

## Bible Study 26th August 2020

The Parable of the Talents; an alternative view.

A Talent was a weight, of silver or gold, it amounted to a considerable monetary value.

So, supposing that the man who goes on a journey is a 'captain of industry,' a top investment banker or a hedge-fund manager and that the two who are given the '5 talents' and '2 talents', respectively, are in the same business, the wealth and possessions game of 'The World'. They are rewarded, likewise, by 'The World'. The third man recognises the unethical nature of the business, ie, harvesting and gathering where there has been no labour or effort put in. The story can be seen as a warning for our time, that people impoverished and marginalised by the greed of the wealthy will find themselves in a worsening situation, along with those who campaign and work for justice and equity, at the mercy of the rich and powerful.

- Vv 14-17;      Be careful how we use our wealth and talents!  
                    Luke Ch16 vv19-31
- Vv 18;            To do the right thing may mean letting go and denying ourselves.  
                    Matt' Ch16 vv24-26
- Vv19-23;        Have we been good stewards?  
                    Matt' Ch25 vv31-40
- Vv24-25         What is more important to us?  
                    Matt' Ch6 vv19-24
- Vv26-27         A case for taxation.  
                    Luke Ch20 vv21-25
- Vv28-29         What about tax evasion?  
                    Mark Ch7 vv9-13
- Vv30             Abiding by God's economy may well be very painful!  
                    Matt' Ch5 vv10-12

The story of the Talents, is the middle of a set of three parables, starting with 'The ten virgins', warning us to keep awake, be vigilant and be prepared. It concludes with 'The sheep and the goats', also a warning but pronouncing salvation and blessing on those who 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God.'

A Poem by Eddie Askew

Lord, I understand,  
that what you've given me  
is meant to be developed.

I understand.  
Which isn't the same  
as saying I like it.  
I'd prefer life ready-made.  
Bought off the peg.  
A reasonable fit, but cheap.  
Nothing too demanding.  
A holiday cruise,  
full of colour and romance,  
but air-conditioned from the heat  
of commitment.  
What you ask sometimes seems  
more like a seat in a galley.  
Rowing hard against the tide,  
and sometimes into danger.

A little exercise,  
a little love,  
a little bit of giving.  
is one thing - or three, to be exact -  
but your demands are so much more.  
You ask my life and time,  
my mind and heart.  
You're never satisfied with less.  
It seems a bit unreasonable, Lord.  
Too much for you to ask,  
or me to give.

But then, Lord, I acknowledge  
that your demands are made in love.  
That in its fertile ground  
my roots can spread  
and grow up to maturity.  
That what you offer me  
isn't the grind of soulless self-denial,  
but the affirmation of my being.  
That in the contradictory freedom  
that your service brings,  
I can be so much more  
than I ever was before.  
I find I'm rich with talents  
I never knew I had  
whether through laziness or lack of consciousness  
I'm never sure.  
And I can live beyond myself.

Lord help me step out  
in fearful faith today.  
Ready to use my energies for you.  
In hope,  
in confidence.  
With joy.