

a Bible Lesson from MATTHEW 25:14-23:

TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF THE BLESSINGS OF GOD

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I. INTRODUCTION

What does The Lord expect us to do with the material blessings of money and possessions He gives us? Yes, we should attend to the basic needs of ourselves and our loved ones by the means The Almighty blesses us with. But what then of the excess of material blessings for The Kingdom of GOD? What then of those around us who are in need, suffering in want and perishing in sin? What then of work of The Church in this fallen and dark world that so often is slowed because the saints of CHRIST do not put to good use these things?

Our Lord gives us the parable in MATTHEW 25:14-30 of the three servants, each of which their master gave coins to attend over as stewards in his absence. The coins were not theirs, but the property of the master. Their lord placed in the hands of his servants these resources and expected that they would employ them to increase his household in his absence. To one he gave 5 coins, to another 2 and to another one. And when he returned, all his servants knew, they would have to give an account for their stewardship of the coins to the master. So also do we to our Eternal Master, The LORD GOD!

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FAITHFUL “STEWARD” OF GOD’S GIFTS?

Noah Webster defines “steward” as “A man employed in great families to manage the domestic concerns, superintend the other servants, collect the rents or income, keep the accounts... An officer of state: as lord high steward; steward of the household... In Scripture and theology, a Minister of CHRIST, whose duty is to dispense The Provisions of The gospel, to preach its doctrines and administer its Ordinances...”¹

As The Apostle Paul says in I CORINTHIANS 4:1-2, “Let a man so account of us, as of The Ministers of CHRIST, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”² As Albert Barnes observes, “The office of steward was to provide those things which were necessary for the use of a family.”³ GOD calls all Christians to be faithful stewards over the gifts which He entrusts to us. How much more so The ordained Stewards over GOD’s Family, The Clergyman over CHRIST’s Church!

“And so the office of a Minister of The Gospel, and a steward of its Mysteries, is to dispense such instructions, guidance, counsel, etc., as may be requisite to build up The Church of CHRIST; to make known those sublime Truths which are contained in The Gospel” of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.⁴ To all who serve in The Church, but especially to those ordained as Clergy, they must be faithful keepers, administrators and dispensers to The Kingdom of GOD, for she The Church and all her members on earth are entrusted into the hands of The Minister, who must answer to CHRIST Himself!

¹ 1, Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, entry “steward,” noun, # 1,2,3,5/

² 2, KJV, I CORINTHIANS 4:1-2.

³ 3, Barnes’ New Testament Notes, I CORINTHIANS 4, Verse 1, p 2266.

⁴ 3, Barnes’ New Testament Notes, I CORINTHIANS 4, Verse 1, p 2266.

Paul calls us to take a sober lesson here from this weighty calling, “(1.) That a Minister, like a steward, is [to be always totally] devoted to His Master's service... (2.) That he should be faithful to that Trust, and not abuse or violate it. (3.) That... his main desire should be to meet with the approbation of His Master,” JESUS CHRIST.⁵ Now we should keep this lesson in mind, as we proceed to this parable about the two faithful and one unfaithful steward. For GOD has work for all of us in His Kingdom. And we must all answer to Him, both Laity and Clergy, how we have used the gifts He has entrusted to us as His stewards!

III. TWO FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD’S GIFTS

First, there are these two faithful servants:

MATTHEW 25:14-23

¹⁴ For The Kingdom of Heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

¹⁵ And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

¹⁶ Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

¹⁷ And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

¹⁸ But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

¹⁹ After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

²⁰ And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

²¹ His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

²² He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

²³ His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.⁶

In the first half of this parable, our Divine Master paints a portrait of two faithful stewards. They were entrusted by their earthly with money, one 5 coins, another 2 coins. The third steward received but 1 coin. It was expected that, while their master was away, they all as faithful stewards would put those resources to good use, that the estate of their lord would be found to have increased on his return. They are rewarded with praise. More is added to their charge. And they dwell with their lord as beloved servants.

Matthew Henry observes that “CHRIST keeps no servants to be idle: they have received their all from Him, and have nothing they can call their own but sin. Our

⁵ 3, Barnes' New Testament Notes, I CORINTHIANS 4, Verse 2, p 2267.

⁶ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 25:14-23.

receiving from CHRIST is in order to our working for Him. The manifestation of The Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. The Day of Account comes at last. We must all be reckoned with as to what good we have got to our own souls, and have done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed.”⁷

So all that we have in life – family, career, abilities, wealth to whatever degree, even and especially our very breath from moment to moment – are all gifts of GOD. More correctly, all that we have in fact belongs to The Creator. And especially to we His saints in CHRIST, those gifts are but our temporary stewardship, the use – or lack thereof - of which we must answer to The Almighty for on our Day of Judgement!

“It is the real Christian’s liberty and privilege to be employed as his Redeemer’s servant, in promoting His Glory, and the good of His people: The Love of CHRIST constrains him to live no longer to himself, but to Him that died for him, and rose again!”⁸ As Paul says in EPHESIANS 2:10, “For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them!”⁹

As James says in JAMES 2:20, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”¹⁰ Is our Christian Faith then a living Faith that, by The Spirit of The living GOD, produces good works in our lives as The Fruit of That same Spirit in us, serving the increase of The Church? Or do our lives show forth the works of the flesh, our mere intellectual faith of lip service only a daily testament of rebellion and unfaithful stewardship of The Grace, abilities, resources and opportunities to increase The Kingdom of GOD?

