

**The Consequence of Lazy Discipleship as Found in the
Parable of the Eight Talents**

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THE PARABLE OF THE EIGHT TALENTS IN ITS MATTHEAN CONTEXT

The Gospel of Matthew records five discourses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of these discourses or didactic presentations ends with a formula, approximating “When Jesus had finished these words . . .”

The first of these five discourses recorded in Matthew concludes at Matthew 7:28 after 107 verses. The discourse presents a discipleship lifestyle.

The second discourse recorded by Matthew concludes at Matthew 11:1 after 38 verses. The discourse highlights negative treatment that may result from the practice of authentic discipleship.

The third discourse recorded by Matthew concludes at Matthew 13:53 after 50 verses. The discourse presents possible response options on the part of potential disciples.

The fourth discourse recorded by Matthew concludes at Matthew 19:1 after 33 verses. The discourse presents a strong reminder that discipleship will be personally expensive.

The fifth discourse recorded by Matthew concludes at Matthew 26:1 after 94 verses. The discourse presents discipleship as found in an eschatological setting.

THE FIFTH DISCOURSE

Jesus delivered the fifth discourse recorded by Matthew, known as the “Olivet Discourse,” while sitting on the Mount of Olives immediately east of Jerusalem (Matthew 24-25). It is an eschatological discourse that deals with the Second Advent of Christ.

Four parables within this fifth discourse present supplemental material related to the Second Advent. These four parables are “intended to arouse a deluded people and their leaders to a realization of the awful gravity of the moment” (Jeremias 63). The issues thus raised require one’s full and undivided attention.

AN ARGUMENT FOR A CHURCH AGE APPLICATION OF THE PARABLES

The four parables found within the Olivet Discourse are teaching instruments that represent “characteristics of the church age” (Gundry 475). The foundation of the church certainly had been anticipated earlier in Matthew at 16:13-19 and anticipated earlier in Matthew at 18:15-17 as to the church’s paradigm when discipline of its membership would become necessary, following the birth of the church at Pentecost (Acts 2). These two references to the church in Matthew are anticipatory. Advancing beyond Matthew 16

and 18, one finds that “these parables picture Christendom when Christ comes for His church” (Wiersbe 87). The parables in Matthew 24-25 anticipate church truth.

A GENERAL EXPLANATION FOR EACH OF THE FOUR PARABLES

All four parables of the Olivet Discourse command perpetual vigilance (Dockery 364). That is the primary application of each parable. Within the subject of vigilance are various other matters that need exploration and explanation.

A Simple Translation of the First Parable, the Parable of the Fig Tree

Now learn a parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and put forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that the Son of Man is near, right at the door. Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and being married off, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know what day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the household had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his home to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

The first parable (Matthew 24:32-44) utilizes Noah’s flood, offering an exhortation to watchfulness. In the immediate context of the parable the primary lesson is Christ’s completely unexpected return. That is the primary lesson, but not the only lesson. In fact, the return of Christ is certainly unexpected, but also unpredictable.

But utilizing the illustration from Genesis 6-7, Jesus demonstrates that though Noah and his family were prepared for the flood, the timing of the cataclysm was revealed only at the last moment. From this we can safely conclude that a disciple of Christ does not sit around idle, watching the clock. A disciple must be a dedicated and patient steward who successfully focuses on accomplishing his stewardship.

Jesus makes this point via another word picture of a homeowner who is always on guard, keeping diligent watch over his property. But the introduction to the parable by using the fig tree maturational process makes the point that time is running out and should not be wasted. The word of the master will come to pass! One must stay alert.

A Simple Translation of the Second Parable, the Parable of the Two Servants

Who then is the faithful and sensible servant whom his master put in charge of his household to give them food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I tell you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if an evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and shall begin to beat his fellow servants and eat and drink with drunkards, then the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and the master shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and gnashing of teeth.

The second parable (Matthew 24:45-51) utilizes a story of two servants, featuring both a good servant and a wicked servant. The primary lesson is that Christ’s return is sooner than expected. But this in turn leads to an additional lesson. Jesus illustrates that a servant / disciple should keep up a ready state of preparedness, since that servant does not know just when his master will return. All servants are tempted to slack off from a constant state of diligence, and certain ones will behave poorly, succumbing to temptation. But the servant who falls short of faithfulness and diligence pays a high price.

The viewpoint that a wicked servant could set his master's schedule is ludicrous. Yet, to this temptation many succumb.

