

Communion service

Bible reading: Matthew 25: v. 14-46.

Theme: Using your time wisely, knowing that judgement will come.

¹⁴ “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 So 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.’ ³¹ “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.”

Introduction

We have now come to the last part of the 5th teaching block in Matthew’s Gospel.

These teaching blocks are very important because they comprise the main messages that Jesus taught when He was walking on this earth.

Last month we learned from the **parable of the wise and foolish virgins** that we must be **ready for the second coming of Jesus**.

The only way in which we can be ready for the second coming of Jesus is if we put our **faith and trust in Jesus for our eternal Salvation**.

The way to Salvation through Jesus is firstly to recognise your own sinful nature, and that your sin separates you from your creator, the God of the Bible.

Judgement for our sin will surely come, unless we accept that Jesus has taken our punishment Himself as a way of being our substitute sacrifice, in place of us.

However it is not just enough to recognize our sin, we need to repent about it and confess our need to Jesus. This is hard to do, especially for good law abiding citizens. However, like Simon Peter, when you understand who Jesus really is, God in human flesh, then repentance is the only option.

(Luke 5:8)

⁸ When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

Our Bible reading is split up into two clear sections.

The first section is a parable that Jesus teaches to illustrate the need to be wisely active as we wait for His second coming.

The second section is Jesus's teaching about what will happen when Jesus returns. It mainly concerns the judgement of the nations.

Jesus will divide the sheep from the goats.

(v. 31-34)

³¹ "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:

Firstly we will deal with the parable of the "Talents" and then with the "Judgement at the second coming of Jesus".

Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25: v. 14-30.

The Bible is full of challenges to take advantage of opportunities while they are available.

Proverbs 10: v. 5, in the N.K.J.

⁵ He who gathers in summer *is* a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* a son who causes shame.

Isaiah 55: v.6, in the N.K.J.

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.

John 12: v.35-36 in the N.K.J.

³⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

The tragedy of a wasted opportunity is the theme of the parable of the talents.

Though the parable of the talents has relevance to every generation, Jesus was speaking at this time directly about the generation that will be living just before His return. (Matt. 24: v.34)

The exact time of Jesus' return will not be known in advance but the imminence of it will be manifest by spectacular and unmistakable signs.

(Matt. 24: v. 3-29)

The parable of the talents illustrates four aspects of spiritual opportunity.

1. **The responsibility that we receive.**
2. **The reaction we have.**
3. **The judgement we all face.**
4. **The reward we gain.**

2.

Before we begin this parable, there is one important thing that we must understand.

It is the phrase “the kingdom of Heaven in v.14”

In the New Testament the phrase “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven “are frequently used.

These phrases are used in two different ways.

Sometimes it refers to the invisible body of all redeemed people. Jesus used it in this sense when he spoke in Matthew 18: v. 3.

(in N.K.J.)

³ and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

This is the kingdom in its pure and exclusive sense.

However sometimes the Kingdom of Heaven refers to the visible outward body of those who profess to know Jesus and serve Jesus.

Jesus made it clear that there will be true and false in this outward appearance. There will be the genuine Christian and there will be the imitation Christian.

In both of the parables that Jesus teaches here, the wise and foolish virgins and the parable of the Talents, Jesus is referring to the outward profession of people. Both of the parables reveal, there are true and false professing Christians.

It is not easy to recognise the true and false in professing believers, but Jesus did say **“by their fruits you shall know them.”**

(Matthew 7: v.20)

As it is the work of the Holy Spirit to “convict of sin” (John 16: v.8) then anybody who continues in sin and behaves in a sinful way without repentance is unlikely to be a child of God.

1 John 1: v. 8-9 in N.K.J.

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. The Responsibility we have - v. 14-15.

In v. 14-15 we are introduced to a wealthy man who was about to travel to a far off country. He called his servants together and gave talents to each of his servants, according to their ability. Usually Talents refers to money. In this case it was not the amount of money given that was the important issue, it was the responsibility to use that money for the wealthy owner of the property and land.

In this case Jesus represents the wealthy land owner.

