

Sunday June 30th 2013
One Taken, One Left
Part Five

1). Lu 19:15 *"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'*

a). Within the parable of the minas, as with the parable of the talents in Matthew Chapter 25, the Lord has used monetary units of exchange common at the time of His earthly ministry in order to provide a clear understanding of what is required of His servants.

b). Staying within the imagery of the parable, an amount of money is given to each servant, which overall constitutes all the master's money, and each servant is expected to take that which they have been given and produce a profit – this is an easy concept for us to understand.

c). The distribution of the master's money in the parable of the minas shows that each servant is of equal worth in the eyes of the master. No one servant is treated more highly than the next or thought of as more special than another.

d). And along with this equality of worth comes an equality of responsibility – each servant has the same responsibility with the master expecting no more and no less from each – 'do business till I come' – the responsibility for each is to make a profit on that entrusted to them – pure and simple.

e). What we see that does distinguish one servant from another is not the way each is viewed by their master at the outset, but what each has done with that entrusted to them upon the master's return – what we see here are

different levels of faithfulness with regards to the master's business, which we see through one mina becoming ten for one servant, one mina becoming five for another and one mina producing nothing in the hands of a third.

f). It is good for us to understand this – God does not play favorites – the degree of commendation and reward we receive is determined entirely by our own faithfulness. Let's remember - Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Jas 2:21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.*

g). And this is exactly what we see here with Abraham – Abraham was called 'the friend of God', not just because he was Abraham, but because he had faith, he believed that which God had said and then acted upon it.

h). With this in mind we should realize that to be 'the friend of God' is a status open to anyone who would have faith in like manner to Abraham – Ga 3:9 *So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.*

2). Mt 25:19 *"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.'*

a). The parable of the talents shows exactly the same thing but from a different perspective. In this parable we will remember each servant receives a portion of his Lord's goods based on his 'ability', with some servants receiving more than others.

b). But despite being given different amounts each servant is shown to have the same worth accompanied by the same responsibility that we saw in the parable of the minas.

c). Again we see here that it is not the amount they are given that is the issue, but their degree of faithfulness in exercising their responsibility. The servant who was given five talents and produced five more is given the same commendation as the servant given two talents who produced two more.

d). Again the lesson is clear – it is the degree of our faithfulness with that which the Lord has entrusted to us that will count when we appear at His Judgment Seat – this is exactly the truth that was given to us in the Matthew 13 parables - Mt 13:8 *"But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* All the 'good seed', the 'sons of the Kingdom' find themselves to be good ground and as a result of that yield a crop. We are dealing with the same ground, the same word of the Kingdom and the same responsibility to produce fruit, however, some as we see produce a hundredfold, while others produce sixty and others thirty.

e). The reason for the difference we can now know to be because of different degrees of faithfulness – and we can also know, from the evidence of the parables of the talents and the minas, that each of these 3 groups will receive a reward commensurate with their degree of faithfulness.

3). Mt 13:4 *"And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.*

a). What we see here in Matthew Chapter 13 would correspond with the servant in both our previous parables who took what he had been given and made no use of it.

b). And the reason for that which he was given being wasted is found in the Lord's explanation of the verses from Matthew 13 - Mt 13:19 *"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or*

persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Lu 8:14 *"Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*

c). For certain we can say that had the servant who buried that which he was given, within the context of either parable, produced an increase he would have received commendation and reward just as the others did.

d). But this of course he did not do – rather than exercising faithfulness he exercises unfaithfulness which would be the same as unbelief. He has not believed what his master had told him to do and therefore, for any of the reasons we have already seen, did nothing.

4). There are two further things we should note about the unprofitable servant, the first of which will take us again to the Matthew 13 parables – Mt 13:19 ***"When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.***

a). The failure to produce fruit is not a result of ignorance, never having heard, never having opportunity, but rather a failure to capitalize on that which has been heard.

b). In the Matthew 13 parables all those who failed to produce fruit had heard 'the word of the Kingdom' and likewise as we take this over into the parables of the talents and minas we realize that all the servants had been given the master's goods – in other words they had all received what they had be given, knew they had it and knew what they were supposed to do with it.

c). The second thing to note is that what we see in the Master's dealing with this servant is absolutely consistent with that found in Hebrews 2:2 – *'a just recompense of reward'*

d). Every servant gets exactly what he deserves demonstrating the absolute righteousness and absolute justice exercised by their master.

e). Just as the faithful servants receive commendation and reward so the unfaithful servant must receive rebuke and punishment – it can be no other way - Mt 25:26 *"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.....30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

f). This is the very same picture given through the parable of the wedding guest in - Mt 22:12 *"So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."*

g). The lack of a wedding garment and the absence of profit are one and the same – righteousness and justice are fulfilled at the time of Judgment.