The point is that God rewards and punishes based on faithful stewardship. The parable additionally teaches the truth of equal opportunity, while at the same time not necessarily teaching the practice of equal distribution. The disciple must take advantage of his opportunity no matter how large or small it appears to the disciple. Failure to do so will cost a disciple dearly. The subject of equal opportunity, but not necessarily equal distribution, will be substantially developed in the fourth parable's third servant.

A Simple Translation of the Third Parable, the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten bridesmaids, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of the bridesmaids were foolish and five of them were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no extra oil with them, but the wise took oil in flasks, along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, all of the bridesmaids became drowsy and began to sleep. At midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all the bridesmaids arose, and trimmed their lamps. The foolish bridesmaids said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you also; go instead to the dealers and buy some oil for yourselves.' While the foolish bridesmaids were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the foolish bridesmaids arrived at the feast saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But the bridegroom answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day or the hour [of my coming].'

The third parable (Matthew 25:1-13) makes use of the traditions found at a typical Jewish wedding feast in the New Testament era, focusing particularly on the ten bridesmaids (popularly known as the Ten Virgins). The return of the bridegroom is later than expected. That is an important lesson found here. It looks forward to the Second Advent of Christ. Yet, do not fail to notice in the parable that some female servants of the bride ("female disciples?") are not prepared for the long wait the bridegroom demands of them. The imagery of the parable accurately reflects typical customs of first-century Palestinian wedding festivities. A welcoming processional typically escorts the newly married couple from the bride's home to a great banquet at the bridegroom's home at some unspecified time after the legal nuptials have been exchanged. Torches or lamps light the way in the darkness, so all the bridesmaids who are waiting for the arrival of the bride and groom must be certain to have enough oil to keep their lamps burning for as long a wait or walk as might be necessary (Dockery 369).

Additionally, all guests, no matter what their role at a wedding celebration, needed to bring their own oil to the event; and this requirement came to serve as an admission ticket. "Great efforts are made to have an abundance of light at Oriental weddings, which always take place at night" (Freeman 379). The foolish bridesmaids failed to make a serious effort and have something to contribute to the evening's lighting. Their failure to plan ahead would have embarrassing results for them.

Interestingly enough, it is every woman for herself in the story of the Ten Bridesmaids. Oil cannot be shared by the "spiritual haves" with the "spiritual have nots." Sadly, the extra errand required of the five thoughtless bridesmaids to obtain oil for their lamps, so they can join the marriage march and then be admitted to the marriage celebration, takes too long to accomplish. On festive nights such as this, special catering shops stayed open as long as people might need them to, so the foolish bridesmaids hurry off to fetch the required. Alas, the "five truant girls" (Dockery 370) are refused entrance anyway into the marriage feast. No oil-no admittance. Alas, they are too late by the time they arrive from the shop where they made their purchase. The foolish bridesmaids are

just too late getting back with their newly purchased oil. The door to the feast has been shut on them. The foolish bridesmaids are shut out of the feast.

The young ladies' cry of "Lord, Lord" takes one back to Matthew 7:21-22, which reads, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord' . . . Then I will declare to them, 'Depart from me you who practice lawlessness.'" The servant is bound to do the will of his or her master. To fail to accomplish the will of one's master has serious consequences. The foolish bridesmaids learned this the hard way. They should have been prepared for all eventualities. They were not prepared.

The moral or application of the third parable is that the followers of the Lord must be prepared, though not necessarily always awake, as an evidence of anticipation of the return of the Christ. God may well delay the return of His Christ. Thus, disciples must be prepared for such a delay. Disciples must realize that there is a point of no return if they are not prepared for His return. That is, when Christ returns, one's neglect of preparation will have no means of compensation.

A Simple Translation of the Fourth Parable, the Parable of the Eight Talents

For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his servants, and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another one, each according to his own ability, and he went on a journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.

Likewise, the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' The one also who had received two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has ten talents.' For to everyone who has shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The fourth parable of this immediate quartet (Matthew 25:14-30) makes use of the world of finance. The parable presents the needed preparation for Christ's return. Christ is represented by the master, and the long journey represents the Inter-Advent Period. The notice of the long absence of the master connects this parable with the one immediately preceding it-the parable of the ten bridesmaids.

Davies makes an important observation about this parable that the reader should pay careful heed to if the full value of the lesson is to be appreciated.

The eschatological element in this parable may be regarded as secondary. Its main purpose is given clearly enough to impress on the followers of Jesus the importance of the consecration of the gifts God has entrusted to us, and to show that though we vary in our several capacities the spirit of faithfulness and dependability in the performance of our trust is equally required of all. Such a quality of character enriches our endowments

and qualifies us for larger trusts, while neglect and laziness result in loss and deterioration of our original endowments (992).

