

# *Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*

*February 14, 2021*

*“Action Flows From...”*

*Sunday school at 8:30, Service at 9:15, Service at 10:45 with King’s Kids.*

*NEWS*

Wednesday Night Activities at 6:30 PM

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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Emails: [pastor@myaletheia.com](mailto:pastor@myaletheia.com), [stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com](mailto:stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com)

## **MATTHEW 25:14-30 ~**

The last of three parables. The first emphasized action flowing from character and character flowing from relationship.

In the second parable, there were the “Prudent,” *φρόνιμος* (*fřō-nē-mōs*), and the *μωρός* (*mō-rōs*). The latter were prepared, but not enough for the unexpected.

The third parable is long... When I read it out loud, you got an impression. That impression is the launching point to understanding.

It’s an example to reinforce the main point and application, as well as fleshing out the application. What is it to be ready?

“Talent,” is the Greek *τάλαντον* (*tä-län-tōn*). Each was given what they could handle...

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

The first word in verse 16 of the NASB is “Immediately.” It is εὐθέως (ü-thě-ōs).

Thinking that you have time to get busy is an assumption that shows your inadequate level of commitment, care, and concern for the master’s business.

These parables simplify the Judgment for the sake of the point. Every person has upon them, at this very moment, either the Mark of the Beast, or the Seal of God.

God judges the heart. Why? The action reveals the attitude, and the attitude reveals the heart, and the heart reveals the truth...

The first two are not only commended, but rewarded. That’s crazy enough, but then the master has them enter into His joy. They have both become the master’s friends.

They joined the master because they were just like him.

The third slave opened with a defense of himself that was to attack the character of the master. The master’s reaction is to call him “Wicked,” as in it was evil to take the talent and not do anything with it.

Then he called him “Lazy.” The word ὀκνηρός (ōk-nā-rōs), traditionally meant, hesitating because of a fear of failure.

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Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Welcome Friends*

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
**MATTHEW**  
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

*Alêtheia Christian Fellowship*



Matthew 25:14-30, 14“For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and

entrusted his possessions to them. 15“To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 16“Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17“In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18“But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19“Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20“The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.’ 21“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 22“Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, ‘Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.’ 23“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ 24“And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and

gathering where you scattered no seed. 25‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’ 26“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 27‘Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28‘Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.’ 29“For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30“Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is a supercool parable - I’m excited to go through it with all of you. Once again, Jesus starts off with a connecting word, which means it is an elaboration on what came before. In Greek, it is obvious that this parable connects with the other two parables we looked at last week.

# MATTHEW

## 24:45-51

### THE FAITHFUL OR THE UNFAITHFUL SLAVE

Hopefully, you remember the similar parable at the end of chapter 24. There a slave was entrusted with the care of his fellow slaves and had a choice to act well, or to act selfishly. Each choice resulted in a significantly different outcome.

The point wasn't so much a philosophical, or moral choice; it was a reaction flowing from the slave's perspective, his character, and his nature. On the one hand, the slave loved his master, desired to do what was in his master's best interest, and because of that, he loved his fellow slaves on his master's behalf. He treated them well. On the other hand, the slave loved only himself and took advantage of the situation at the

expense of the slave's in his charge, and by extension, at his master's expense.

Again, I want you to see a distinction here... He didn't do well because it was the right thing to do, or the noble thing, or even the moral thing. Similarly, he didn't do wickedly because he read Friedrich Nietzsche, or was a manipulative narcissist. It wasn't a philosophical, or ethical, decision.



1) The slave acted in one direction or the other based on his character. It boils down to how he related to his master and therefore to his fellow slaves. How he saw himself in relation to the two. Doing well wasn't about

doing what was good, it was about doing what the master wanted. Ultimately, because he was focused on what was best for his master. In this case that was taking good care of his master's slaves. It is action flowing from character and character flowing from relationship.

