

## Church Resource Pack: **Sermon Notes A**

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### **Sermon Notes on Matthew 25:14-30**

#### **Background:**

- Context: Jesus is referring to the sudden arrival of the Kingdom of God, as with the previous parable... The 10 Virgins. (Emphasis on being ready and prepared).
- A parable that is well known... but what lessons are really at the heart of it?
- N. B. what does a parable do? In a minimalist, but believable way, Jesus presents a story to challenge and encourage us to see his way.

What can we learn of Jesus' heart from the main players in the story?

#### **The Master:**

Who is he? Is Jesus talking about his own return? What does he show us?

- Actions: He entrusts them with his property.  
He goes away and leaves them to their own devices.  
They do not know when he will return?
- Character: What is his attitude to his servants? – gives responsibility  
How much does he entrust to them? –according to their ability  
What does he expect from them? – high expectations, initiative  
HIS DELIGHT! HIS ANGER!  
How does this bear on us? Now? In the Future?

#### **The Servants:**

Are they different from each other?  
Is it unfair, and who decides how much they get?  
How did they feel? How would you feel?  
Were they given a Job Description to use the Talents?  
Could Mr "One Talent" complain of unfair dismissal?  
Are they treated differently at work and at the end?

- Attitudes: How do they react to the Master's trust and expectations?  
Are they shrewd, responsible, trustworthy, active, imaginative  
**Or** Lazy, Passive, Frightened, Confused, Suspicious, Selfish?  
What does their attitude tell us about their relationship with their Master?

Verses 21 and 23; what strikes you about these verses? Is the *amount* important? If not, then what is? What characteristics do the first two servants share? What can they teach us about our relationship to our Master, and is there a challenge there?

What is the third servant's problem? Verse 24, what is going on in his heart... and head? And in his life and attitudes?

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**The Talents:**

Jesus' contemporary audience would have understood the talents as money. Some scholars claim that **one** talent was equivalent to about £150,000; others, say that it was equal to 6000 *denarius*, when one denarius is a day's wage for a labourer! So Jesus is talking **big** money! "*entrusted* his property..." (verse 14). This master is generous and is also taking huge risks and showing enormous faith in relying on these servants! The second meaning of **talent** becomes clear – their skills, acumen, ability, entrepreneurship.

**Application**

How is this parable relevant to us? Talents, in the Sunday school sense, can be a cliché. We all know we have them...but do we really? And which ones exactly? God knows of course, even if we haven't yet discovered! Is this reflected in the way we behave and use our talents? Do we really believe that the Master is coming back, suddenly and He will call us to account?

Striking points from Jesus:

- 1) Master/servant relationship? Master's LOVE and belief in his servants – Wow – this is amazing!
- 2) Master gone in person, but present by his Spirit. About to return in person.
- 3) Abundance of trust/abundance of resources
- 4) Our responsibility and expectation
- 5) Our desire/enthusiasm/ imagination
- 6) Our obligation for shrewd use of talents?
- 7) The coming day of reckoning and accountability – pride, satisfaction...or shame?

'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!'

**Illustration**

Five Talents gives people small loans (entrusting talents). There are currently around 20,000 loan clients worldwide, each using their talents to grow their businesses, helping to employ other people and supporting family livelihoods from the profits. This is also a shrewd use of our talents in the UK – giving to enable others to use their talents, to help them to climb out of poverty! For examples and case studies see the Five Talents website at [www.fivetalents.org.uk](http://www.fivetalents.org.uk)

Five Talents is an Anglican microfinance charity, whose Patron is the Archbishop of Canterbury. It started as an African-led initiative at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 and has now spread to support 14 microfinance projects, linked with the local Anglican church, in 10 developing countries.

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