

Quail Neighborhood Men's Bible Study

Session 8

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew 25:14-30 (NIV)

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’

“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!’

“The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’

“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!’

“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

“Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

How much money is a talent of gold? _____

Do you think that a rich man entrusting huge sums to servants “made sense” to those who heard the story? _____

To whom would the listeners be likely to relate—the rich man, or one of the servants? Why? _____

Can you imagine yourself as one of the servants? How would you feel, being entrusted to manage a large amount of someone else's money? _____

Compare the master's words to the three servants. What words did he use to describe each of them? What matters to him, and what does not matter? _____

From what they said, what can you infer about the relationship of each servant to the master? _____

How might their relationships have affected their actions? _____

Think of people you have done jobs for. What bearing did your relationship with them have on your attitude toward the job? _____

How is the master like God and how is he unlike God? _____

How does our relationship with God affect our attitudes toward what we do? _____

List some of the resources God has given His people to further His kingdom. _____

How can you faithfully handle the responsibilities God has given you? _____

Summarize the message of the parable. _____

Prayer: Lord, You have given each of us talents. Inspire us, guide us and help us to use them in ways that multiply blessings and bear fruit for Your kingdom. Make us faithful servants. Amen.

The Parable of the Rich Fool

Luke 12:13-21 (NIV)

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?"

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

What can we tell or guess about the person in the crowd? _____

Discuss the appropriateness of Jesus's reply. _____

What is greed? What does it feel like to be greedy? Why is it dangerous? _____

What is the rich man planning? What is his attitude? Why? _____

Analyze what God says to the man. Why does God call him a fool? Why is the man going to die? _____

What does it mean to be "rich toward God"? What does the parable say about the relative importance of material riches versus spiritual riches? _____

In practical terms, what can you do to become "rich(er) toward God"? _____

Prayer: Father, we lack nothing we need, and we are grateful. Even more, we thank you for our salvation and the privilege of being called your sons. Help us to focus on the things that are important eternally. Help us be faithful. Amen.