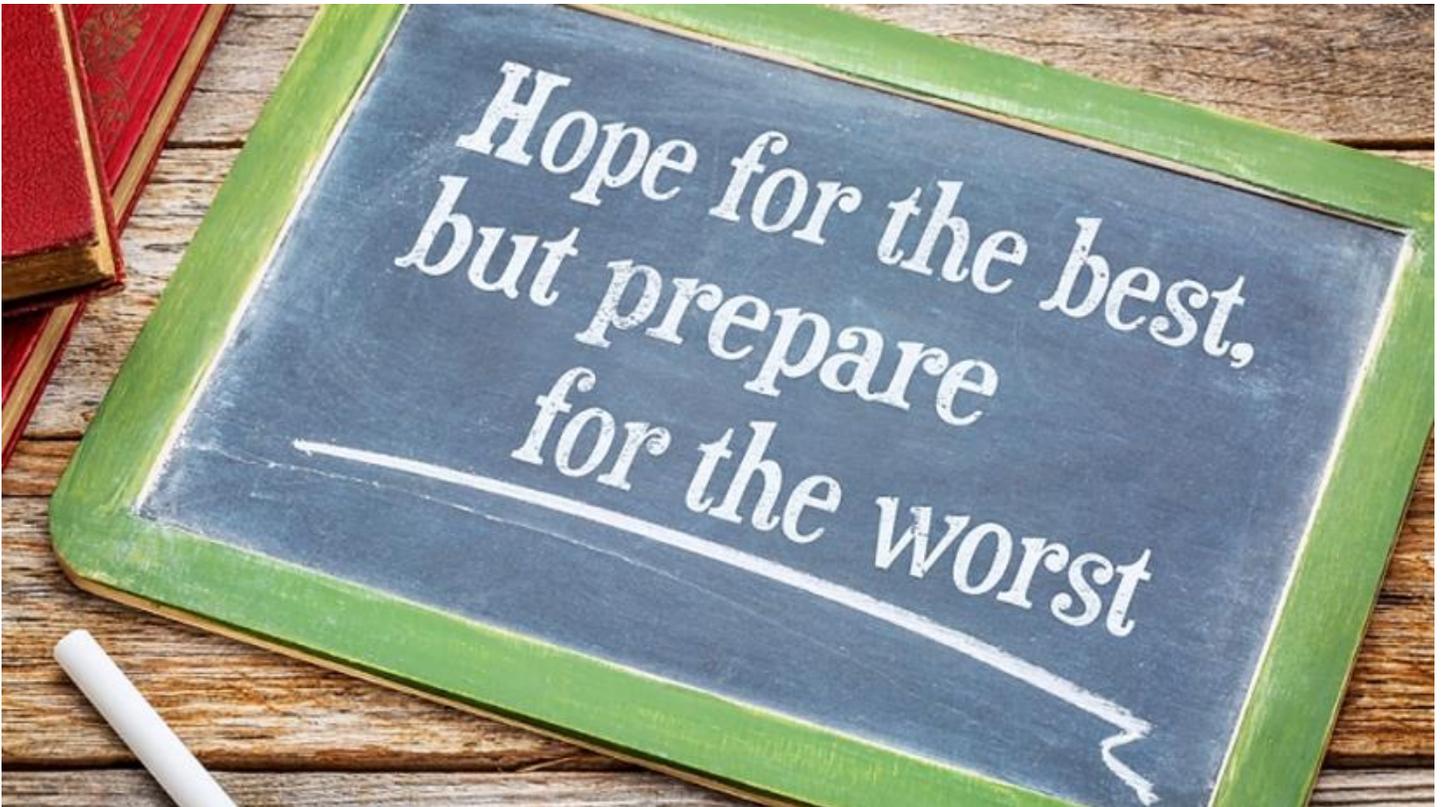


In the second parable, at the beginning of chapter 25, we had young women who cared, and others who were careless. Each group had dramatically different results based upon that single distinction. Jesus called the first group “Prudent,” φρόνιμος (frō-nē-mōs). It’s a reasonable translation. Holman has “Sensible,” which may be better. Most translations go with “Wise.” That’s

not as good. This Greek word is not about intelligence, or education, but on a practical insight. It is focused on an outworking in life that is based upon a grasp of the situation. These 5 women understood the circumstances. They wanted to be part of the wedding, realized that they might need extra supplies due to the uncertainty of the groom's arrival and took the necessary steps to be ready. They were rewarded.