IV. ONE UNFAITHFUL STEWARD OF GOD’S GIFTS

But second, there is this one unfaithful servant:

MATTHEW 25:24-30

²⁴ Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

²⁶ His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

²⁷ Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

²⁸ Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

⁷ 4, Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, MATTHEW 25, Vs. 14-30.

⁸ 4, Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary, MATTHEW 25, Vs. 14-30.

⁹ 2, KJV, EPHESIANS 2:10.

¹⁰ 2, KJV, JAMES 2:20.

²⁹ For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

³⁰ And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹¹

In the second half of this parable our Divine Master paints for us a portrait of the one unfaithful steward. His abilities being less, he was entrusted with but 1 coin by his earthly master. But what did he do with it? Nothing! He buried it in the ground and employed it for nothing whatsoever. So that when his earthly lord returned, this unfaithful servant was not able to bring before his master any increase in his estate. He is punished with chastisement. What he had been given is taken away from him. And he is cast away from his master's presence!

This unfaithful servant was found to be both wicked and slothful. Wicked in that he did not see to the good of his master's estate, to make good use of his charge of the 1 coin to increase his lord's holdings. Slothful, as Marvin Vincent observes, that "With no more trouble than he expended in digging, he might have gone to the exchangers." The master observes, "You knew that I am a hard master, reaping what others sow for me and resting upon what others labor for me!" Therefore, "Thou shouldst then have acted with the promptness and care which one observes in dealing with a hard master!" ¹²

This is a most frightful picture of the fate of all men who are found as unfaithful stewards by GOD! Matthew Henry says here, that "The slothful servant is sentenced to be deprived of his [one] talent. This may be applied to the blessings of this life; but rather to the means of Grace. Those who know not The Day of their Visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. His doom is, to be cast into outer darkness. It is a usual way of expressing the miseries of the damned in Hell!" ¹³

The LORD sets forth what He, as our Divine Master, requires of us through His prophet in MICAH 6:8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth The LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy GOD!" ¹⁴ CHRIST requires of us His saints that we do justly for His Kingdom, our fellow saints and the lost. CHRIST requires that we love mercy towards others, that we ourselves may receive His Mercy. CHRIST requires that we walk humbly before Him, not in service of ourselves, but serving Him as faithful stewards. Lord have mercy on the unfaithful servant then, on The Day of Judgement!

¹¹ 2, KJV, MATTHEW 25:24-30.

¹² 5, Vincent's New Testament Word Studies, MATTHEW 25:26.

¹³ 4, Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, MATTHEW 25, Vs. 14-30.

¹⁴ 2, KJV, MICAH 6:8.

V. ARE WE FAITHFUL OR UNFAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD'S GIFTS?

As Randy Alcorn says, "The Fear of dealing with what GOD expects me to do with my money is exceeded by the fear of not dealing with it. I don't want to stand before Him one day and try to give an answer for how I could call myself a Disciple [of CHRIST] without ever coming to grips with money and possessions [as a faithful steward]. Not when even a cursory reading of The New Testament shows this issue to be right at the heart of discipleship!"¹⁵

Now on The Day of Judgement, when we shall stand before our Eternal Lord, will He be able to say to us, "Well done, My good and faithful servants?" Or will He have to say of us, "Take this unprofitable servant and cast him into outer darkness?" What have we done, and what are we doing, with the precious gifts which The Good LORD has placed in our charge in this life?

What will our Divine Lord say to us on our Day of Judgement? Are we faithful servants of The Cross of CHRIST, thankfully receiving His Grace that saves our lives and souls, and diligently working on behalf of He Who died for us and His Church on earth, that He may find us faithful stewards in His Church Above? Or do we risk being cast down, or worse cast away forever, from His Presence Above because we are unfaithful stewards here in this life? GOD forbid!

VI. IN CONCLUSION - LET US CONFESS OUR SINS UNTO ALMIGHTY GOD

Let us repent of our unfaithful stewardship, in whatever form they may be in our lives – money, possessions, people, relationships, witnessing and living out The Gospel, justice, mercy, walking with GOD, serving Him by serving others – at The Cross of our Redeemer, JESUS CHRIST! As Saint John says in I JOHN 2:1, "...if any man sin, we have An Advocate with The Father, JESUS CHRIST The Righteous!"¹⁶

Let us then come boldly and humbly before The Throne of Grace and cry out to Him, as does David in PSALM 86:1-5, "Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O Thou my GOD, save Thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto Thee daily. Rejoice the soul of Thy servant: for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in Mercy unto all them that call upon Thee!"¹⁷ In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Ghost. AMEN!

¹⁵ 6, Alcorn, "Money, Possessions and Eternity," p 10, paragraph 3. "Hitting Close to Home."

¹⁶ 2, KJV, I JOHN 2:1.

¹⁷ 2, KJV, PSALM 86:1-5.

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