In particular, and for our purposes, the fourth parable also focuses on the need for the good stewardship of all that God has entrusted to His children. The opportunity to do good works, make good investments, and thereby bring glory to God is at the essence of the parable. Though in this parable we have “unequal distribution” (Pentecost 408), the Savior is still teaching individual responsibility, while at the same time acknowledging individual ability. There is no excuse for not doing what God has given one to do.

Curiously, the parable of the ten bridesmaids is followed by the parable of the ten talented individuals. With the bridesmaids there was carelessness. With the parable of the talents there is laziness. The bridesmaids are waiting, but they are unprepared. The servants in the parable of the talents are working, but not necessarily all of them with wisdom or diligence.

An important lesson for the servant / disciple is that God sovereignly gives different gifts and proportions of those gifts to His disciples. Those gifts are to be used for His glory and for His pleasure. Everyone who receives a gift or gifts, no matter how significant, has the potential of being proportionately required.

A further lesson of the parable is that the person who receives a gift or gifts must not allow himself to focus on his personal opinion of how sensible or righteous the bestower of the allocation was with him. Negative feelings that result from supposed unfair treatment lead to anger, resentment, bitterness, depression, and fear. All of these bad feelings will in turn immobilize the one to whom assets have been allocated, and God will not receive the glory from His investment that He expects and rightfully deserves.

The lazy disciple in the parable will be made even more miserable than he was when he handled the one talent the way he did, for he is severely rebuked and sentenced to a life of wallowing in his own bad attitudes. In contrast, the faithful servants are commended and rewarded abundantly for their fruitful efforts.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE OF THE EIGHT TALENTS

The beginning of the Parable of the Eight Talents in Matthew 25:24 in the original Greek is somewhat abrupt and lacks the words “the kingdom.” “The Kingdom of Heaven is . . .” formula, so common to Matthew’s gospel record, where it occurs twenty-four times, is absent here. Instead, the text provides an example of anacoluthon (syntactic inconsistency). The reader is forced to return to Matthew 25:1 and thereby is made to understand that the speaker is continuing to dissertate about the Kingdom of Heaven. The writer takes for granted the reader would quickly grasp what he has done, so he does not have to repeat himself and can thereby avoid redundancy. The writer also creates a means whereby he can signal the close relationship between the two parables—parable three and four of Matthew’s fifth discourse.

The talent is the medium of monetary exchange used in the text. During the first century of the current era in Palestine the talent was a measure of weight in the range of fifty to eighty pounds, and it represented from three hundred to seventeen hundred dollars of value (Gundry 503). Wenham suggests, “. . . a talent being roughly equivalent to the wages of a working man for ten years.” The author of the Gospel of Matthew, Matthew Levi Alphaeus, a former tax-collector, would be especially sensitive to financial figures. The original language represents a monumental amount of silver coinage. For the reader this would be quite a shock, but not for the writer.

The parable begins with the allocation of five talents to the first servant. That gesture reminds one of the five wise and the five foolish bridesmaids mentioned a few verses preceding and the five loaves mentioned earlier in Matthew 14:17, 19.

The parable continues with the allocation of two talents to the second servant. That gesture also brings to mind the two fish mentioned earlier in Matthew 14:17, 19.

The first two servants are good servants who feel the responsibility of their assignment and who went to work promptly and without delay to improve upon their allotment.

The parable continues with the allocation of one talent to the third servant. The third servant's response, or rather reaction, will await further discussion.

An accounting of the allocations distributed to all three servants was put off for a long period of time. (Compare Matthew 24:48; 25:5.) At last the allocator of the assets in trust returned. A reward for each of the three servants was available as determined by the master.

The words of the master of the two diligent servants falls into three parts: 1) commendation with hearty praise, 2) exaltation by appointment to additional responsibility, and 3) communion with an invitation to share the master's joy. The reward or outcome for their faithful stewardship is twofold: 1) increased allocation of assets and 2) mutuality in the master's enjoyment.

The good work of the first two servants demonstrated the reality of their faithful stewardships as they served their master responsibly.

THE THIRD SERVANT'S PROVERBIAL ASSESSMENT AND REACTION

The assessment by the third servant of the way his master did business is transparently crass. This servant saw his master as a kind of curmudgeon who exploited the hard labor of others. There is a hint here that servant number three thought he would see little profit from any effort he put forth on his master's behalf.

The servant may well have been piqued at having been given much less responsibility than the first servant and half the responsibility of the second servant.