Jesus called the second group "Foolish." It is μωρός (mō-rōs), from which we get our word moron (in Greek it is constructed as μωρόν when it is the direct object in a sentence as in, "Jesus even calls the μωρόν"). It isn't that they were stupid, incapable, or uninitiated; it was that they were unprepared. "Foolish" is okay, but the meaning goes deeper.

It is a foolishness based in thoughtlessness that itself is the result of not taking a thing seriously. That's really the key difference to me. It isn't that some were smart and others dumb, but that some cared and others didn't. They had not cared enough about the wedding to think through what they might need to get there. They didn't care enough to be ready for the unexpected.



2) That's what Jesus is trying to tell us here this morning. You might think that you're ready, just like the 5 "Foolish virgins" did, but is your preparation for the Groom's Return thorough enough for the unexpected?

Jesus went from that point directly into this parable that expands on what thorough readiness looks like. He starts with, "For it is just like." What is "It"? Some think Jesus refers back to the opening of the previous parable and so "It" is "The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to." That's part of the story, but it's more, and it's specifically "Readiness." What is it to be ready, how do you fit that category and receive a reward?



The parable is long, and some people get lost in it - that's too bad. What's worse, is due to its length, most people take it out of its setting and context, make it a standalone passage and then turn it into an allegory. Much damage has been done to Christianity because of it. We need to stop.

When I read it out loud, you got an impression. That impression is the launching point to understand Jesus's teaching. But, when we allegorize - when we carefully dissect this parable and assign meaning to the various components, we actually miss the point. You ask, what does that picture mean? Exactly.

It's a simple example to reinforce the main point that no one knows when the Master will Return and therefore, the application that, we must always be ready. Here, Jesus gives us a little more fleshing out about that application part of readiness... We Americans love the application part. As a culture, we're very pragmatic - very practically minded, so today ought to be fun.



Even one “Talent,” was a lot of money. “Talent,” is the Greek *τάλαντον* (tä-län-tōn). It means to weigh as on a scale, and so came to mean a weight. As it applied to money in New Testament times, it was a weight of silver, usually about 70 pounds (32 of these 1-kilogram bars equals a single talent). The weight varied over the

centuries and under different empires, but generally was worth 6,000 Greek drachmas, or more correctly drachmae.

A drachma was equivalent to a Roman denarius. Both were the wages of a typical soldier, or laborer for a day's work. Usually, 12-hour workdays. The annual Temple Tax was a single δίδραχμον (dē-dřäx-mön), meaning a coin worth two drachmas. Peter found a shekel, worth four drachmae in the fish's mouth to pay for both Jesus and him. So, even a single talent of 6,000 drachmae was a substantial amount.

Just to finish that thought and give you an extra tidbit of goodness this morning... Back in Matthew chapter 18, Jesus told the story about the slave who owed his master, was forgiven of his debt, but then went out and jailed a fellow slave who owed him. The forgiven slave owed his master 10,000 talents... That's 60 million denarii. That debt was forgiven by the master. The slave then went and harangued, threatened, strangled, and jailed his fellow slave who owed him 100 denarii.

The point is each of us has been forgiven an astronomical debt that we could never repay and yet we run around fussing and fighting over relatively

insignificant amounts. Anyone who does so, obviously does not get it.

From *τάλαντον*, we get this measure of money, but from its use in this parable, we get our English use of talent as in ability, gift, endowment, capacity, aptitude, forte... The talents that the good Lord blessed you with.

Each of the three slaves was given an amount commensurate with their capabilities... “Not too big, not too little; just right.” The master knows what his slaves can handle.



The first word in verse 16 of the NASB is “Immediately.” It puts the emphasis on that word, it highlights it like the green figure draws your attention and focus.

