

## Is It Fair?

Matthew 25:14-30 Text vs. 28 *“Take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags.”*

The *Parable of the Bags of Gold* is also known as the *Parable of the Talents*. It’s part of Jesus’ final teachings before His crucifixion as He was warning His followers to be ready for His return. We learned about that last week. Now, He wanted them to use their time wisely. So, He told them a parable, which is a short story with an object lesson that makes it easier to understand.

This *parable of the bags of gold* is about a master who handed over his wealth to three servants before he went on a long journey. He gave each servant a different amount of gold, called a *talent*. In the Old Testament, a *talent* was a unit of weight used for measuring precious metals such as silver or gold. Today, a talent is worth about \$150.00. And this parable emphasizes using your gift wisely and profitably. The first two servants invested and doubled theirs. But the third servant, buried his and did nothing with it.

And that’s the point of this parable. God expects you to use the gift He has given you wisely and faithfully. Each servant was only required to give an account for what was trusted to him. They did not have to give an account of what was done by the others. And it’s the same with you. You don’t have to give account for what God has entrusted to your neighbor. You only have to give an account for what you have. I don’t have to account for the evangelistic gift Billy Graham had. I must just give an account for the grace and abilities God has deposited in me.

So, what is to be learned from this? Stop making comparisons. Stop competing with other people. Stop looking down on people who can’t do some of the things you can do. Stop envying people who can do more than you can do. Just stay focused and be faithful with what God has given you. Then, look up to heaven and ask, *“Lord, what would you have me to do with your gift?”* Because God has given each one different gifts and abilities according to His wisdom and grace. In our lesson, talents represent spiritual gifts which are given to individuals by God.

So, in a broader sense, a talent symbolizes more than just material resources. It’s a spiritual gift. So, the Biblical meaning of talent goes way beyond money. It includes your abilities. Your potential. And how you use your gift for God’s purposes. Ephesians 4:7 says, *“to each one of us, grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.”* Romans 12:6-8 says, *“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. If it is to encourage, then give encouragement. If it is giving, then give generously. If it is to lead, do it diligently. If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully,”* which means, don’t compare yourself with others. Don’t envy their gifts. Be grateful and faithful using what you have. And 1 Peter 4:10 says, *“<sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”* That’s pretty straight forward. Identify your gift. Recognize your ability. Thank God for it, and then use it to serve God and others.

Let me tell you about someone who possessed a rare gift. Her name was Elena. She could play the violin with such grace and emotion that it moved her listeners to tears. People traveled from distant towns to hear her play. Elena believed her gift wasn’t just for her own pleasure. She believed it had a higher purpose. One day, a young girl named Maya spoke with Elena. Maya was blind. Her world was always in darkness! She had heard Elena’s music and she wanted to experience more of it. Elena was so touched by that, she decided to share her gift by visiting Maya every evening and playing for her. As Maya listened to Elena play, melodies danced through her head. Her imagination soared. She felt the vibrations of the strings. The music enveloped her. Weeks turned into months. Then something magical happened to Maya. She began to see - not with her eyes - but with her heart! Music began painting pictures in her imagination she had never seen. The sunrise. . . Rustling tree leaves. . . Rivers of clear water. . . Through the gift of music Elena had given Maya a new way to *see* the world. Word spread. Others joined in. The blacksmith made a sturdy walking cane for Maya. The baker taught her how to bake bread by feel and touch. The weaver wove intricate patterns into scarves so Maya could feel them. Each person used their talents to deepen Maya’s life. Soon, Elena realized her gift wasn’t just playing the violin. Her gift was about touching lives. She continued to play for Maya. But she began playing at the village square. Nursing homes. Orphanages. Her music soon became a bridge connecting many hearts. . . and healing wounds.

