

Introduction:

- We began chapter 24 with two questions posed by the disciples: When will this happen? Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. And, what will be the sign of your return (parousia)? Jesus gives signs leading up to destruction of Jerusalem. But regarding the second question he gives no sign. What he does give them is this: three short sayings which communicate the following.
 - The time of the parousia is unknown vs. 26
 - Therefore it will catch many people unaware. vs. 37-41
 - Therefore disciples of Christ must always live prepared. 42-44
- After the three short sayings driving home the three points just given, Jesus now launches into three lengthy parables to make the same point!
- The summary of 24:36-44 is summed up and the stage is set for the next sections. *"You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected."* (Matthew 24:44, NLT) Jesus now in the following verses begins to lay out how the disciple is to live prepared.
- Two weeks ago: The Sensible Servant, The Sensible Steward, The Sinister Servant.
- Last week: parable of 10 virgins
- You must be ready is the message.

I. The Parable Overview

- A. The third parable in this series of three returns to a setting similar to the first one in 24:45, a master dealing with servants.
 1. This time there is a more focused responsibility on what they were given to do.
 2. Each of the three are given a sum of money.
 3. Yet the "failure" of the bad slave consists not in any loss of money, but in returning it without increase. It was not that he did something wrong—he simply did nothing.
 4. ***This is, then, apparently, a parable about maximizing opportunities, not wasting them. France, R. T. (2007). NICNT Matthew (p. 951). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.
- B. This third parable is about making good use of the time before the parousia.
- C. The elements of the story are like the other two. Good and bad, wise and foolish, delay and preparedness, success and failure. The story focuses more on each servant's response with what he has been given by the Master. ***The parable becomes a story of maximizing one's potential and opportunities and not squandering them or passing them by.
 1. In the midst of the Master's delay...maximize profits.
 2. it is about calculating life and work rather than time and dates.
 3. It is about being ready for the return of the Master.
- D. Each servant is given the responsibility of a bag of money, according to his ability. The Master deals out His money to each servant according to the ability that servant has to earn

him a return. Again the parable is more about the responsibility than it is money the money or natural talents. The last parable was about be "ready."

1. The parable teach that each servant has God given talents and abilities that the servant must use until Jesus returns.
 2. Everyones abilities are not the same. But everyone has the same responsibility to use them till Jesus returns. Everyone is to work in bold and creative ways till He returns.
- E. Vs. 19 The great "delay" shows up again. The point is that the Master is returning in spite of the delay.
- F. Two servants are rewarded for doubling the Masters money. One is thrown into outer darkness after his money is given to the first guy.

II. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like

- A. vs 14. This parable too, like the 10 virgins, is introduced explicitly as a comparison of the Kingdom of Heaven.
1. The words, '*hosper gar*' indicates that the same subject is still being discussed.
 2. The focus is again on the responsibility of the servants in the masters absence only the stakes are higher this time.
- B. vss 14b-18 The different 'levels' of the Kingdom is based on ability given. The Kingdom of Heaven is not a 'one size fits all' Kingdom
1. It will be the servants responsibility to make the most of what they have been given.
 2. The first two servants "went immediately" to work. The third guys just went...no eagerness at all.
 3. There is risk involved for all three but only the last guys risks nothing.
- C. vss 19 The delay shows up again in this discourse. "After a long time..." 24:48; 25:5
1. The parables assume that the 'parousia' will not be immediate so what the disciple does in the time of Masters absence is important!
 2. The Master calls them in to give an account for what they have done with His money.
- D. vss 19-23 The Wise Stewards
1. Both double what was given to them.
 - a) First was given five and returned to the master 10
 - b) The second was given two and returned to the master 4.
 2. They are commended as 'trustworthy' like the servant of 24:45.
 3. They are rewarded not with freedom from their servitude but with more responsibility. You do not get to retire from being a servant! You get more responsibility along with added relationship of the master happiness!
- E. The third servant...gets our attention. He serves as a warning to the reader.
1. He buys the money. Because he fears the possibility of loosing what it important to the master.

- a) Risk is at the heart of discipleship: *"He who would save his life will lose it. Give up your life and you will find it."* 10:39; 16:25-26.
- b) Because he plays it safe, he risks nothing and his fear and lack of pursuit of increase for the master brings him condemnation.
2. vs 28-30 The twist in the story takes the spot light off of the master and puts it onto the servant who had 10 bags of silver.
3. The third servant
 - a) Is called wicked - bad, possessing serious fault
 - b) Is called lazy - slothful, slow to act hesitant.
 - c) Is called useless and thrown into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.
 - d) His bag of silver is given to the one with 10. When did that happen?

III. The Comparison

- A. Slaves are the followers of Christ in his Kingdom. He is the Master we are his slaves.
- B. The bags of silver are what Christ has given us to bring increase to His Kingdom.
- C. The delay
 1. Is the amount of time that will pass from the time of the ascension to his return.
 2. We are called, in this parable, to live responsibly with what we have been given bringing increase to the Kingdom of God. What condemned the third disciple was he was useless to the Kingdom of heaven.

Conclusion:

- What use are you to the Kingdom. Is their enough evidence to convict of being useful?
 - Can you be trusted with the Kingdom?
 - Will you live ready?
 - Will you be responsible to use what God has given until He returns?