

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE KINGDOM (1)

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:1, 6, 10-12, 14-30

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus spoke of the kingdom on three different occasions. In the Sermon on the Mount, given in Matthew 5, 6, and 7, He spoke concerning **the reality of the kingdom**. In Matthew 13 in a discourse given at the seashore, He spoke concerning **the appearance of the kingdom**. Then on the Mount of Olives, the Lord Jesus spoke concerning **the manifestation of the kingdom**. The manifestation of the kingdom is related to the Lord's second coming. In a sense His second coming brings in the manifestation of the kingdom. We may also say that when the kingdom becomes matured within us, this maturity will bring the Lord's second coming. *The manifestation of the kingdom is simply the maturity of Christ within us in His coming back.*

THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25, which reveals the manifestation of the kingdom, contains three important matters: **the parable of the ten virgins**, **the parable of the talents**, and **the parable of the sheep and the goats**. All three are related to the Lord's second coming, and all three are related also to the manifestation of the kingdom. In this chapter we will cover only the first two parables. The parable of the ten virgins is related to the manifestation of the kingdom because it says that the kingdom is likened to ten virgins. At midnight the Lord returns, and all ten of the virgins arise to go forth and meet Him. At that time five prudent virgins receive the reward and are able to enter into the wedding feast. Five others who are foolish are shut out from the wedding feast. In other words, five receive a reward, and five miss the reward. *When the Lord Jesus comes back and the kingdom is manifested, all the real Christians will be judged. What we have done since we have been saved will be judged by the Lord Jesus at that time (1 Cor. 3:12-15). This will not be a judgment to determine whether we are saved or lost but to determine whether we will receive the reward or miss the reward.* This is to determine whether we shall enter into the wedding feast or be shut out of the wedding feast. This matter is very clear in the parable of the ten virgins. Because of the lack of revelation in past centuries, many Christians have considered that the five foolish virgins were not saved. But according to the pure Word, the five foolish virgins are real virgins. They may be foolish, but they are not false. Because one is foolish does not mean that he is false. One may be foolish and yet still be genuine. *The five foolish virgins are real Christians, but they will miss something at the Lord's coming in the manifestation of the kingdom. Some real Christians will miss the wedding feast.*

THE TALENTS

Now we come to the parable of the talents. As genuine Christians we have two aspects in our relationship with the Lord. The first aspect is **the relationship of life**, and the second is that **of our work or function with the Lord**. We have both a life and a work relationship with the Lord. On the one hand, we are the virgins waiting for the Lord's coming back. This is the side of life. On the other hand, we are also the Lord's servants, serving Him with the talents He has given us. This is the side of work. **With the virgins the matter of love is a very important part. With the servants the matter of functioning and serving is the important part.** We have to take care of these two aspects. **In life we must be like virgins—prudent to get our vessel filled up with the Triune God. As to the matter of work and ministry, we must be the faithful servants who are exercising and using all the talents we have received from the Lord.**

As virgins, we need oil in our vessel; as servants we need to use our talents. **Oil signifies the Spirit that fills up our spirit and eventually our whole inward being. The talents signify the gifts and functions of the Spirit.** All real Christians have some gifts and functions given by the Lord. These functions are of the Spirit. If we would be those who love the Lord and who are waiting for His coming back, we need the infilling of the Spirit for the maturity of life. Furthermore, we need to use the gifts or the talents given to us by the Spirit to serve the Lord.

In the parable of the talents, the Christians were in three categories. Those in the first category received five talents, those in the second received two talents, and those in the third received one talent. According to the parable, the problem was not with the first or second category but only with the third. There was no problem with those who had received five talents or with those who had received two, but the problem was with those who had received only one talent. The five-talented ones represent the stronger believers who have more gifts and more functions. It seems somewhat easy for the five-talented ones and the two-talented ones to function and serve the Lord. But it seems more difficult for the less talented members to serve. Why? It is because they consider that they have received so little. **They consider that their function, their service, and their work mean nothing. Because they do not have a large portion, they tend to let the more gifted ones replace them in their function. The danger is for the one-talented members to give up their function. But there is no excuse. All must serve.** To the consideration of the one-talented members, the Lord is a hard master. He gathers where He does not scatter, and He reaps where He has not sown.

One day the Lord will come back, and when He comes back, He will reckon with all His servants. All His servants will have to settle their accounts with Him. At the Lord's coming back, the problem will not be with the five-talented or the two-talented believers. The problem will be with the one-talented ones. They will

excuse themselves, saying that the Lord is too hard. And the Lord will not deny that He is hard. In a sense the Lord is really hard. He does reap where He did not sow, and He does gather where He did not scatter. So in a sense, it is right to say that the Lord is hard. If you have ever been in the Lord's service, you do have the experience that, in a sense, the Lord is hard. For example, concerning the church meetings, do not consider that you can function because you feel that the Lord has given you something. Many times it is not like this. Rather, when you come in, your sensation may be that you have nothing, but the Lord still requires you to function. You may excuse yourself, saying that the Lord has given you nothing. This means that [the Lord has not scattered anything to you or sown anything into you, but now He requires some reaping, some harvesting. Many times this is the principle in God's economy.](#) This is the way of the Lord. This is because, on the one hand, we all have to learn to be diligent, and on the other hand, we all have to be those who serve by faith.

