

Series: The Wealth of Christ and the Walk of the Christian

FOR WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

(PT 2)

EPHESIANS 2:10

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¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Introduction:

As we began looking at this passage last week we considered first Ownership. Until that matter is settled the rest of this verse will never be fulfilled as it should be.

Remember we are “HIS WORKMANSHIP.”

Because He is the owner He has the right to make us into that which He desires and use us for His honor and glory.

This evening we will consider the second part of this passage, and that is Occupation.

Because He is the owner we are to be working for Him again for His honor and glory.

Turn to Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:13

Matthew 25:14-30

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. 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. 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.

Luke 19:13

*¹³ And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **Occupy till I come.***

As we consider this evening our Occupation – “Unto Good Works.”

A man from out east had always dreamed of owning a cattle ranch and had finally saved enough money to buy his dream spread in Wyoming. His best friend flew

out to visit and asked, “So, what’s the name of your ranch?” His buddy told him that he had a really hard time coming up with a name that he liked. He and his wife couldn’t agree on what to call it so they settled on, “The Double R Lazy L Triple Horseshoe Bar-7 Lucky Diamond Ranch.”

His friend was really impressed and then asked, “So where are all the cows?” To which the new rancher replied, “We had quite a few...but none of them survived the branding!”

As we’ve been focusing on some ways that we can improve our serve, I want to suggest this morning that it’s possible to get so caught up in what we call our spiritual gifts that we might not survive servanthood.

The key is not so much to identify what we have but to use what we’ve been given.

This parable comes in the section of Matthew’s gospel where Jesus is giving an answer to the disciples’ question about His Second Coming in Matthew 24:3.

Jesus warns them to be on guard so that no one will deceive them and helps them understand that once He leaves, He will come again.

In chapter 25, Jesus compares His coming to the eastern custom of a bridegroom arriving in the middle of the night.

Chapter 25 ends with the separation of the sheep and the goats. Sandwiched in-between is the parable of the talents.

In this parable that everyone was given all that was needed to serve the master.

Notice:

1. THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE TALENTS (VS. 14-15)

Matthew 25:14-15

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.

Note:

A. The Person Making the Assignment

The man or master “called” the servants to himself to equip them for the work.

The “Servants” didn’t initiate the calling but rather the “Master.”

Our divine calling and divine equipping is ALWAYS initiated, and supplied by our Master.

Note not only The Person Making the Assignment but also:

B. The People Receiving the Assignment

They were all called servants, meaning they all belonged to the Master. As wholly owned slaves they would have taken the name and the identity of their Master. They had made the decision that would be united to him for life.

Notice:

- The Description of the Talents

Talents in New Testament times represented money.

One Roman talent was worth 6000 denarii.

One denarii represented a day’s labor, which meant the man with five talents was entrusted with what would have been the equivalent of 80 years’ salary; the man with two talents, 32 years’ salary and the man with one talent, 16 years’ worth of wages.

It was no small sum. It was all that was needed to do the work expected.

What is the worth of the talent the Lord has entrusted to you?

Notice also:

- The Distribution of the Talents (vs. 15)

The distribution of the talent is based on the biblical principle which Jesus articulated in this verse.

Matthew 25:15

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.*

The Master knew HIS SERVANTS and He gifted His servants accordingly.

The lesson for us here is that God equips us with responsibilities and opportunities which match our abilities. He does not give us tasks to do which we cannot do. He does not lay on us a burden we cannot carry. Think of two cups of different sizes. They are both effective and both are meant to be filled to capacity and yet they both have limits.

Our capacity to receive will also be the capacity to administer. This eliminates any excuses for failure. God is fair.

Our work is judged and accepted according to what we have, not to what we don't have.

Illustration:

Martha Berry had a dream to start a school for poor children. She had no books, no building and no money, just a heart and a dream to help. She went to Henry Ford and asked for a donation and he gave her a dime! She could have been insulted and discouraged and quit but she took the dime, bought a packet of seeds, planted a garden and raised a crop; sold the crop and bought more seeds and planted a larger garden. After her fourth harvest she made enough money to buy the building. She went back to Mr. Ford and thanked him for his donation and showed him what his dime had accomplished. He was overwhelmed and immediately donated \$1 million dollars and the Berry School for Children was firmly established.

