

PSALMS PROVERBS & PARABLES



Everlasting Joy Or Eternal Judgment

Matthew 25.14-30

Main Idea

Faithfulness brings everlasting joy; faithlessness brings eternal judgment.

Overview

I. Setup

- Jesus is telling another parable that reveals how His disciples are to live in light of His second coming to fully restore His Kingdom.
 - It's like a master who entrusts "talent" to his servants while he's away.
 - Upon his return he will settle accounts with his servants.
 - The faithful will enter the master's everlasting joy; the faithless will receive eternal judgment
- This parable is about responsibility of what we have been entrusted by God (not necessarily about natural ability).

II. Faithfulness Brings Everlasting Joy

- The first two servants are entrusted with five and two talents, respectively.
- Each servant goes to work "at once" after their master leaves.
- Upon their master's return, they are rewarded by the master for their faithfulness, and are invited to enter into the master's joy.
- We are the servants; God is the Master; all of us have been entrusted with various talents to be used for our Master's purposes.
- All of us fail, but Jesus is the one true Faithful Servant; by trusting in Him we too can be counted faithful; and His Spirit will indwell us causing us to be faithful.

III. Faithlessness Brings Eternal Judgment

- The third servant does not truly know or fully trust his master.
- Instead of working for his master, he takes the talent entrusted to him and buries it in the ground.
- Upon the master's return, the third servant is called "Wicked and slothful" and cast in the outer darkness.
- This third servant warns us of the penalty for all those who are not counted faithful upon our Master's return.

Questions

Discussion Starter: *Why/How are we continually tempted to live without considering the future return of Christ Jesus?*

1. Read Matthew 25:14-30. What's the significance of the master giving the same exact response/invitation to the first and second servants? What does this tell us about the nature of true success/faithfulness in God's eyes? How does this contrast with the world around us?
2. Read Acts 17:9; James 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Colossians 1:16; Romans 11:36. How do these verses correlate to this passage? How does this inform our responsibility to God and accountability before God?
3. Have each group member name one specific "talent" and one way they can use that talent this week to possibly labor for the Kingdom.
4. On the surface it may seem like this parable is teaching "salvation by works." Explore why that is not what this parable is teaching. How does this parable point us to Jesus? But why is it important to realize that we are not excused from seeking to be faithful with all that God has given us?
5. What characteristics of the master can you draw out of this parable? Contrast the actions of the third servant from the first two. What does this tell us about the way the third servant views his master?
6. The third servant is cast into the "outer darkness" and "that place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." What does the imagery in this verse convey? Why is it important to realize such a place is real?
7. Some want to say something like "God loves everyone and therefore will not judge anyone." Why is this a faulty view of God's character, and of love and judgment?

Accountability Question: Has God brought to mind a specific talent/gift/ability that you are not actively using for the cause of Christ? If so, how can you begin to use it in a way honoring to God?