

THE RESURRECTION OF THE HIDDEN TALENT

by Carter Conlon

Matthew 25:14-15: *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

What are these talents Jesus is referring to in this parable? Is it the ability to sing, play the guitar, paint a beautiful picture or do other wonderful things? Many of you possess such abilities and you had them before coming to Christ. We have heard people say, "Give your time, talent, and treasure to the Lord," implying that the natural talent you were blessed with is what this parable is referring too. We have to ask ourselves a few questions: "Is God unfair? Why does he give one person a single talent, another two and somebody else five? Why does the one who had one talent he never used have it taken away and given to the man who has ten talents?" Again, you have to ask the question, "Doesn't that seem rather unfair?"

Matthew 25:14: *...the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

To grasp the full power of this parable, you have to understand that Jesus was speaking about himself in this verse. He was God in the flesh and he called to himself all those who would be his ambassadors on the earth and "delivered unto them his goods." The goods he brought with him were his incredible compassion and mercy.

Furthermore, all the resources of heaven were in him and he made these available to all who trusted in him for salvation. These "goods" are the promises of God and his life in the believer is the power to perform them.

■ THOSE WITH A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO HIM WERE GIVEN TALENTS

Matthew 25:15: *And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

In the Greek text the word several means a special relationship. He came and gave his goods to those he was familiar with, those whose heads are leaning on his chest and listening to his every heartbeat. They may not have a lot of natural ability, but they are saying, "Jesus, I love you with all my heart. I want to be where you are. Wherever you ask me to go, that's where I want to go."

Secondly, the word ability in Greek is *dunamus*. It means "inherent power." I read the definition like this: "Power and miracles that come from Almighty God, which power is given to his witnesses and ambassadors." He came and delivered his goods to those who knew him and were open to receive his power. It is through this close relationship with him that several abilities are given. They are given to those who say, "God, I love you, I know your promises are true, and you alone make this Book a living reality to me. I do not look at impossibilities any longer, but proclaim that in Christ I am more than a conqueror." God comes and

calls together these types of servants, and delivers to them his goods.

The Scripture tells us clearly that we are given a new mind, a new heart, and a new spirit. We are made into brand-new creations in Christ Jesus. By the incredible life of Christ, we are made into what we could never hope to be in ourselves. When Isaiah prophesied about this day and this kingdom, he said, "The lame take the prey." Those who are nobodies, men, and woman, who have nothing in themselves, receive his goods when they believe God. In other words, he gave you and me the ability to do everything he's called us to do, to go everywhere he's called us to go. And we can conquer everything he's called us to conquer. This is what makes the Christian life so incredible.

■ GOD WANTS TO BRING YOU INTO NEW PLACES

In Numbers 13 the children of Israel had all of the promises and the opportunities we have today.

Those whose heads are leaning on his chest and listening to his every heartbeat

Exodus 3:8: *...deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.* It was always God's intention to bring his people into a land of Promise, a land with incredible provision. However, other people occupied this place of

Promise, but they did not have a right to dwell there any longer. The Israelites were called out of bondage to occupy the places of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now these are exactly like the places you and I have been called to occupy through Christ Jesus. For instance, God could be bringing you into a place of being made into a very loving person, but right now an enemy called selfishness occupies that place of promise. God does not want you to be afraid of it, for those walls of selfishness will come down. You will be known as a compassionate man or woman for the rest of your life. The promise of God is that you will be made into other than what you are. It requires a heart of faith to say, "God, I am simply going in. I am going to believe what you say, until these things that you promised me have become a reality in my life."

Come with me on this journey with God.

■ A JOURNEY TO SPY OUT THE LAND

Numbers 13: 21-22: *So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob...*

There were twelve men, each a ruler from his tribe, who were selected to go in and spy out this land God had promised. In some measure, whether or not you are a leader, you too are spying out the land. Come with me on this journey with God. When you open the Bible, you are not doing anything different from these twelve spies. They were taken into a physical place of promise; you are being taken into a spiritual place of promise. When you read the Bible, you are doing exactly the same thing they did—you are going in and searching this land of the Word, which is full of promises.