“Immediately” is εὐθέως (ü-thě-ōs). It is based in the meaning straight - to make something straight and so it is to get to something in as short a distance and time as possible. Straightaway, instantly, without any delay, and so, immediately. The NASB is the only translation that I checked, that correctly rendered this word in this place.

It's important, or I wouldn't bring it up. Scholars, commentators, and teachers will all elaborate on the meaning for the story, but only the NASB gives it the punch it deserves in the actual translation. The older translations like the KJV wrongly connect it with the master's departure... He went away immediately. Most modern translations correctly put the concept of immediacy with the action of the slave, but bury it several words from the front as in the NIV, “The man who had received the five talents went at once.” “At once” are words 10&11 - talk about burying the lead!



The point is that the first and second slaves wasted no time at all getting busy with the master's business. They were ready for his return 5 seconds after he left and remained so until he came back.

There's no vacation my friends. Thinking that you have time to get to business is an assumption that shows your inadequate level of commitment, care, and concern. for the master's business. It is that reality that shows that you're not his slave, but that you are still your own slave.

It will not do - it will not be rewarded. You will be with the selfish slave of the first parable and the foolish

virgins of the second. Not only will you likely be unready for his unexpected return, even if somehow you got it together before it was too late, think of all the time wasted... Think of all the potential profit lost.



In this parable Jesus developed a rhythm from slave one, to slave two, that you would expect to continue with slave three. Instead, a startling “But” is interjected. These rhetorical devices are masterful. Abruptly the pattern is broken, and we are told the third slave is not at all like the other two.

Notice in verse 19, it was after “A long time.” Even so, that’s relative. Many people take that to mean that

there will still be a lengthy delay for them - time to party a bit before getting serious. Not so. It's already been approximately 1,991 years. Jesus can Return at any moment... Any moment.



The master called his guys for a full accounting of what they did with the “Talents” that he entrusted to them during his absence. We assume that this is a picture of what is called the Bema Seat Judgment.

The Judgment where Jesus will evaluate the ministry effectiveness of Christians. Some will be commended, some will be chastised, but all will enter Heaven. Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned and therefore

it cannot be unearned. Salvation isn't about you, it's about Him and if you're in Him you are saved, even if there is nothing in your life that is commendable by Christ.

That's not this... Not in any of these three parables, nor in the examples that preceded them. Here Jesus was, for the stories, simplifying the more complicated reality.

Every person has upon them at this very moment either the Mark of the Beast, or the Seal of God. While we cannot see it, it is plainly obvious supernaturally right now. To God, to angels and to demons, yeah it's obvious.

To become a Christian is Christ removing the Mark of the Beast and replacing it eternally with His Seal. The Bible tells us that God judges the heart. Why? Why doesn't God judge the deeds of man? Why doesn't He simply judge whether a person confessed Christ? Why is He going to, and technically, already has, judge the heart of man?

It is the difference between those to whom Jesus says, "Well done good and faithful slave," and those to whom Jesus says, "Throw out the worthless slave into the

outer darkness.” The slave was His in both cases. Do we have here the possibility of losing the Salvation God has granted a person in Christ... Losing the indwelling Holy Spirit... Losing the Seal and being rebranded with the Mark of the Beast?

No! It is another example of the lesson Jesus taught over and over. The lesson easily seen in Matthew 7:21-23, 21“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’

When we don’t divorce that from its context, we know that Jesus was talking about fruits as in outward evidence of an inward change. An external effect from an internal cause.