This servant could not submit to the master's judgment of his two fellow servants or himself. The problem for this poor servant was that failure to make good use of the talent he was given resulted in its abuse. The servant's lack of confidence in the wisdom of his master's actions was fatal to all of the servant's subsequent behavior. What could have been and should have been action on the third servant's part became reaction!

In the apology offered by his master that followed the scolding by the third servant, it is possible that the master is not agreeing with the charges against him, but rather saying, "If that's the kind of master you thought I am all the more reason to have put the talent to work. Your words condemn, not excuse you" (MacDonald 1298). Indeed, in the *Interlinear NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English* (1993), as translated by Alfred Marshall, the English translation of Matthew 25:26 concludes with a question mark. (Compare *The New Revised Standard Version*, *The New English Bible*, *J. B. Phillips - The New Testament in Modern English*, and *The New American Bible*, all of which conclude Matthew 25:26 with a question mark.)

This poor servant fails to appreciate the responsibility he has to his sovereign master, to his duty, and to himself. The servant admits not once but twice that the talent was his master's ("your talent"), and not once but twice the master reminds the servant that he was absolutely correct ("my money"). Nevertheless, the servant blames his failure to act responsibly on the master's personality and *modus operandi*.

Love would have motivated the third servant to serve and to serve industriously, but the absence of love means that the servant's fear, which could only make matters worse, accomplished that very result. Things were made worse, much worse, and the fear that possessed the servant became all consuming and immobilizing. The embedded fear of the servant had aroused a reaction and then led to the inevitable result, incorrect action followed by inappropriate inaction. Thus, instead of a promotion for servant number three, it is a demotion for this lazy fellow-even degradation.

What a terrible waste of misdirected effort on the part of the third servant! The third servant went to the labor of needless digging. Digging in the earth for purposes of security was a common practice in that part of the world. (See Matthew 13:44.) But fear drives people to the useless expenditure of precious energy. If people are going to dig, they need to dig and hide for the right reason at the right time. This fellow dug for the wrong reason at the wrong time and had nothing but a hole in the ground to show for himself and to his boss! He digs and then he wastes time by loafing away further time and opportunities. For his efforts, or lack of them, his fate is to be cast out into outer darkness, where he will weep and gnash his teeth (Matthew 25:30).

It is very important that one see the mutual usage of some of these terms- "outer darkness," "weeping," and "gnashing of teeth"-in other contexts in Matthew's Gospel. The same usage of this same terminology occurs in Matthew 8:12 and Matthew 22:13. Notice that there is no "furnace of fire" in these three references, but the addition of the term, "furnace of fire," can be found in Matthew 13:42, 50. Charles Stanley succinctly and correctly states:

"The final verse of this parable is so severe that many commentators assume it is a description of hell. It is not. Keep in mind that this is a parable. A parable is used to make one central point. The point of this parable is that in God's future kingdom, those who were faithful in this life will be rewarded and those who were not will lose any potential reward. Some will be given more privileges and responsibility while others shall have none" (124).¹

¹ (Note from the editor) For material pertaining to the issue of whether "outer darkness" unequivocally refers to those destined to eternal condemnation see: <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1992b/Huber.htm>

Eddie Chumney had said to an enquirer in email correspondence:

I have a Zodhiates Hebrew/Greek Key Study Bible. Zodhiates is Greek and is a Greek scholar. He has a commentary on the Greek word "outer darkness" as it is used in the NT. He explains that it can refer to BOTH unbelievers AND believers who LOSE REWARDS and are therefore, "wailing and gnashing of teeth". Here is what he writes:

"The expression outer darkness occurs three times in the Bible (Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30) and is always preceded by the definite article in Greek. It seems to have denoted an area outside a well-illuminated banquet hall where there was darkness (see the parable of the wedding feast in Matt 22:1-14). The person who managed to sneak into the banquet hall without the proper garment was cast into "outer darkness" separated from the ongoing feast. In the first two instances, "outer darkness" refers to a place of suffering for the unbelievers and is in contrast to the light where the believers will shine as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father (Matt 13:42-43). The "outer darkness" in (Matthew 8:12 and 22:13) is referring to Ge'ena (1-67) the "place of burning" (Matt 5:22, 29-30, 10:28, 18:9).