Verses 23: *And they came unto the*

brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

They spent a significant amount of time spying out this land. They found this cluster of grapes so large, with so much provision, that it took two men to carry it on a beam between them. This is a type of Christ. Grapes were symbolic of wine and provision. Now when you think of Calvary and the cross, you see two thieves on either side, and between them was Christ—the provision of God for everything that you will ever need.

The first miracle Jesus did was change water to wine. He referred to the life of the Spirit as new wine, which cannot be put into old wine skins. It doesn't fit into old religion; it has to be put into new vessels. Through him, the new wine of the Spirit comes into the life of those who receive him as Savior by faith. You may ask why he was crucified between two thieves. The answer is simple: This is accepting that they were other than Joshua and Caleb, who were men of faith. The two men carrying the grapes out of Canaan were like the two thieves at Calvary since they would bring an evil report. They were carrying this incredible provision, but they were not partakers of it. They went into the Promised Land and said, "It's all true," but they did not believe it for themselves.

■ AN EVIL REPORT MAKES YOU A THIEF

Numbers 13:26-28: *...and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.*

It's possible to bring a positive report about what God has spoken, but an evil report about what God is able to do.

This verse shows the type of preacher or Christian who says he has been on a journey in the Bible, and everything God says is true, but does not believe it for himself because of the giants. If you are pastor or a teacher, and you are in the Bible, especially if you are looking at it but not really believing it, doesn't that make you a thief? Aren't you bringing an evil report of the Word of God to people when you say the promises are there, but it's just not good enough to obtain them by a walk by faith? Instead, you offer some other methodology whereby they might take over the Promised Land.

The twelve spies came back into the camp with this incredible type of the provision of God in Christ suspended on a beam. Does not the provision of God come to us in the same way? God suspended his Son on a beam and crucified him between two thieves. That's where life comes from, where the grace of God reaches to us, and makes us more than we could ever hope to be in our entire life.

Verses 30-32: *And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land...*

It's possible to bring a positive report about what God has spoken, but an evil report about what God is able to do. That's in a lot of pulpits today: a positive report that the promises are good, but an evil report about God's ability to perform the things that he said he is able to do.

You and I have the same choices to make. You can come to church, fast and pray, and say, “God, take me into your Word.” You can shout and dance, and get excited, but ultimately every man, every woman, every young person has to make his own choice to go into this place of promise—to have everything God has for you and in every way he has determined to glorify himself through you.

■ THROWING ACCUSING STONES AT CHRIST

Numbers 14:9-10: *Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones...*

They were supposed to be picking up these promises of God and literally casting them into the foreheads of their enemies, conquering in the name of their God, yet they were picking up stones and preparing to throw them at the very men who were speaking on God's behalf. These stones are a type of contrary arguments against truth.

Here, in effect, this man is throwing an accusing stone at Christ.

This is always the pattern. There will be people who will sit in church for a season, shouting with everyone who shouts, but there comes a time when they say, “No” to God, because there are too many giants. Too many things in their past, too many walled cities, too many insufficiencies in their character. Ultimately, they pick up stones and begin to throw them at the preachers of the Gospel. They leave the house of God and pick up the stones of contrary arguments, saying they have had enough of this preaching. It leads nowhere; it does nothing for their life, or for their family.

■ GIVE IT TO SOMEONE WHO WILL USE IT

Matthew 25:24: *Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed.* Here, in effect, this man is throwing an accusing stone at Christ, accusing the Lord of sending him out to harvest while doing nothing for him. Sending him into impossible places by himself, knowing that one day he would have to stand before Christ and give an account of what he did. Accusing that all he was given was this insignificant little talent, this little deposit of Christ's life, which he took and buried in the earth. Notice, he didn't say, “I took it and buried it in myself.” Look at verse 25: “...there thou hast that is thine.” In other words, he was saying that Christ gave him a promise or two, but Christ can have them back since they meant nothing to him—because they did not help.

