

Midtown Messenger

Volume 3

January 19, 2020

Issue 3

The Parable of the Talents

One of the most eye-opening revelations mankind faces when coming to the Bible is exemplified in the parable of the Talents; namely, that we are accountable to God. The Parable of the Talents casts a great light on the varied elements of our faithfulness towards the Lord. Let us be reminded of four practical lessons of our stewardship reinforced in this parable.

First, the Parable of the Talents teaches us that we will be held accountable for our lives. The overarching theme Jesus provides is that we have been entrusted. Everything we possess is given to us by Almighty God. Often we see the word “possess” and recognize ourselves as owners. But in reality, we are mere stewards. Do we recognize ourselves as stewards or owners? Our answer makes all the difference. A steward is one whose life consists of taking care of something for someone else and waiting for the day such things will be returned to their Master. An owner possesses things and is entitled to do anything he wants with them. And yet all we have, our material belongings, our opportunities, and even our very lives—belongs to God. We are simply entrusted with them until the day of reckoning. Some believe on that final day we will show our faithfulness but the truth is we are showing our faithfulness now by the way we use these entrusted endowments, just like the servants in this parable.

Second, the Parable of the Talents shows us that we do not have identical opportunities or talents. Notice that each steward was entrusted with unequal amounts of money, “Each according to his ability.” (Matt. 25:15) All are entrusted with something, but each receives a different amount. In our age of

equality, we are tempted to begrudge the varying degrees of allocation and opportunity we see. We sometimes want to compare ourselves and our talents. Yet we must remember two things: we are responsible for what we have and we are able to work with what we have. Jesus reminds us, “After a long time the master of those servants returned.” (Matt. 25:19) The parable parallels a sure return of Jesus to judge us, and a sure accounting of our faithfulness with that which he has entrusted to our care. The return will consist of our own accounting of our faithfulness to God.

Third, the Parable of the Talents shows that God has given us everything we need in order to be a good steward. Due in large part to the modern-day doctrines of equality, we are tempted to feel sorry about the servant who was only given one talent. Yet our faithfulness is not contingent on anyone else’s relationship with God and we will be judged by our own merits. The Biblical teaching found in Luke 12:48, reminds us that whatever we are given is required back to God, whether a little or a lot. “...For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required...” The one talent man was not given too little to accomplish his faithfulness toward the master. He was given more than enough to meet the master’s expectations. Likewise whatever we possess is sufficient enough to produce an increase for our God. But it will always take our effort of faith to achieve that increase. This brings us to our final point.

Fourth, the Parable of the Talents teaches us that our success is contingent upon our work or effort of faith. Go back to the beginning in the book of Genesis and you will see

that God's purpose for man was to work the garden and to keep it. Man has always been made to work. God cares about our efforts and pursuits. This is why God has included the efforts of man in his plan for salvation. Our labors and deeds matter to God. And He expects an increase in whatever we have been given. God expects growth and increases to be the outcome of our efforts in faith for Him.

Regardless of whether we are reading this parable for the first or the fifty-first time, the conclusion is unmistakable: we are personally held responsible for our lives to God. Jesus shows us in the Parable of the Talents, our calling as Christians and our responsibility to use what God has given us to glorify and honor to Him. May we ever be thankful to Him for giving us opportunities to serve and glorify Him.

-Selected-

Selfishness

In Genesis 38, Judah married and had three sons. His oldest son married Tamar but was slain because of his wickedness. Onan was told to marry Tamar and provide an heir for his brother. He married Tamar but refused to provide an heir, and he was slain by God (Gen. 38:1-11). Judah asked Tamar to stay so she could marry his youngest son, Shelah. When the time came, Judah did not uphold the deal. After Judah's wife died, Tamar dressed as a harlot to seduce Judah. She conceived as a result. (Gen. 38:11-19). When her pregnancy was discovered, Judah was quick to condemn until Tamar provided evidence that he was the father (Gen. 38:20-26). Though this family was in turmoil, we can learn from their mistakes.

