuse to work for His glory will lose what they have (reference to hell) and their minas will be given to those with the faith to use them. (v. 24-27). Are you ready to allow Jesus to be your **King**? Are you willing to work for **His glory** alone? He is awaiting your answer!

Saturday -- October 5 (John 3:16-21)

This is perhaps the most powerful portion of Scripture recorded in the Bible. I want you to read it today to amplify the teachings of the two parables we have studied this week. After using v. 16-18 to separate those who **believe** and **receive** eternal life from those who **reject** and **remain lost**, Jesus returns with a verdict (v. 19). Those who profess to know Him are required to **walk in His light** so that others "may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven" (see Matthew 5:16). If you are living by the truth you have received, you will have no problem giving **Him** the glory for your personal works (v. 21). Make a new commitment today that you will use everything He has entrusted to you for His glory alone!