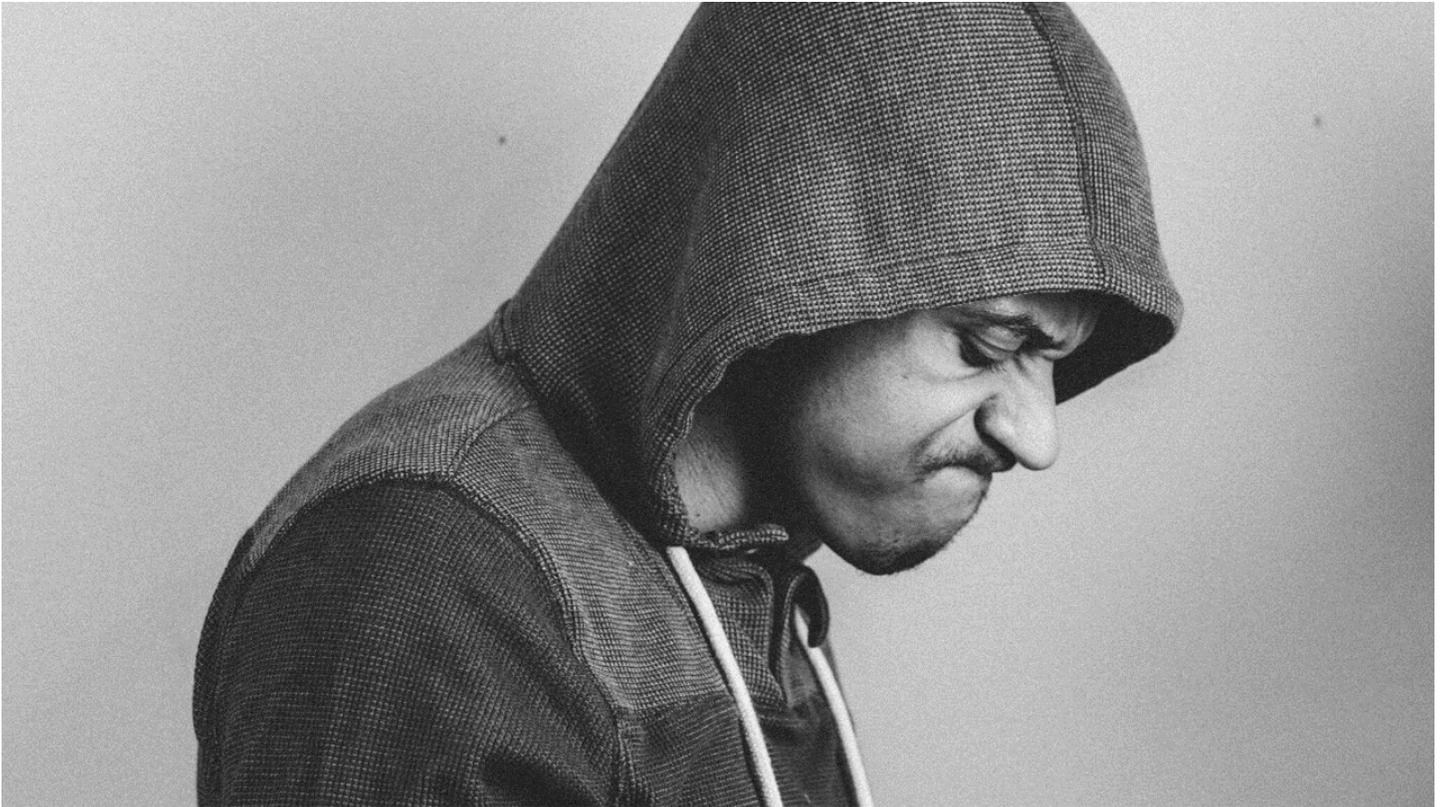
It isn't that we must shuck and jive, work and do, it is that our actions reveal our character. A person claiming to be a Christian, who has no Christian fruit is no Christian. The action reveals the attitude, and the attitude reveals the heart, and the heart reveals the truth... That's why God judges the heart.

Let's see if I'm right. The first two are not only commended, but rewarded. That the second slave earned less is irrelevant to the master. Both are treated the same. Commendation was unusual treatment for even the best slaves... Reward was even more unusual behavior for a master towards a slave... But then the master does something truly remarkable. He

has the two faithful slaves enter into His joy. They have both become the master's friends. One scholar said, "The mood of the statement matches that of what should have been the shared celebration by father and son of the restoration of the prodigal in Luke 15:32."

Why - because they doubled the sum? No, it's because they were "Good," and they were "Faithful." We see it all the time in the Bible. Christians are to be like Christ, who as God is precisely like the Father. It is the Holy Spirit who conforms us to His goodness and to His faithfulness. The first two slaves were rewarded with the joining the master in his joy, because they were just like him.