(Verse 26): *His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.* In other words, Jesus said to him, “You thought I was a man who called you to do things and then didn't give you the power to do it? Is that how you thought I was?” In this rhetorical question the Lord was saying, “If you weren't willing to use what was given to you for my glory, at least you could have given it to somebody who would use it. However, you didn't even do that. You just took it and buried it.”

■ A FOUR-TALENTED CHRISTIAN

Let me share with you how I saw this passage when I first read it in Matthew. I thought I was a two-talent Christian but afterward decided I was a four-talent Christian. It's even possible I am a twenty-talent Christian. This is not boastful. You see, the weakest, not the strongest, need the most talents from God. It's the

man or woman who knows they can't do anything without Christ that need his talents.

■ TALENT #1 – POWER TO WITNESS

There are instances in my life where I know I've needed a supernatural empowerment to go where Jesus has called me to go. When I was a young Christian, I could not stand up to witness for Jesus Christ. I didn't have the power. I could sing songs in church, but I would want to melt into the sidewalk when I saw another Christian walking my way while I was with some of my unsaved buddies. I remember getting sick of not being able to stand up for Christ the way I wanted to in the workplace. I cried out, “God, I want to live for you, but you've got to help me in this thing. I want to, but I can't.”

It's the weakest that needs the most talents from God, not the strongest.

Just a few days after I prayed, I was in a meeting of Christian ex-cons in a halfway house. They prayed for me and I received the power of the Holy Spirit and God gave me my first talent that day. Power to witness. The difference in me was amazing. God put a love in my heart and I started standing up for Christ in the workplace. Compassion started to flow out of my heart and I would witness to those I worked with.

■ TALENT #2 – POWER TO BE A GOOD HUSBAND

As a young Christian I had read in my devotions, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.” I felt, “Oh, my goodness, how am I going to do this?” My wife and I had been through some pretty troubled waters at the beginning of our marriage and I prayed, “God, I need you in order to do this.” I can't tell you the moment or the

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hour, but I can tell you that he gave me his goods, and he put a deposit of his heart within mine—a talent. That was my second talent. I started to love my wife in a way that I had never loved her before.

■ TALENT #3 – POWER TO BE A GOOD FATHER

I didn't know how to be a good father. I was a very self-focused, self-centered man. Being a father was such a hard thing for me. I began to cry out to God, and I believe that's where another talent came from. He started to enable me to be a father to my sons and my daughter, and beyond that, even nieces, nephews, and other kids. At what point did this happen? It happened the moment I cried.

■ TALENT #4 – POWER TO PREACH

I remember the time when God called me to preach the Gospel and to leave the security of my secular job to pastor a church. I remember crying out to him, saying, "I don't know how to do this. I was not raised in a Christian home, and did not even attend a Christian church. I have no idea how to do this." Again, I cried out to the Lord, and he simply began to guide me and deposit another talent in my life, he enabled me.

It's not the talented that need talents—it's the needy. Yes, the needy need these deposits of God's life.

■ ADDICTED TO GLORIFYING THE LORD

When I used to read the parable about the talents, I almost thought it was unfair that God took the talent from the man who only had one and gave it to the man who had ten. But God gave them to the man with ten

because this man had become addicted to honoring him; this man had an open heart. The best thing that could happen to you today is that you get addicted to glorifying God through Jesus Christ. I am called to glorify God by the power of the Holy Ghost within my life. I have promises from a God who cannot lie, and a God who will do what he said he was going to do in my life, because he cannot lie.

This man had every opportunity at any time to go back and get that talent, but he chose not to.

But today you and I have the option; we can go back at any time and resurrect that buried talent, that very thing that God first gave us that we may be neglecting. God said, "I've not forgotten. I put three talents in you right in the beginning, but you've buried them in another place." Let's go back there, let's take those out, and let's do it now. And I promise you, if you will do this today, you'll become addicted to glorifying God.

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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Intercessory Prayer	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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