

## Accounting To Christ.

Text: Matt 25:14-30

Suggested Hymns:

518T526, 488, 492, 352, 374

1) We Are Responsible To Christ

2) Therefore Let Us Be Ready To Give An Accounting

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Matthew 25:14–30, <sup>14</sup> *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.*

<sup>15</sup> *And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.*

<sup>16</sup> *Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. <sup>17</sup> And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. <sup>18</sup> But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.*

<sup>19</sup> *After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup> “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ <sup>21</sup> His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

<sup>22</sup> *He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ <sup>23</sup> His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

<sup>24</sup> *“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. <sup>25</sup> And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’*

<sup>26</sup> *“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not*

*scattered seed. <sup>27</sup> So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.*

*<sup>28</sup> So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. <sup>29</sup> ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup> And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ (NKJV)*

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

One of our day’s most glaring faults is the sense of irresponsibility. Employers toward workers, parents toward children, husband toward wife, citizen toward government, rich people toward poor people, and vice versa in all cases.

This can creep into the mentality of professing Christians. The Church as an institution seems adequate to satisfy a few fundamental cravings for religion. But a dimly comprehended Gospel-message lulls the conscience, and religion becomes “for sitters only” instead of “for sinners only.”

The Bible’s strongest antidote for this poison of irresponsibility is before us in this parable. Parables almost always have just one central idea. Here the idea embraces two clear ideas: We are responsible to Christ for possessing and for using certain gifts, and we must be ready to give an accounting of our administration. May the Lord bless our meditation.

### **1. We Are Responsible To Christ.**

Christ has given us gifts, <sup>14</sup> *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.*

*<sup>15</sup> And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.*

These gifts come to each of us in varying proportions. The fact that one has more, the other less has nothing to do with our duty of responsibility. We all remain equally accountable. The gifts are in varying proportions.

Firstly, There are the gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. For example wisdom, faith, knowledge, discerning of spirits etc.

Secondly, there are also the gifts of physical energy, mental abilities, associations and friendships, employment and leisure, money and other property, and opportunities for advancement. In summary, every manner in which the guidance of God influences our life for good, for ourselves, or for others are gifts.

But these gifts are from God. They are not assigned in fee simple, but the title remains in the hand of the Lord. We are merely the administrators. The purposes to which they are to be put therefore are to serve Christ's purposes. The worldly attitude prevalent among people blunts this discernment. But this should not deceive us. We ourselves and our possessions are the property of God. We read in 1 Chronicles 29:14, *For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.*<sup>1</sup>

Christ holds us accountable for the profitable use of our gifts.

What is the profit? It is not to be reckoned in human terms. It is not a profit for ourselves. Rather the profit is one reckoned according to the standard of the Lord.

Spiritual gifts are to be used to their fullest extent for spiritual aims, for the good of the Christian Church.<sup>2</sup> Temporal gifts are to return a yield in terms of human souls, in goods that last beyond the grave, as we learn from the *Parable of the Unjust Servant* in Luke 16:1-13.

The emphasis in the parable is on the actual yielding of a rich profit, and the gifts are distributed for the one purpose of producing profit. We are judged by the Lord, not by how much we possess, but by how much the possessions produce in love, charity, testimony, and the saving of souls.

What is the accounting? This accounting is coming to us all, possibly unexpectedly, but all must answer. Our text says, <sup>19</sup>*After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.*

The unprofitable use of these gifts which the Lord distributes is the reason for rejection. In this world the rejection may work out in the curtailment of the

gifts, spiritual or temporal, the steward forfeiting his right to administer what had been entrusted to him.

Our text says, <sup>28</sup> *So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.* <sup>29</sup> *‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.*

In the life to come it means death, <sup>30</sup> *And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

Redemption has for its purpose the fashioning of the redeemed into the profitable servant, as we read in Ephesians 2:10, <sup>10</sup> *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Where the profit is lacking, it is evident that the relationship of faith and grace does not exist, as we learn from the Gospel reading for today<sup>3</sup> where Jesus describes the dividing of the ‘sheep and the goats’ of Judgement Day. We are saved to serve. We are to make profitable use of our talents.

It is wrong therefore to enjoy the grace of God, while embezzling the treasure, which He lays in our hands to administer for Him.

## **2. Therefore Let Us Be Ready To Give An Accounting.**

The unready person, is a warning against being unprepared for the judgement of Christ.

Let us consider the characteristics of the man not ready for the accounting.

He did not see the way for gaining a profit. He assumed that he could keep the goods assigned to him by God as such, without diminishing or increasing them.

It is the very nature of the gifts of God that they must grow, the spiritual gifts in intensity and usefulness.<sup>4</sup> Not using them is paralysing them.

We read in 2 Peter 1:5–8, <sup>5</sup> *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, <sup>6</sup> to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, <sup>7</sup> to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

<sup>8</sup> *For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The misuse of the temporal gifts likewise ends in disaster, as we learn from the Parable of the rich man in Luke 12:16–21, which ends with these words, <sup>20</sup> *But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’* <sup>21</sup> *“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Let us realise that we all have gifts that can be put to use and achieve a profit, whether large or small.

This man took a grudging attitude toward the demand of God that he should work.

<sup>24</sup> *“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.’* <sup>25</sup> *And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground.*

Even more dangerous, this attitude can creep into the thinking of the Christian; he may imagine that Christianity is all receiving, without any work. We read in James 2:17, <sup>17</sup> *Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

An unused talent cannot be kept for long. Like an unused muscle, it gradually wastes away. In the kingdom of God, an unused talent is confiscated and given to someone else. If we are neglectful or indifferent toward the opportunities that God gives us to serve Him in His kingdom, He will surely give those opportunities to someone else. God will see to it that His work will be done and that His kingdom will come.

Let us not imagine that because our effort goes into the skilful handling of the goods of life, the profit belongs to us. Working is simply our duty, as we learn from Romans 12:1, <sup>1</sup> *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*

The servants ready for the accounting give a glimpse of our own correct attitude.

Their characteristic may be summed up by their master in one word — “faithful.” They had been given a trust. They kept the trust. The fact that they were profitable resulted from this, *‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

They neither lost sight of the nature of the talents, nor of the responsibility they owed the master.

How can this faithfulness be preserved? Through the Gospel. The Gospel not only proclaims and conveys to us forgiveness of sins, but it also works in us the readiness to follow and serve Christ. This readiness is the gift of the Holy Spirit through the Word.

We read in 1 Peter 1:22–23, <sup>22</sup> *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,* <sup>23</sup> *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.*

And in 1 Peter 1:13–15, <sup>13</sup> *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;* <sup>14</sup> *as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;* <sup>15</sup> *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.*

And in Romans 6:22, <sup>22</sup> *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

The glorious end of this faithfulness is a blissful eternity, with responsibilities and dignities, as our text says. *‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

We are told in 1 Timothy 6:11–12, <sup>11</sup> *But you, O man of God, ... pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.* <sup>12</sup> *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

And in 2 Timothy 4:7–8, <sup>7</sup> *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* <sup>8</sup> *Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

In conclusion, to the world man's self-sufficiency, irresponsibility toward God, is part of his contentment and worth, but to the Christian working for the Lord here is part of sharing His joys hereafter. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> See also Psalm 24:1; 1 Cor. 4:7

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 12:26-27

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 25:41–46

<sup>4</sup> Philippians 3:12–14