First, we must fulfill our responsibilities to others, even at personal cost. Onan wanted the benefits of being married to Tamar without the responsibility. He knew that any children she bore would not be his but would carry on the name of his brother (Deut. 25:5). This meant that Onan's inher-

itance would not belong to his family alone, but would have to be shared. Lust and selfishness motivated Onan's actions, and that is why he was destroyed. We must set aside personal desires and be concerned with helping others because our responsibility is to do good to all (Gal. 6:10, Phil. 2:4).

We also learn we cannot make allowances for sin, even in distress. Judah yearned for comfort after losing his wife. However, that did not give him the right to seek a harlot. When we are emotional, it becomes more difficult to think clearly. Recovering addicts often lapse when they are under high stress. When we are emotionally compromised, our pet sins become even more enticing. Sin is like a drug. We do it because it feels good in the moment, but in the long term it is deadly (Rom. 6:23, 1 Jn. 2:15-17). Satan knows this tendency and will exploit it (1 Pet. 5:8), just like Tamar exploited Judah in his mourning. Instead of running to the false comfort of sin when we are emotionally distressed, we must run to the Lord, because He truly cares for us (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

Finally, we must be consistent in judgment. Judah was quick to condemn Tamar, though he was guilty of the same sin. We may look down on Judah, but how often do we act the same? How often do we apply the scriptures to denominations and non-Christians but fail to apply them to ourselves? There are many things we can condemn in our society, but if we too are participating in them, we are just as guilty as they (Rom. 1:32, Gal. 5:19-21).

Judah's family was a mess because of sinful behavior. If we want our families to experience a better life, then we must learn from the mistakes of our predecessors, striving to obey the will of God. – D.J. Stucky

From Faith to Faith, Granbury Street Church of Christ Weekly Bulletin, December 10, 2017.

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of January 19, 2020

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Mark FitzSimmons
Scripture Reading: Kirk FitzSimmons

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Bryce Dolan
Fruit of the Vine: Clifton Rutherford
Offering: Dale Hill
Assist: Curtis Scherffius, Pat Gooch, Isaac Jobs

Sunday Evening: Bryce Dolan, Clifton Rutherford

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Jeff Harris
P.M. Closing: Dale Hill

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Sun. P.M.: Mike McVey
Wednesday: Fred Scherffius

Usher: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional: Anthony Scherffius

Open/Close Building: Whites

Sound System: Will Burleson

Greeters: Lupe Escojido
Doug Jobs

Prepare Communion: Dolan

SPECIAL NOTE:

Glenodine Pitts would like to thank the ladies who attended her 100th birthday party on January 4th, 2020. Glenodine would also like to thank everyone who sent her birthday cards and well wishes for this special occasion.

**LADIES' DAY 2020
"BIND US TOGETHER"**

Speaker: Jennifer O'Banon
Saturday, February 8, 2020 @ MidTown church of Christ
Registration: 9-9:30am
Lunch will be provided.



IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Paul Solis, who is the son-in-law of Lupe Escojido's brother, who is in San Antonio waiting for a liver transplant.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 21, 28: Tuesday Men's and Ladies Bible Class
Jan. 22: Barry Hatcher speaking on Indonesia missions.
Feb. 8: Ladies' Day hosted by MidTown. Registration begins @ 9am. Lunch will be provided.

AREA EVENTS

Jan. 31-Feb. 1: Young Ladies' Day for Middle and High School Girls @ University church of Christ in San Marcus. More info on the bulletin board.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Nina Siegel (21); Phillip Garcia (24)

Happy Anniversary: Richard & Marva Hill (25)



The Wedding of Alex Scherffius to Jesse Moser is Tuesday, January 28th, 2020 at 7pm at Southwest church of Christ in Austin, TX. Reception to follow. The couple is registered at Target, Bed, Bath & Beyond, and Amazon. All are invited to attend.

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of January 12, 2020

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Bible Class..... | 114 |
| A.M. Worship..... | 144 |
| P.M. Worship..... | 84 |
| Wednesday Bible Class..... | 77 |

Offering \$3,522

Reading for this week:

Listen to these words from the apostle Paul (who also had a lot of heartbreak in life): "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication WITH THANKSGIVING let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli
Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore
Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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