Contrary to popular opinion, it isn't about working harder, doing more, being your best you... It's about allowing the Holy Spirit to make you more like the Master.



On the other hand, the third slave didn't start off with the same rhythmic "Master, you entrusted X number of talents to me. See, I have gained X number more talents." He started off with, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid."

The opening reveals a couple of things. First, the slave already knew that he hadn't done what his master wanted and immediately opened with a defense of himself that was to attack the character of the master.

“I knew you to be a hard man.” That is a perspective of the master that was not at all shared by the other two slaves. It was that slave’s perception of his master.

The reaping and gathering bit, was a common saying to indicate a person who always had good fortune - who was abundantly blessed - who was constantly profiting seemingly from everywhere.

To those who like him, he seems blessed. To those who don’t, he seems like he’s a moneygrubbing profiteer getting ahead by taking advantage of others. In reality, he’s well prepared, works hard, and is willing to take big risks. Case in point, apropos, entrusting huge sums of money to slaves.

Again, it’s a perspective. The third slave didn’t know the reality, and he didn’t like the master so naturally, to him, the master was a hard man who was constantly taking advantage.



Then the third slave says because of that I was “Afraid.” The implication is that he was afraid that taking risks with the money might not work out - that he might lose the master’s money, instead of increasing it. He was terrified into inaction, and so, he simply buried the talent given him.

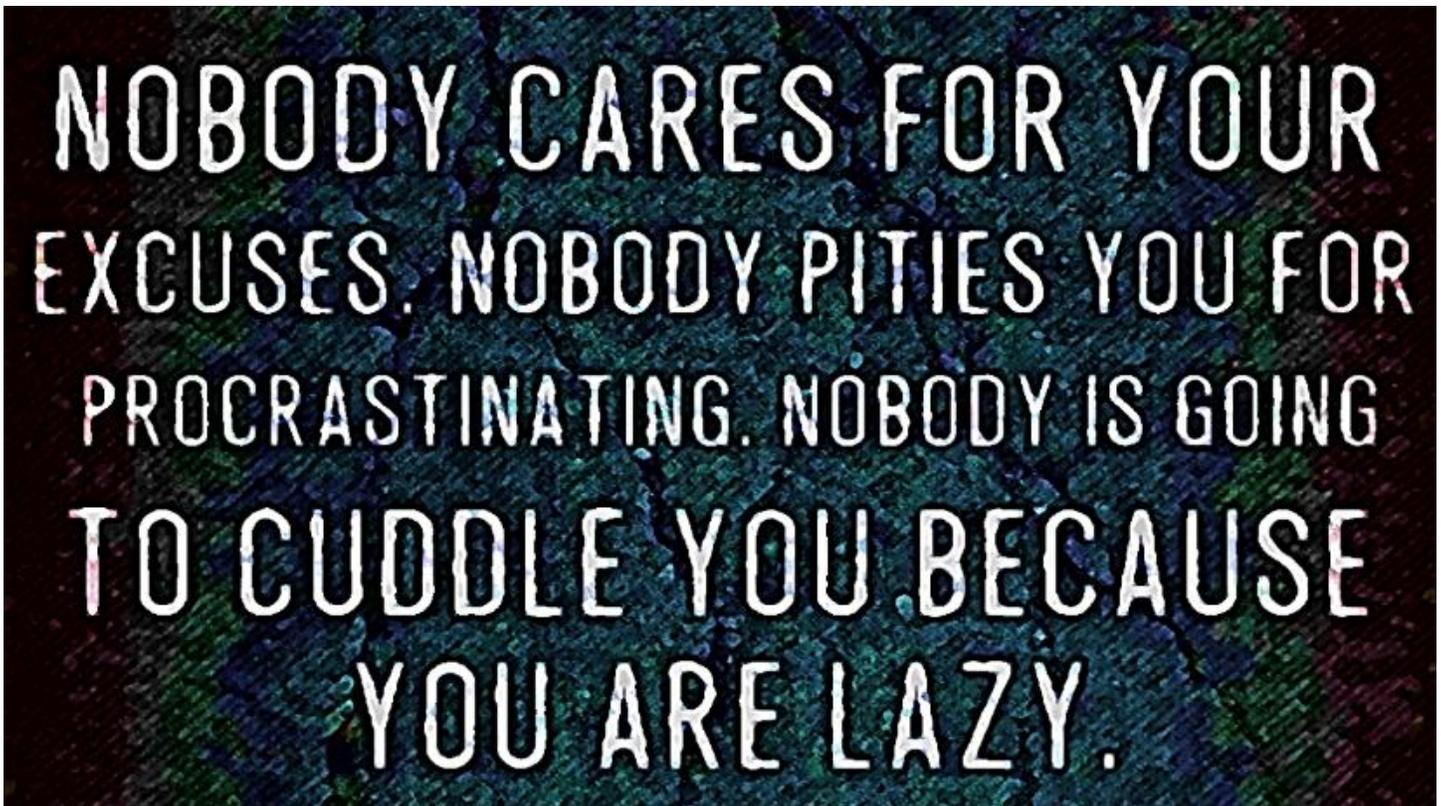
The slave then finishes with, “See, you have what is yours.” I don’t know if it sounds as sulky and even defiant in English, but it sure seems that way in Greek. It is definitely defensive. The slave was blaming his failure on the master.

