

Christ Authorizes His Followers to Use Their Talents
(1 Peter 4:10-11)

Introduction:

1. Several passages in the New Testament teach Christians to use their talents.
 - a. 1 Peter 4:10-11
 - b. Romans 12:4-8
2. These verses are sufficient to show that "Christ authorizes His followers to use their talents;" however, in our lesson we are concentrating on "the parable of the talents" (Matthew 25:14-30).
3. Let us begin by examining . . .

Discussion:

I. THE SETTING FOR THIS PARABLE

- A. (Matthew 24:1-3) Jesus informed His disciples that the temple would be destroyed, and they asked Him when that great event would occur.
 1. From the questions that they asked (vs.3), it seems that the apostles thought the temple would be destroyed when Jesus returns.
 2. They wanted Jesus to give them a sign of His return.
- B. (Matthew 24:4-35) Jesus talked about the destruction of Jerusalem, and He gave a number of signs relating to it.
- C. (Matthew 24:36-51) Jesus talked about His return.
 1. (vs.36) No one knows when Jesus will return -- there will be no signs.
 2. Jesus said "*watch*" (vs.42) and "*be ready*" (vs.44).
- D. The Lord's teaching continues in Matthew 25.
 1. In "the parable of the virgins" (vs.1-13), Jesus emphasized the importance of being ready for His return.
 2. In "the parable of the talents,":
 - a. Jesus showed His followers how to be ready for His return
 - b. Jesus showed us why we must be ready for His return -- when He returns we will face Him in judgment.

II. THE PARABLE

- A. (vs.14-15) A man going on a long journey divided his goods among his servants.
 1. It seems that he would be gone for an extended time, but he did not say exactly how long he would be gone.
 2. He wanted his goods to be taken care of while he was gone, so he entrusted them to his servants.
 3. He gave his goods to his servants according to their individual ability -- this indicates that he knew the capabilities of each servant.
 - a. To one servant he gave 5 talents.
 - b. To one servant he gave 2 talents.
 - c. To one servant he gave 1 talent.
 - d. Note that there were no 0-talent servants.
 4. A "talent" was a considerable amount of money.
 5. This man was trusting his servants to care for his goods while he was gone.
 6. The servants would be responsible for the way they used his goods.
 7. He left on his journey.
- B. (vs.16-18) We learn what the servants did with their master's goods.
 1. (vs.16) The servant who had been given 5 talents gained 5 more.
 2. (vs.17) The servant who had been given 2 talents gained 2 more.
 3. (vs.18) The servant who had been given 1 talent hid his in the ground.
- C. (vs.19-30) The master reckoned with his servants.
 1. (vs.19) After a long time the master returned and asked his servants to account for the way they had used his goods.

2. (vs.20-21) The servant who had been given 5 talents was blessed for his faithfulness.
3. (vs.22-23) The servant who had been given 2 talents was blessed for his faithfulness.
4. (vs.24-30) The servant who had been given 1 talent was cursed for his wickedness and slothfulness.
 - a. This servant tried to make excuses.
 - 1) (vs.24) He told his master about how hard he was.
 - 2) (vs.25) He revealed his main problem: FEAR.
 - 3) He tried to return the talent he had been given.
 - b. The master did not accept the talent or his excuses.
 - c. This servant was cast into outer darkness.

III. APPLICATION

A. The symbolism:

1. The man going on a long trip refers to the time between the Lord's ascension and return.
2. The servants refer to the Lord's followers.
3. The master's return and the reckoning of the servants refer to the Lord's return and the judgment.
4. The blessing refers to eternal life in heaven, and the curse refers to eternal condemnation.

B. Let us put ourselves into the parable.

1. (Romans 12:4-8) He has given us different gifts that He expects us to use.
2. (1 Peter 4:10) He wants us to be "*good stewards*" of His blessings.
3. Stewards have 1 main requirement: FAITHFULNESS (1 Corinthians 4:2).
4. When Jesus returns we will be judged on the basis of how we use the blessings that He gives us.
5. We learn from the 1 talent man that God will not accept excuses.
6. We must not allow fear to prevent us from doing the Lord's will.
7. If we use the blessings that the Lord entrusts to our care He will bless us with more, and we will be prepared to face Him in judgment.

Conclusion:

1. How can we be ready for the Lord's return? (By using the talents and blessings that He gives us)
2. Why must be ready for the Lord's return? (When He returns we will face Him in judgment and give an account of how we have used His blessings)