5). 1Co 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

a). Within our own experience we must realize that ‘you are not your own’ – we belong to Him who bought us ‘at a price’. And consider the enormity of that price – this alone should make crystal clear to us that there is not one of us whom God regards more highly than another. The same price was paid for all making us all of equal value in the Lord’s sight.

b). And we should note with all seriousness that we all remain of equal worth in the Lord’s sight right up to the point when we appear at His Judgment Seat and it is here and here alone that a distinction is made between us, not on the basis of what he paid for us, but on the basis of our faithfulness.

c). The High Priestly ministry of Christ, the efficacy of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit remain in full force all the while we have breath in our body upon this earth so that regardless of our past choices, regardless of whether we are a moron, all can be changed if we so choose.

6). 2Pe 1:3 *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

a). This is in our possession, and has been so since we first believed – even if we have buried this we can still go and dig it up and start making a profit – it’s not over until it’s over and it’s not over yet.

b). In this verse from 2 Peter we find our mina and our talents, and the verse clearly states that the ‘all things that pertain to life and godliness’ are ours ‘through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue’.

c). Keeping this in mind look at what we find in - Col 2:1 ¶ *For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

d). It is interesting to note that Paul's 'great conflict' is not only for the Colossians to whom writes, but also for 'those in Laodicea' – and his great conflict is within the context of them 'attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ...'

e). The mystery of God is made clear in - Re 10:7 *but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.*

Re 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

f). Needless to say then we are dealing with the coming Kingdom of Christ in fulfillment of the Godhead's purpose from eternity pass – and do you remember what the Lord says to the church in Laodicea with respect to this coming Kingdom? - Re 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- 18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*

g). He instructs them to 'buy from Me' – to take that which they have been given already – 'all things that pertain to life and godliness', all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and make a profit.

h). Even in these last days when we find the 'church' in its most decadent, lukewarm, deceived condition the Lord still stands at the door and knocks - Re 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

i). For everyone and anyone who would hear there is still time to turn unfaithfulness into faithfulness, to turn loss into profit, to cover nakedness with glory. If such grace, mercy and love is extended to those who scripture

describes this way - Php 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

Then how much more should we who have experienced the antitype of Abraham's oldest servant bringing out the gifts of jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold and garments embrace with our whole heart the faithfulness that we should give to Him to whom we belong - Pr 3:13 ¶ *Happy is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding; 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, And happy are all who retain her.*

7). Heb 11:7 *By faith Noah, being **divinely warned of things not yet seen**, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and **He will tell you things to come**. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*

a). In the example of Noah we see that he had been 'divinely warned of things not yet seen' and as a result of believing that which he had been told he 'moved with godly fear' and made the preparations necessary for the saving of his soul.

b). The divine warning received by Noah finds its equivalent for us in the Holy Spirit telling us of 'things to come'.

c). And if we think about it this is exactly what He has done through our past weeks of study as just one example.

d). What has He told us? Simply this – we have all been given the Lord's treasures of 'wisdom and knowledge' through the Word which is Christ – Joh 15:4 *"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*

We are to take what He has given us and 'bear much fruit'; and He has told us that the Day is coming when the Lord will hold us to account concerning the fruit we have produced – He will want to know what return we have made upon the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that he has entrusted to us.

e). And in one sense the treasures of wisdom and knowledge fall into two interrelated categories – there is the knowledge concerning Christ's coming Kingdom and the Judgment that is to take place in respect of that Kingdom and there is what we have to do in order to be properly prepared to pass safely through that Judgment in order to receive a position of rulership with Christ in the Kingdom.

f). To pick up the theme from our message last week - Mr 16:16 *"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*

We are firstly to 'believe' – we are to believe all that God has revealed to us about the coming Millennial Kingdom, we are to believe 'the word of the Kingdom' – this has to be the place we start from.

g). And if we have believed, if the coming Kingdom is a greater reality for us than the world in which we live, then we will do that symbolized through baptism – we will die to our flesh in order to walk in the Spirit to ensure our entrance into the Kingdom - 2Pe 1:10 *Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.*

h). Conversely of course, if we do not believe 'the word of the Kingdom' we will not do that symbolized through baptism, consequently producing no fruit which will result in our condemnation at the Judgment Seat.

i). As we will remember from the foundation in Genesis - Ge 1:9 ¶ *Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so.*

j). It is only that which is raised from the place of death by the Spirit according to the word of God that can produce fruit.

k). And so in order to make a return on the investment the Lord has given to us we must choose to allow our lives to be governed by the Spirit and not by our flesh - Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

l). And the choice to live our lives according to the Spirit becomes a reality through the metamorphosis - Ro 12:1 ¶ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

m). And the renewing of our mind comes about through our proper engagement with the Word of God - Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

n). And it is of course 'in Christ' that we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and as we have seen, by abiding in Him we can 'bear much fruit'.

8). Ro 13:12 *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*

a). The Day of the Lord is at hand and must not overtake us as a thief in the night – we know what's coming just as Enoch did - Jude 1:14 *Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,*

b). 2Co 6:1 ¶ *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

c). Ro 13:11 ¶ *And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.*