

The final Three Parables, Matthew Ch. 25

The Christian walk in the late twentieth and early twenty first century is almost exclusively a deluded walk toward an expectation of personal gain and satisfaction, treating God like a rich uncle. We certainly have been told, but did we hear, the call to true faith: to deny ourselves, our personal desires and plans, and to take up the burden of the Lord and walk his walk? Since when did God become our servant?

3 last chances to “get it.” At the end of chapter 24, Jesus begins to move the listener along a line of thinking which begins with the necessity of being alert to the possibility of his imminent return. In chapter 25 he gives us 3 portraits of preparedness, responsibility, and finally compassionate selflessness with an increasing emphasis on the ominous consequences of non-action: the judgment.

Parable of ten virgins, v.1-13

- The problem of “ten”
 - They are neither identified as brides or bridesmaids. _____
 - Both a Jewish and Christian cultural stumbling block. _____
 - No cultural or biblical context. _____
- Relation to a standard wedding feast
 - The Jewish bride, “Kallah”: the “enclosing or completing one.”
 - The groom’s preparation of the dwelling, or “Huppah.”
 - The waiting period between the betrothal and the fulfillment of the wedding cycle. _____
- The “prudent” and the “foolish”
 - Prudent: expedience and foresight. _____
 - Foolish: careless and lazy. _____
 - To the foolish Jesus said “Truly, I do not know you.

Parable of talents, v.14-30

- Masters and Slaves
 - A more intimate relationship than “employer/employee.”
 - An assumption of trust. _____
- Dispensing “talents” according to ability
 - A relatively large sum for the day. _____

- The master’s expectation of return based on the amount entrusted to each, without moral prejudice. _____
- The lazy slave
 - While the first two slaves acted responsibly, the third slave simply buried his talent and returned it with no gain.
 - The obvious focus of this parable. _____
 - A pointedly direct correlation to the average “Christian.” _____
- The judgment: revocation of what he had been given, and exile to “outer darkness.” _____

The judgment parable: sheep and goats, v.31-46

- The judgment of the nations
 - Without prejudice of “person or station.” _____
- Sheep, v.34-40
 - Invited to the Kingdom. _____
 - Those who acted with compassion toward Jesus. _____
 - Perhaps without even knowing it (v.38-39). _____
 - By the virtue of sacrificial compassion to others. _____
- Goats, v.41-46
 - Exiled to the eternal fire. _____
 - Those who ignored the distress of others, and the correlation to Jesus. _____
 - Judged to their surprise (v.44). _____

The final emphasis

- Three signs of moral or spiritual failure
 - Carelessness and unpreparedness. _____
 - Indolence: lazy thoughtlessness. _____
 - Selfishness: lack of any sign of compassionate love. _____

If not yet understood, Jesus makes it clear in the final parable that the judgment is not a scale measuring our “good” and “bad” deeds, or our confessions of personal faith, but our actions, and perhaps only one simple action. The emphasis on these actions should be a revelation, not that we are saved by our works, but that the works of obedience and love which we do perform are a clear window into our hearts, whether belonging to Jesus or not. Are you willing to be God’s slave?