Sometimes we come to the meeting in an idle, sloppy, and slothful way. We excuse ourselves by saying that we are tired, and we come with no intention of functioning. We only come to rest and to enjoy some testimonies, to listen, and perhaps to criticize a little. This becomes our enjoyment. Even our criticism becomes an enjoyment. This is to be sloppy, slothful, and idle. Contrariwise, we should come to the meetings with a "Praise the Lord!" Regardless of whether we are tired and regardless of our situation, we need to function. We may be tired, but He is unlimited. We are nothing, but He is everything. We are tired, but He never tires. We have nothing to say, yet we have to say something. We have nothing to minister, but we must function by faith. If you will open your mouth, the word will come out. [The way to dig out your buried talent is to open your mouth. Do not bury your talent. Dig it out. Do not excuse yourself for any reason.](#)

Many brothers and sisters have learned not to come to me with these kinds of excuses. I never sympathize with them. When they come to tell me how weak they are and how much help they need, I do not sympathize with them. The weaker they are, the less I sympathize with them. They are weak because they say they are weak. Eventually, you will be what you say you are. We all have to declare that we are not weak. In 2 Corinthians 12:10 Paul said that when he was weak, then he was powerful. Therefore, there is no excuse. If you come to me saying that all the brothers and sisters in your place are strong and doing well, I would like to come and visit you. But if you say how weak you are and how much help you need, I would tell you to help yourself. [You must rise up to take care of your own situation.](#)

Have you noticed what the Lord said in Matthew 25:28? "Take away therefore the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents." The Lord goes on to say

in verse 29, “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away from him.” This means that the more you have, the more the Lord will give you. The more you do not have, the more the Lord will take away from you. This is the Lord’s economy. The Lord only gives to the rich ones. Whoever is poor receives nothing. Even the Lord takes away from the poor ones and gives to the rich ones. To those who have ten talents, the Lord gives one more. **When you come to the meetings, never consider that you have nothing. If you consider that you have nothing, the Lord will take away what you do have and give it to another. This is the Lord’s economy.** Do not think this is my concept. This is the Lord’s economy revealed in Matthew 25. Many times when I came to a meeting to minister, I had nothing. But when I went to the platform and opened my mouth, eventually a book came, a verse came, and the message came.

One Lord’s Day morning in January 1968, I stood up encouraging all the saints to function and to say something. At that time I told them they could at least say four words. As I made this statement, within I was questioning, What four words? Then I said, “Number one,” and even at that point I did not know what word. Then I said, “O. Number two, Lord. Number three, Amen. Number four, Hallelujah.” This is how the four words O Lord! Amen! Hallelujah! came. When I arrived home after the meeting, I considered that perhaps I had given the saints the wrong order of these words. Perhaps I should have put Hallelujah before Amen. Surely Amen should be after everything. Yet I told the people they could speak, “O Lord! Amen! Hallelujah!” But then I remembered Revelation 19. There the order is “Amen, Hallelujah!” not “Hallelujah! Amen.” If you look into the matter, you will find that to say, “O Lord! Hallelujah! Amen!” is awkward for composing a song. It is difficult for anyone to make a song from these words. But to say, “O Lord! Amen! Hallelujah!” fits very well. This example illustrates that if we will open our mouths in faith, the Lord will give us something to say.

We all must realize that the Lord is hard. He does not give something to you, but He asks something of you. He does reap where He has never sown, and He does gather where He has never scattered. **Whenever you open your mouth and function, immediately you open the way for the Lord to come out. He is rich in you, but you have to function by faith.** How unfortunate that many Christians have never realized that after they are saved, they need to be wise virgins growing in life, and they need to be proper servants serving the Lord with the talents He has given them. **We all must be the five prudent virgins, and we must be those who use their talents.** Otherwise, when the Lord comes back, we will have a problem. At the time of the manifestation of the kingdom, we will have to account for our shortage. Many Christians only care for one thing: to be saved and to go to heaven. They think that as

long as they are saved, one day they will go to heaven, and everything will be fine. We must say strongly, “No!” There will still be a problem.