The servants of the wealthy man represent the followers of Jesus. Everybody who professes to know and love Jesus as their personal saviour will be given some responsibility from Jesus Himself. The money represents the resources that are given to professing believers in Jesus. These resources could be actual money, they could represent time, or they could represent gifts or talents.

No professing Christian can say that they do not have any responsibility to serve Jesus with what He has given them.

2. The reaction we have – v. 16-18.

In v. 16-18 we are told about the way each servant reacted to the money that their master gave them. The one who received 5 talents was very keen to serve His master and immediately went and used the money wisely to trade and doubled his money.

In this context the word traded carries the idea of doing business over a period of time.

The servant didn't just make one transaction and then did nothing. He traded over a period of time.

The point here is that he used what he had received and took full advantage of the money he was given.

It was exactly the same with the servant who received two talents.

However the servant who received one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid the money that he had received.

Hiding money in the ground was a common practice in the ancient world. There were no banks or safe deposit boxes.

The problem here is that hiding money in the ground is not a good way of carrying on a business and making a profit.

Although this servant had been given less money than the other servants, he had the same obligation to use it wisely in the best possible way.

We will see later that this servant had the wrong thinking about His Master. Wrong thinking about the person of Jesus will always result in the wrong service for Jesus. Understanding who Jesus is and your personal relationship with Him should always be your motivation for service.

3. **The Judgement that we all face. – v. 19-27.**

The exact length of time that the owner was away is not mentioned. However we do know that it was a long time.

The owner returned and firstly approached the servant to whom he had given 5 talents. He said that he had gained 5 more talents. The owner commended him for his work and gave him greater responsibility. He was told to “enter into the joy of your Lord”.

The same thing happened with the person who had received two talents. He was commended and given more responsibility.

However, the last servant who was given one talent was judged harshly by his master.

v. 24-27.

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.

This servant identified himself with his master, but he didn’t make any effort to serve his master. He was called a wicked and lazy servant.

The servant attacked his master’s character and accused him of being a hard man. He said that he reaped where he had not sown and gathered where he had not scattered any seed.

This lazy and evil servant represents the professing believer who has not responded to the Gospel message, in spite of having had the privilege of hearing the Gospel. This servant represents a Church attendee who will be caught by surprise at the second coming of Jesus. He had the privilege of knowing about Jesus but did not do anything about it.

In the final judgement we are told that there will be people professing to have followed and served Jesus, but in the end, Jesus will reject them.

Matthew 7: v. 21-23. In N.K.J.

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

God knows those who are genuine in their faith and in their relationship with Jesus, even when we are not sure.

4. **The reward that we will gain. – v. 28-30.**

We are told in v. 28-30 that the servant with the one talent that was buried in the ground, lost it, and it was taken away and given to the servant who had produced 10 talents.

In v. 30 it is made clear to us that the last servant represents those who are not true believers. And yet they came to Church, heard the message, but never responded. Their lives were never changed by

God's Holy Spirit. They may have seemed to be Christians outwardly, but they were like the Pharisees, very educated about God's word, but no personal relationship with Jesus.

If you are a true believer, one day we will have our reward in Heaven. We will be abundantly blessed with all that God has promised in His word.

There is still time to repent and put your faith and trust in Jesus. Will you come to Jesus today?

Judgement of the Nations – v. 31-46.

In the last verses of the final teaching block, Jesus reveals that He is going to Judge the Nations. (v. 32)

By the Nations, Jesus reveals that this includes everybody.

Nobody is going to escape God's judgement.

The Bible makes it clear that all sin is known to God and that all sin must be punished by God.

(Numbers 32: v. 23, Rom. 5:12, 6:23, Is. 3: v.11)

Romans 1: v. 18-23 in the N.L.T.

¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.

²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

The wonderful thing is that our sin can be placed upon Jesus Christ, God's Son and He can take the punishment that we deserve for our sins.

So if you are a true Christian today, you can celebrate the Communion Service with thanksgiving in your heart, that Jesus Christ has forgiven all of your sins.

He has given you a new life, in Him.