

88. Settling individual account

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In the business world, there are two very important areas in each company. The first one is 'accounts receivable' and the other 'accounts payable.' At the end of the fiscal year, they must settle individual accounts to keep accounting right. Like that, each Christian and every human being need to settle individual account with God Almighty when the time comes.

As we finish Jesus' Olivet Discourse in this chapter, we can find three important things: Non-transferrable personal salvation in v1-13, faithful and unfaithful servants in v14-30, and Practical Servanthood in v31-46.

A. NON-TRANSFERRABLE PERSONAL SALVATION

Matthew 25:1-13 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

As 2 Timothy 3:16 declares, the Word of God is inspired by the Holy Spirit and there is absolutely no error. However, the chapter divisions were done by men. In most cases, they are good. But sometimes, they are not. This is a case in point. Chapter 25:1-13 should have been included in at the end of chapter 24, because Jesus still talks about the rapture. In this portion of the scripture, Jesus continues His parable of the urgency of rapture.

In Jesus' day, though the day of a wedding was known in a community, but the exact hour was not known. The bridegroom could show up at his bride's house any time, even in the middle of the night. When the groom arrives at the bride's home, he takes the bride with a procession of ten bridesmaids back to his home where the wedding ceremony and feast are waiting.

The five foolish virgins appeared to be prepared for the bridegroom, because they had their lamps. However, without oil, they were not ready for the bridegroom. In this case, Jesus is the bridegroom and He is coming back to take His church which is His bride, to heaven.

Throughout the Scriptures, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit consistently. Unless a person has the Holy Spirit in his heart, he cannot claim that he is a born-again believer. So how does a person get to have the Holy Spirit in his heart? Simply, receiving Jesus Christ into his heart. Nothing else.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

I asked you to underline v8 and 9. Salvation cannot be transferred from one person to another. As I said many times, no one can ride someone's spiritual coattail to heaven. No, it must be done by individual choice only.

B. FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANTS

Matthew 25:14-30 "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. 15 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. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 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.' 21 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.' 22 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.' 23 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.' 24 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. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 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. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 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. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Each servant in this parable was given money according to his ability. For your information, a talent was worth about twenty years' wages. So if you make \$40,000 a year, the first guy received 4 million dollars, the second guy got 1.6 million dollars and the last one \$800,000. I say, that is a lot of responsibility to handle. But God knows our capabilities.

It is valid to see these talents as resources in our lives – such as time, money, abilities, and authority. Everything we have in our lives belong to our God. We have been assigned our ministries and our lives according to the abilities and gifts God has given us. It is our privilege and honor to serve the Lord and multiply His goods.

Whether it is small or a lot, we are accountable to God for everything we do, we have, and we say. If we used them only for our own benefits, we'll be so sorry when

we get to heaven that we didn't use anything for our Lord Jesus. However, even if you have used everything for your own only, it is never too late to start your life and make it count for the Kingdom of God.

The three servants fell into two categories: faithful and unfaithful. The faithful servants took their talents and put them to work for their Lord. The unfaithful servant hid his talent in the earth. Instead of using his opportunities, he buried them! He did not purposely do evil. But by doing nothing, he was committing sin and robbing his Lord of service and increase. Some of you may not do anything for the Lord and for His kingdom. You are accountable for doing nothing.

The two men who put their money to work each received the same commendation. They started as servants, but their Lord promoted them to the rulers. What did the master look for? Obedience and faithfulness in His servants, not the "bottom line."

It's possible that some of us could have a saved soul, but a wasted life. In other words, you have the assurance of heaven, but you're wasting your life here on earth. You're not serving Christ to the fullest. Every person's life is filled with opportunities to serve the Lord. What we do with the opportunities is the big question. Do we let them slip by? Or do we seize the day and serve the Lord, so that we can hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant"?

The third servant was unfaithful and therefore he was not rewarded. Because this man was lazy as his master declared, he never tried to succeed.

If you desire to hear those words, then make a change in your life. Take what God has given you and make the most of it. You might say to yourself, "But I don't have much." Actually, you have everything you need to start. You have God's most precious gift, Jesus Christ. You have the Holy Spirit to empower you. God has instilled in your life certain gifts for His glory. That means your life is valuable. Take what God has given you and dedicate it to His glory. Then, watch what He will accomplish through you.

Instead of coming up with some lame excuses why you cannot serve God in His kingdom, I am asking you to ask yourself if there is any way you can serve Him.

2 Corinthians 5:8-11 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

You might be thinking, "I've already made a bunch of mistakes. I've messed up a lot." It is not too late to change. Start making good decisions with the Lord's help from now on. Do what you can to right the wrongs that you've committed over the years. And then, from this day forward, determine to walk with God and start living the way He wants you to live.

Our readiness for Jesus' return is determined by our stewardship of the resources that He has given us. Some think that "readiness" for Jesus' return is a rather mystical thing. It really is NOT. It is a matter of being about our business for the Lord. In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: what have we done with our knowledge? Our time? Our money? Our abilities?

The sins of omission which mean the sins of doing nothing may ultimately be more dangerous than the sins of commission. However, the real reason for this parable of Jesus is not about servanthood only, but it is about more for being ready to meet our Savior Jesus at any given time.

C. PRACTICAL SERVANTHOOD

Matthew 25:31-46 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 41 Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

This is about the judgement of individual people from all the nations. Both those who are found guilty – the goats, on the left hand – and those who are declared innocent – the sheep, on the right hand – are surprised, wondering when they helped or neglected Jesus.

The answer is simple: when they helped or neglected the least of His brethren, they helped or neglected Jesus. Because the righteous were not aware that they were helping Jesus when they helped the least of His brethren, and it shows that their motives were pure. It was a simple response of love from the heart.

One thing in common we must notice in today's three parables is that the ones who were cast into the outer darkness were the five foolish virgins who dressed like the others and carried the lamps and waited for the groom to come; we find the unfaithful servant who received a talent from his master to do his work; and we find a group of goats which used to be mingled with sheep and get separated from the master.

Jesus is telling us that these are the people who think that they are the followers of Christ, they smell like Christians, they act like Christians, they talk like Christians, and they look like Christians, yet they did not have a personal relationship with the Savior. People around them may not know, but God knows.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to examine our hearts for the moment of the rapture. Either you will go with Jesus or you will be left behind.

If you are not absolutely sure that you're ready to fly when the rapture happens, get your ticket fast. As long as they are available, they are free, because Jesus paid for it with His life. But don't dare put it off. The rapture can happen any moment.

2) Let's make ourselves available to Him instead of coming up with sorry excuses of why we cannot.

God knows what kind of capability we have, because He created us. Our Lord is not looking for our ability, rather our availability. Are you available to Him?