From Matthew 13 we saw that the Lord has sown a seed and that we are all the wheat. But that was only the sowing stage. The reaping of the harvest is in chapters 24 and 25. In chapter 13 the Lord sowed the seed, and in chapters 24 and 25 He comes to reap. You cannot say that the Lord has not sown something into you. Neither can you say that the Lord is hard and that He never scattered anything to you. That is not fair to say, because He has at least scattered one talent to you. Can you say that you have received nothing from the Lord? At least you have received a little portion from the Lord. **Regardless of how small the gift or the talent you have received from the Lord may be, you must use it. The more you use that little gift, the more it will be increased. If you will use it, it will be multiplied. The more you use your talent, the more the Lord will give you. But the more you do not use the gift and talent the Lord has given you, the more you will lose. The Lord will take something from you. This is a serious situation.**

Let us also read Matthew 25:30: “Cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.” You must realize that these are the words of the Lord. According to the word of the Lord in this verse, **even a saved one could be cast into a kind of darkness.** Do not ask me what kind of darkness. For sure it will not be pleasant. Do you think you will be laughing and rejoicing if you are in that darkness? Some have said that this slothful servant was never saved. This is not logical! If he has never been saved, how could he be a servant of the Lord? Furthermore, if he has never been saved, how could the Lord give him a talent or gift? No doubt this slothful servant is a saved one. All three are servants, and all three have received some talents. This strongly proves that all of them are saved. As far as salvation is concerned, there is no difference between the three of them. Can you say that because one is less talented, he is not saved? Can you say that the five-talented servant is fully saved, that the two-talented servant is half saved, and that the one-talented servant is not saved? If he has received a talent, surely he is saved. To say that a person can be lost due to slothfulness would indicate that salvation is not by grace but by works. But according to the divine principle, salvation is by grace. This parable is not related to salvation; it is related to something beyond salvation. It is related to how we serve the Lord after we have been saved.

All ten of the virgins are saved ones, and all three of the servants are also saved ones. The point is that even as saved ones we must be diligent to be filled up with the Spirit as prudent virgins, and we must be faithful to serve the Lord as diligent servants.

In verse 21, “His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.” This verse is not related to salvation but to a reward. Someone was invited into the joy of the master. The servant who received five talents was set over many things, and he entered into the joy of his master. In addition, the servant who received two talents was also set over many things, and he entered into the joy of his master. **To enter into the joy of his master does not refer to salvation. This means that he received something as a reward in addition to salvation.**

Concerning the slothful one, the Lord said in verses 24 through 28, “Then he who had received the one talent also came and said, Master, I knew about you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow. And I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours. And his master answered and said to him, Evil and slothful slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not winnow. Therefore you should have deposited my money with the money changers; and when I came, I would have recovered what is mine with interest. Take away therefore the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.” This does not mean that salvation was taken away from the slothful one, but it does mean that he suffered because of his lack of diligence.

If we are faithful servants using the talents that the Lord Jesus has given us, when He returns, He will reward us. He will assign us to rule as kings over many things, and He will invite us to participate in His joy. But if we are saved and then are slothful and not faithful to use the talents He has given us, when He comes back, He will reckon with us. Do not think that because you are saved there can be no problems. There can be a real problem if you are not faithful in your service. **It is altogether possible that you will receive some punishment rather than a reward.** We must take heed to the pure word of the Lord. Do not “dispensationalize” this chapter wholly to the future.

CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM

Now we need to consider two basic concepts or schools concerning the matter of salvation. One is the Calvinistic school, and the other is the Arminian school. The Calvinistic school teaches eternal security and believes in predestination. According to the Calvinistic school, we were predestinated before the foundation of the world. Then we were born, we were called, we were justified, and we were saved according to God’s election. Once we are saved, we are eternally secure. No doubt this is absolutely right according to the Word of God. Many verses support the matter of predestination and eternal security. The Lord Jesus in John 10 said that once we receive eternal life, we can never be lost. On the one hand, the Calvinists are right

concerning eternal security, but on the other hand, they are short of something because they have not seen Matthew 25:30. **They have not seen that there could be some problem with a person after he is saved. They would wrongly say that this verse applies not to true believers but to false believers.**

The Arminian school does not believe in the eternal security of the believer. According to their teaching, you may be saved in the morning and lost in the evening. Then after a few days you may be saved again. Later, you may be lost again. According to this concept, people may be saved and lost many times. We may call this “elevator salvation.” When they are saved, they are going up; when they are lost, they are going down. In their experience they are going up and down many times; they are saved and lost many times. This kind of concept is not right. **They have picked up verses concerning reward and punishment at the Lord’s coming back and applied them to believers losing their salvation. According to their concept, for a person to suffer some punishment means that he is lost again.** We must be clear that all three of the servants mentioned in Matthew 25 are saved, but the last one suffered some punishment by being cast into the outer darkness. Forget the traditional teachings and come back to the pure Word. The Bible says that all three are servants, and the Bible says that the third servant, because of his slothfulness, suffered some punishment. Please read and even pray-read these verses in the Lord’s presence. Are you a servant with five talents, or two talents, or one talent? **We all must be faithful to use the talents that the Lord has given us.** Remember, one day the Lord Jesus will come, and He will reckon with us. We will have to hand over our talents and settle our accounts with Him. **We have to be faithful to use what the Lord has given us. Otherwise, at His coming back, at the manifestation of the kingdom, we will suffer some punishment. We will not lose our salvation, but we will suffer something. We will surely miss reigning with the Lord during the millennium.** May the Lord have mercy upon all of us!

(The Kingdom, Chapter 36)