So, in that small village, the story of Elena and Maya extended outward to remind you . . . gifts are meant to be shared. Whether it’s music. Kindness. Knowledge. Or love. Using your talent for others will bring light to the darkest corners of someone’s world. And it will remind you; your gift is not just for yourself. It has the power to transform lives. And it will create oceans of goodness.

Matthew 25:21 tells us *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*. That verse is from a parable teaching the need for commitment to do something in all circumstances. God *expects* you to use your gift and your ability to advance His kingdom and to glorify His name. You’re not to hide or neglect your gift. You are to develop it. You are to multiply it. Whatever it is. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, *“<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts. But the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service. But the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of work. But in all of them, and in everyone, it is the same God at work. <sup>7</sup> Now to each one, the expression of the Spirit is given for the common good.”*

In 2 Timothy 1:6-7, Paul wrote to Timothy, his faithful disciple whose unwavering commitment and service alongside Paul contributed greatly to the early Christian movement, *"I remind you, fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid. But gives us power, love, and self-discipline."* Paul was reminding Timothy; God had not given him a spirit of fear. God had given him a spirit of power. A spirit of love. And a spirit of self-control. Paul was challenging Timothy, as he was facing as a young pastor in Ephesus: False teachers. Persecution. Discouragement. Paul encouraged Timothy to remain faithful. Be persist in his ministry. Don't be afraid. Don't be ashamed of serving God. Be faithful and hard-working. Love Him. And love others. Live a holy and Godly life. Don't neglect the spirit God has given you. And live in such a way that you will hear God say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant!"*

God's going to hold you accountable for how you use your gifts and abilities. If you have Christ, you have everything you need. Everything! Paul expressed this in his letter to the Philippians: *"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. Whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."* (Philippians 4:11-13, NIV) Having Christ in your life gives you a sense of completeness. A sense of purpose. And a sense of fulfillment that goes beyond the material realm. 2 Peter 1:3 says, *"His divine power has given you everything you need for life and godliness through your knowledge of Him who called you by His own glory and goodness."* Don't underestimate the awesome privilege of being *"in Christ."* As a joint heir with Christ, you can by faith, draw upon all the resources of God in all that you may need for today. It's not fair when your body is sick. But God is the healer. Call on Him to heal. It's not fair if you lose your job and can't pay the rent. But God is your provider. Call on Him to provide.

Hudson Taylor was a great missionary. He reached thousands in China with the Gospel of Christ. At one point, his resources were exhausted. He wrote his wife, *"We have 25 cents and all the promises of God."* . . . Yes, we get that! We're all thankful for what we do have. But what we should really be counting are the great and precious promises God has given us in His Word. That's more valuable than a \$600 million bank account. \$600 million is fine, but it's limited. The promises of God aren't! They flow out of an infinite God *"who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we can ask or think."* Romans 14:12 tells us *everyone shall have to give an account of himself.*

You learned last week that at the judgment bar of God, you won't have to account for the conduct of another. Each one shall give an account of himself. So, take heed. You had better be prepared to just tell with joy what you have done. If you can't, repent! Be baptized. And change your way of living because you are wasting and misusing your gift! Get ready and eager to meet your Master and to hear His approval of you. Because the *Parable of the Bags of Gold* teaches you that God has given each one different gifts and abilities. He expects them to be used for His glory and His kingdom. He's going to hold you accountable for how you use yours. You're not to be lazy. You're not to be afraid. You're not to be self-satisfied. You're to be faithful. Productive and ready.

Don't go home after this Service and bury your talent. Think and pray about it. Ask the Lord what He wants you to do with the gift he has given you? Then do it! And if you haven't already, let your Pastor or someone know where you would like to serve in your church. You will be investing your talent wisely. Investing it generously. And you won't be wasting your time. You will be using your talent purposefully and carefully for God. Don't fear Him. Love Him. And serve Him joyfully. Don't seek your own reward. Seek His approval and His happiness living in such a way that when He comes again, you will hear Him say to you, *"Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the joy of your Lord!"* AMEN