

—Matthew 25:14-30|| Expository Thoughts on Matthew by J.C. Ryle—
Module 80 – Parable of the Talents

Background and Context:

The parable of the talents is related to that of the parable of the ten virgins in that both direct our thoughts to the second coming of Jesus Christ. Both parables concern the members of the professing Church of Christ. The virgins and servants are one and the same. The practical lessons are however different. Vigilance is the key point of the first parable while diligence is the key point of the second. The story of the virgins calls on the church to watch for Christ to come while the story of the talents calls on the church to work.

Lessons:

First, we learn that all professing Christians have received something from God. We are all God's 'servants' and we all have 'talents' entrusted to our charge. Talents in this case has a different connotation in that we are all talented people. Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent. Where did these talents come from? All are on loan from God. We are God's stewards and debtors.

Second, we learn that many make a bad use of the privileges and mercies they receive from God. The servant that 'dug in the ground and hid his Lord's money' represents a large class of mankind. To hide talent is to neglect opportunities of glorifying God. They are burying their Lord's money. They are daily robbing God. He has lent them much and they make him no return. The words of Daniel to Belshazzar are applicable to every unconverted person (*Daniel 5:23*).

Third, we learn that all professing Christians must one day have a reckoning with God. There is a judgment before us all according to our works. This is certain, strict, and unavoidable. All peoples shall stand before God and receive their respective eternal sentence. We will have to render an account of every privilege that was granted to us. To whomsoever much is given much is required (*1 Cor. 11:31*).

Fourth, we learn that true Christians will receive an abundant reward in the great day of reckoning. The servants who had used their Lord's money well were commended as 'good and faithful' and told to 'enter into the joy of their Lord'.

Finally, we learn that all unfruitful members of Christ's church will be condemned and cast away in the day of judgment. There will be no excuse for an unconverted Christian at the last day.

—Matthew 25:31-46|| Expository Thoughts on Matthew by J.C. Ryle—
Module 81 – The Last Judgement

In these verses Jesus describes the judgment day and some of the circumstances leading up to that day. We should read it with the deep and serious attention which it deserves.

First, let us mark who will be the Judge in the last day. We read that it will be the ‘son of man’, Jesus Christ himself. The Father has committed all judgment to Jesus (*John 5:22*). Every knee shall finally bow to Jesus and every tongue confess that he is Lord (*Phil. 2:10-11*).

Believers may take comfort in this. He that will sit on the throne in that great and dreadful day will be their Savior, Shepherd, High Priest, elder Brother, and Friend. There will be no cause for alarm when we see Him. Unbelievers should be afraid. Their judge will be the very Christ whose gospel they despise and whose gracious invitations they refuse to hear.

Second, let us mark who will be judged in the last day; “before Him will be gathered all nations”. All that have ever lived will one day give account of themselves at the bar of Christ. All must obey the summons of the great King and come forward to receive their sentence. All that are judged will be divided into two great classes. There will be only one distinction. All that are found in Christ will be placed among the sheep ‘on his right hand’ and all that are not found in Christ will be placed among the goats ‘on the left.’

Third, let us mark the manner in which the judgment will be conducted in the last day. There are several particular points given.

- A. Judgment will be according to evidence. The works of men are the witnesses which will be brought forward, and above all their works of charity. The question will not merely be what we said, but what we did; not merely what we professed but what we practiced. Our works will not justify us. We are justified by faith without the deeds of the law, but the truth of our faith will be tested by our lives (*James 2:17*).
- B. The last judgment will be a judgment that will bring joy to all true believers. They will hear those precious words, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom’. They will be owned and confessed by their Master before his Father and the holy angels. The least and lowest and poorest of the family of God shall have a crown of glory and be a king!
- C. The last judgment will be a judgment that will bring confusion on all unconverted people. They will hear the awful words, ‘Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.’ They will be disowned by the great Head of the church before the assembled world. They have no place in His kingdom.

D. The last judgment will be a judgment that will strikingly bring out the characters both of the lost and saved. They on the right hand will still be ‘clothed with humility’ (*1 Pet. 5:5*). They will marvel to hear any work of theirs brought forward and commended. Those on the left will still be blind and self-righteous. They will not be sensible of any neglect of Christ. Let this thought sink down into our hearts. Characters on earth will prove an everlasting possession in the world to come, with the same heart that men die, with that heart they will rise again.

Finally, let us mark what will be the final results of the judgment day. ‘The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal.’

The state of things after judgment is changeless and without end. The misery of the lost and the blessedness of the saved are both forever. It is clearly revealed in scripture. The eternity of God, and heaven, and hell all stand on the same foundation. As sure as God is eternal, so surely is heaven an endless day without night, and hell an endless night without day.

How do we describe eternal life? It can only be measured by contrast and comparison. An eternal rest, after warfare and conflict; the eternal company of saints, after buffeting with an evil world; an eternally glorious and painless body, after struggling with weakness and infirmity; an eternal sight of Jesus face to face, after only hearing and believing.

How do we describe the misery of eternal punishment? It is something indescribable and inconceivable. The eternal pain of the body; the eternal sting of an accusing conscience; the eternal society of none but the wicked, the devil, and his angels; the eternal remembrance of opportunities neglected, and Christ despised; the eternal prospect of a weary, hopeless future.

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