GOD CALLS US TO BE PRODUCTIVE WITH HE GIVES US.

Notice also:

The Declaration Regarding the Talents

There is no clear declaration in this text in Matthew but Luke also recorded the parable of the talents and in Luke this is what the Master says to his servants:

Luke 19:13

¹³ *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, **Occupy till I come.***

The word “occupy” means to use or put to work.

That which the Master gives us He expects us to do something for Him with it.

Why is it that the Lord has the right to expect us to use the talents He has entrusted us with? Because:

He is our owner – we are His workmanship

Notice not only “The Assignment of Potential” but also:

2. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TALENTS (VS. 16-18)

Matthew 25:16-18

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.*

Note:

A. The Diligence of the Faithful Servants (vs. 16-17)

They were:

- Prepared
- Prompt

They were not afraid of:

- Perspiration

Note not only the Diligence of the Faithful Servants but also:

B. The Delinquency of the Fearful Servant (vs. 18)

Matthew 25:18

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

Note some things that may not be obvious on the surface of this man's actions.

- Look at the Energy He Expended

Digging is not easy, it can be a lot of work. This servant had to work hard to keep from working. He worked hard to keep from using the potential entrusted to him by the Master. But in spite of this work, the Master called him a slothful servant.

Matthew 25:26

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:*

This action of digging shows to what great lengths people will sometimes go to keep from doing what they KNOW God has called them to accomplish. It is rebellion in the life of the spiritual delinquent and disobedience causes us to do the dumbest things.

Not only do we see the Energy He Expended but also:

- Look at the Embarrassment He Exemplified

The servant was ashamed to show his talent or let his faith be seen working for the Master.

No doubt he was embarrassed because he only was given one talent.

But also, no doubt he was embarrassed because remember the Master distributed the talents according to their ability. Because he only received only one no doubt he was embarrassed because of his lack of ability.

Both reasons of embarrassment is the result of pride.

Notice not only “The Assignment of Talents” and “The Administration of the Talents” but also:

3. THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE TALENTS (vs. 19-30)

All three servants had to eventually give an account of how they had taken care of the talent or gifts given them by their master. There will be a day of accountability a day of reckoning and in that day there will be blessing or burden; rewards or retribution.

Note:

A. The Return of the Master (vs. 19)

Matthew 25:19

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

The fact that the Master returned after a 'LONG TIME' reminds us of the certainty that HE IS COMING AGAIN but also it represents His test to see not only how we do using the gifts He has entrusted to our care but also to see if we will remain faithful for the long haul...to the end. The children of Israel got tired of waiting on Moses and turned back to sin.

B. The Rewards for the Faithful

Everyone does not have the same ability and skills; but when one is faithful with the skills he has, there will be dividends.

The lord of the servants does not criticize those who had less gains than others, but he criticized those who did not do anything with the TALENTS He entrusted to their care.

God knows our situation and looks for faithfulness. Do what you can with what you have and there will be rewards for the faithfulness.

Notice also that the faithful acknowledged that the talents they received came from the Master.

The rewards for the faithful included not only PRAISE but also PROMOTION!

They were entrusted with more because of their faithfulness. They were praised for doing a good job and were also given a good name, “good and faithful servant.” BEING RESPONSIBLE ALWAYS LEADS TO MORE RESPONSIBILITY!

Notice not only “The Return of the Master” and “The Rewards for the Faithful” but also:

C. The Retribution for the Failure

Matthew 25:24-28

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.

The excuse he offers reveals the disobedience. This is classic shift of blame when a person is confronted with what they have NOT accomplished. The servant goes so far as to even accuse the Master of being hard or cruel.

Often when people are confronted for failed expectations they REACT instead of RESPOND and try to shift the responsibility.

It is always someone or something else fault.

The Master denounced his laziness and his failure.

Close:

As I close, let's remember:

What we have we have been given.

Everything that is needed to serve the Lord has been given to us.

We have been given what we can handle.

A day of accounting is coming.

What we do with what we have reveals our view of God.

We must use what we are given or risk losing it forever.