Verse 26 starts with another abrupt adversative...

“But.” In other words, “In disagreement to your claims I answer this way... You wicked, lazy slave.”

“Wicked,” is evil, as in it was evil to take the talent and not do anything with it.

Most translations and commentaries go with the meaning “Lazy” for the second descriptor. The word ὀκνηρός (ōk-nā-rōs), traditionally meant someone who was hesitating because of their anxiety. It was to act too slowly because of a fear of failure, used especially of military commanders who were too scared to lead their men in battle. So lazy in the sense of being too worried to take any risk and actually do something.

A quote displayed on a dark, textured background with a mix of blue, green, and black colors. The text is in a white, bold, sans-serif font, arranged in six lines.

NOBODY CARES FOR YOUR  
EXCUSES. NOBODY PITIES YOU FOR  
PROCRASTINATING. NOBODY IS GOING  
TO CUDDLE YOU BECAUSE  
YOU ARE LAZY.

The master repeats the saying used against him. So many people miss the point and get bogged down in whether the master really was a “Hard man.” By repeating it, the master shows that it was merely a lame excuse. If the third slave really believed that his master was such a profiteer, he would have at the very minimum put the money in the bank where it would draw interest. The master saw through his excuse... It was just a lie to avoid responsibility... It was just a deflection to shift the blame. Benjamin Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.”



Verse 28 starts with a “Therefore.” It’s important because it shows that the master didn’t act out of emotion. He didn’t act arbitrarily or capriciously, but reasonably.

The slave had proven himself unable to make proper use of his talent and so it had to be taken away and given to someone else who had proven that they knew what to do with it. The slave was then cast out to never be welcome again because he was of no use to the household. Notice that there is no second chance. He wasn’t handed a participation trophy and told to try again.