The expression "outer darkness" in Matthew 25:30 occurs at the end of the parable of the talents which emphasizes the necessity of SERVING Christ faithfully. However, the "outer darkness" of Matthew 25:30 may not refer to Ge'ena. Others say that this parable does not refer to all to be unbelievers or hypocrites but to the believers who neglect to exercise their God-given talents. The Lord calls such a servant (wicked ...4190) and (cursed 2672) (Matthew 25:41) despite the fact that he is one of the Lord's servants. This is similar to the instance where the Lord called Peter "Satan" (Matthew 16:23). Hence, these terms may also be applied to believers who have failed the Lord in their service. The words of Paul in I Corinthians 3:10-15 are in full support of the fact that the works of faith as servants will be tried by fire.

A SUMMARY AND APPLICATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN

Frank Grant titles Matthew 25:14-30, “Special trusts and the heart manifested by them.” In the body of his comments about this text he remarks, “The parable which now follows speaks of the special trust committed to the servants of the Lord in the time of His absence from them. As principles all these things apply to every Christian” (Grant 236-7).

The parable includes a fixed law in the spiritual realm that applies even today for the Christian. “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” (Matthew 25:29). (See the parallel to this statement in Matthew 13:12.) A Christian may lose his talent or talents or waste them, but the believer’s loss is sure to be someone else’s gain. That is, God will get His work done one way or another—through us or through someone else. Be assured that God will get His work done and the reward will be someone else’s!

What a great privilege for the Almighty to stoop to use His children in His service. Failure to fulfill our duty as the children of God means great loss. Yet, the task that God needs done will be accomplished by someone else!

The fourth parable summarizes the message of the parabolic quartet and provides an application to Christians. Watchfulness must be a hallmark of all of Jesus’ disciples. Watchfulness will lead to doing one’s duty, to growing, and to developing the resources God entrusts to His own “until He comes.” Then the master will settle accounts responsibly and fairly.

“The test of their service [the three servants] was not how much they earned, but how hard they tried” (MacDonald 1298). Sadly, the effort the slothful servant went to hid his allocated talent could have been better expended by simply walking or riding his donkey down to the bank and purchasing a certificate of deposit, and at the least he could have earned some interest on the investment.

THE PARABLE’S STARK CLOSURE

The close of the parable is quite negative. The close takes the form of a threatening note concerning punishment. The lesson is that Jesus will most certainly mete out to the disciple whose profession is not matched by doing good works exactly what has been earned.

Let today’s Christian disciple pay heed to the lesson taught in the Parable of the Eight Talents. Let the disciple of Christ never entertain the idea that he can take advantage of the grace gifts of God in any way whatsoever and not pay a very high price for doing so. Such behavior is very expensive.

Therefore, in this instance, the "outer darkness" may be a reference to a place of POSITION of far LESS REWARDS for the servants who proved themselves less diligent than those who used who used and exercised their talents to the fullest. The expression would then refer to degrees of the enjoyment in heaven rather than referring to hell. This teaching of varied rewards is part and parcel of the inherent doctrine of the NT that neither heaven nor hell are experienced equally by all because this would null the justice of God. Entrance into heaven is gained by accepting Christ's sacrifice for justification but a person's REWARDS in heaven will be determined by what he did for Christ on earth (Matt 5:3-12, 7:21-23, 10:15, Luke 6:20-26, 12:47-48, Acts 10:4, 31, Romans 2:1-16, 14:10-23, I Cor. 3:13, 4:5, II Cor. 5:10, I John 4:17, Revelation 20:11-15) ...”

So, "outer darkness" can refer to being cast into hell for an unbeliever. But for the believer, it can refer to being "outside" the ABSOLUTE presence of God (the Holy of Holies ... the place of the THRONE of God) (http://www.hebroots.org/hebrootsarchive/9707/970730_f.html)

A LESSON FROM NATURE

A lesson from the world of nature illustrates the matter of work (talents that are to be applied) and rewards (to be received). In every bee hive a large number of bees called drones always buzz, going in and out of the hive, but doing no apparent work. The drones are male bees--much larger than a worker bee and even the queen bee. The only function of the drones is to fertilize a queen bee before they die.

While waiting for a new queen to emerge, the drones spend their time visiting one hive after another. But the drones do no work; they make no honey; they build no comb; and they cannot even sting. The drone just makes a lot of noise, and it is all bluff. No work--just a bluff.

For a while the drones are privileged characters, but when fall comes and the honey flow slackens, the worker bees kill every drone! Not one drone lives through the winter. The time of reckoning finally comes, and the drones are denied the reward of the workers.

The failure to use the talent the master gave his third servant resulted in his being denied a reward. To fail to use one's God-given talents will result in the denial of reward for the Christian believer when he arrives in heaven. It is that simple, and yet so very profound. Let the child of God take heed.

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