

# Lesson 17

## Proper 28

### **The Holy Gospel: Matthew 25:14–30**

The parable of the talents is the second of three parables in Matthew 25, all of which tell what the kingdom of heaven is like and relate especially to Judgment Day. As we consider the parable, we must remember always that Jesus is that man and we are the slaves, bought at a price and entrusted with the message of reconciliation. (See 1 Peter 1:18–19; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21.)

260. On what does the point of Jesus' story turn? What does it say that the man gave one servant five talents, another two talents, and another one talent?

261. What does it say to us that the servant who gained two more talents for his master heard the very same commendation as the servant who gained five more?

We must keep in mind that it is faithfulness in using what He has entrusted to us that is honored by the Lord. And we need to remember that it is He Himself who must provide the results that He is looking for. (See 1 Corinthians 3:5–11; 4:1–2.)

262. When the time for the accounting came, how did the servant who had hidden his master's talent in the ground show he knew he was without excuse? Why did the master call him not only "slothful" but "wicked"?

263. Is it fair that the one who already had ten talents was given the one that was wasted by the lazy, wicked one? Since he did not steal his master's talent but returned it to him, is it fair that the "worthless servant" is thrown "into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"?

264. What is the emphasis of this parable of the talents that speaks to us regarding our lives as Jesus' disciples?

## The Old Testament Lesson: Zephaniah 1:7–16

The introduction to Zephaniah in the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* says,

The key term in Zephaniah, which means “Yahweh hides” or “Yahweh has hidden,” is “the day of the LORD.” After describing the judgment on the day of the Lord [a day of divine vengeance on the idolatrous covenant nation], the last chapter presents salvation on the day of the Lord, when God will gather his people and reign in victory. . . . The prophet declares: “Then will I purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD” (3:9 [NIV]). . . . Since Jesus alludes to Zephaniah (1:15) in reference to his second advent (Matthew 24:29), these promises refer ultimately to that event, and clearly it is the Messiah who will fulfill the prophecies—as a result of the grace of God. (p. 1399)

265. What attitude does the prophet encourage people to have as they contemplate the nearness of the Day of the Lord?

266. Verses 8–11 describe the devastation of Jerusalem—“the day of the LORD” that was near at hand for its inhabitants and is evidently referred to by “the LORD has prepared a sacrifice.” In that light, who are the “guests” the Lord has “consecrated”?

267. What was at the heart of the complacency of the people of Jerusalem? What is pictured with the words “Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them”?

The description of the destruction, the misery, and the sense of futility that will accompany the Lord’s judgment on the great Day of the Lord clearly refers to the conquest of the city of Jerusalem. Then, however, the picture is expanded to the climactic judgment of the whole world. It uses plurals to say “a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.” No one will escape the judgment to be meted out on the climactic Day of the Lord. The New Testament describes the end of the present age and the beginning of the new: “the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells.” (See 2 Peter 3:10–13.)

268. How does this lesson tie in with the emphasis of today’s Holy Gospel?

## **The Epistle for the Day: 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11**

The Thessalonian Christians were troubled by some who were sure that Jesus would come almost any day. Some had quit working and had become end-times busybodies.

269. What is the one thing Paul could say and they could know for sure about the coming of the Lord?

Paul wanted them—and us—to face up to the reality of Christ’s sudden, surprising, final return without fear. His words remind us to be ready always. And they let us know that the way to be ready is to live as “children of \_\_\_\_, children of the \_\_\_\_”—in contrast with those who are “of the \_\_\_\_ or of the \_\_\_\_.”

Paul emphasized self-control as important if we want to be alert and ready. This is a good time to remember that self-control is one of the fruits of having the Holy Spirit live in us. Those who live in the light not only enjoy Christian self-control but even Spirit-led self-control. (See Galatians 5:22–23.)

270. What three Christian characteristics will help us maintain this Spirit-led self-control and live our lives in the light?

With Paul’s encouragement ringing in our hearts, let’s bring today’s study to a close by saying his words together: “God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him.”