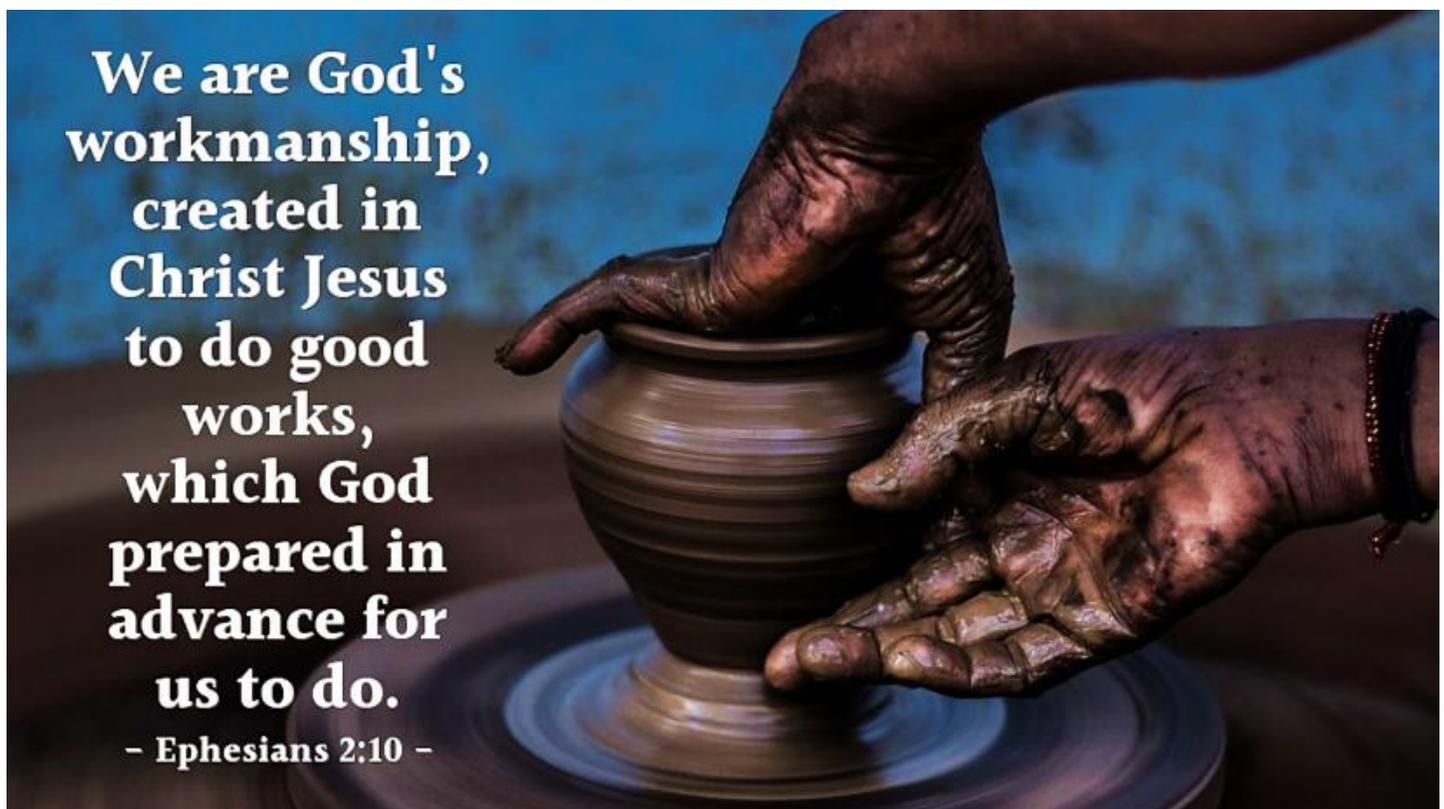


I mentioned at the opening that taking this lengthy parable out of context has led to many bad ideas in Christianity over the centuries, not the least of which is a western idea popular especially in America that Jesus approves of hard business practices.

Many wealthy people, corporate moguls, or small business owners have used the false principles erroneously pulled from this parable to justify their less than Christian attitudes in taking advantage of others. There is no such thing as a Christian side and a business side of a Follower of Jesus. If you are not actively generous towards those you do business with,

suppliers, employees, and customers, you are harming Kingdom business to advance your own.

We don't have time to go into it, or the other misuses now, so let me just say what it is... Jesus was establishing a spiritual principle here in conjunction with all He has already said on the subject.



Every person has a talent, or two, or five. Every person has life in them, and the abilities God has given them. Every person can choose to use those to do the Master's business while He's away, or they not...

Love is not afraid of risk, but fear dooms us to failure. The one who loves knows the Master and wants to be like Him. The one who fears does not know the Master and has no desire to risk anything at all for Him.

What of His that He has entrusted to you are you willing to risk in order to grow His Kingdom? He's Returning and there will be an accounting.