**The Price Of A Salute**

**Matthew 25:14-23 KJV** For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. **[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. **[16]** Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. **[17]** And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two. **[18]** But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. **[19]** After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. **[20]** And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. **[21]** His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. **[22]** He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. **[23]** His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

1. **INTRODUCTION—MATTHEW 25 AND THE PARABLES OF JUDGMENT**

-This parable comes in a series of three parables that Lord gave to His disciples prior to His crucifixion. The three parables in Matthew 25 are provoking.

* The five wise and five foolish virgins. A parable telling us to watch.
* The parable of the talents. A parable telling us to work.
* The parable of the sheep and the goats. A parable telling us to wait.

-They all have to do with the thought understanding some good ways for a disciple to know that he is ready for the rapture of the Church. He can know this by first, serving the Lord and second, serving others because he loves the Lord.

-All three of the parables are concerned with the matter of judgment and there are clear parameters that are determined in the matter of judgment. The prevailing lesson is that there will come a day when the Lord will be a righteous judge of all men and we have to be ready to face the Lord.

1. **The Parable of the Talents**

-This parable is very basic in its story. A rich man goes off on a journey and he calls three of his servants and gives them some money to be invested while he is gone. One man receives five, one man gains two, and the last man is given one talent.

-Historically in Palestine, a talent was not a coin but it was a measure of weight. Because coins were made of copper, silver, or gold and Jesus does not specify the types of coins in this parable we are unable to determine the exact value of the deposit.

-But it can be determined that this was a large amount of money. If one talent was 6000 denarii, it would have taken a working man an average of twenty years to earn a talent. So it could be very possible that this amount of money was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

-Money is not the crucial focus in this parable but rather what God has entrusted to his servants to use for the advancing of the Kingdom of God.

**J. C. Ryle**—Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent. Our gifts, our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our reason, our intellect, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of the church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible—all, all are talents.

1. **The Quality of the Servants**

-When we look at these servants, there is a clear understanding that a certain quality is noticed in these servants. However, their character plays a great role it the quality of their work. The good servants served the master very well because they loved him and wanted to please him.

-The wicked servant failed to serve well because he hated and resented the master.

-There is a great accounting that comes to these men for their work in the absence of the master. The one who had five, he had worked and gained five more. The one who had two, he had worked and gained two more. The one who had one buried his talent and had nothing to show for it.

-Yet the quality of the servants who invested their talents is highlighted by the master’s approval of them. These men were servants who accepted their position as a servant and everything that was demanded by that position.

-There was hard, back-breaking work that was involved in this call to servitude but they willingly submitted to that call. There was a premium that came with that commitment to obedience. It was demonstrated in what they did with their talents.

* They did not consider it their own but the Lord’s.
* They were very conscientious about how they were used.
* They did not waste their talents with idle laziness.
* They did not abuse them with self-confidence or pride.
* They did not destroy them with rash get rich quick schemes.
* They did not display them with flamboyance.
* They did not compare themselves to each other.
* They did not spend time analyzing what each had been given.
* They were determined to use their talents wisely for the advancing of the Kingdom.

-We have to understand that discipleship is just like slavery. There are certain biblical characteristics about it that helps us to see what God requires of us.

**Matthew 24:44-46**—It involves a life of working while watching.

**Matthew 25:21**—Being faithful over a few things.

**Mark 10:44**—A humble attitude toward others.

**Luke 6:46**—A willingness to obey His commands.

**Luke 9:23**—It entails a life of self-denial and cross-bearing.

**Luke 12:37**—An eagerness to serve in his absence.

**Luke 14:26-33**—An absolute whole-hearted devotion to the Lord.

**Luke 16:13**—A service that does not speak of a divided sense of allegiance.

1. **The Reward of Well Done!**

-What these men received for their untiring devotion was just two words, “Well Done!” Yet those two words had great rewards accompanying them. The faithfulness over a few things led to power of many things. It also involved entering into the joy of the Lord.

-That will be *the* day of incredible joy when we hear those words! There are no single accomplishments in life that will even begin to rival what those words will mean to us in that day.

-I believe that we can take from this passage also that the reward of heaven is going to be a much wider sphere of service than what this old world could have furnished for us! We will work without the weariness of labor. We will enjoy a greater fellowship of authority than what we have known here.

-The Bible gives us a theology of work (2 Cor. 9:8; Col. 3:23; 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:21; Titus 1:7; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 1:17; Rev. 2:2). Work was present before sin and the curse and we can assume that work will be part of the New Heaven and New Earth. It will be something that will be so fulfilling that you won’t even consider hating it. You will have great joy in doing the work that God has deemed for you to do.

-What will it be? We cannot say with certainty but we can let our imagination mingle with Scripture and consider it for just a moment.

* Maybe building a cabinet with Joseph of Nazareth or with Jesus.
* Maybe tending sheep with David.
* Maybe building a Temple with Solomon.
* Maybe building the Tabernacle with Bezaleel and Aholiab.
* Maybe discussing medicine with Luke.
* Maybe sewing with Dorcas.
* Maybe making clothes with Lydia.
* Maybe designing a new tent with Paul or Priscilla and Acquila.
* Maybe teaching in a bible school with Paul.
* Maybe writing a systematic theology with John.

-Who can say? But that “well done” is going to open the door of more joy than what you have ever known in your entire life!

-The fact remains that within this “well done” there are some components that I would like to introduce you to.

1. **THE PRICE OF A SALUTE**

-There is a book that was written by Craig Mullaney entitled *The Unforgiving Minute—A Soldier’s Education*. It traces the path of a young man who was accepted and graduated from West Point and then went into the U.S. Army to fulfill his educational requirements.

-In his days of training he decided that he wanted to also become a Ranger. The U.S. Army Rangers are an elite group of soldiers who rival the Navy Seals and are called in to do the most challenging and intense operations that the military becomes involved in.

He told the story about Lt Col. Guy Lofaro who had been in the wave of Rangers sent in to Grenada in 1983. Several years after that, when he was a major with the 82nd Airborne a deranged gunman opened fire on a formation of soldiers who were exercising at Fort Bragg. Lofaro was unarmed but he charged more than 150 yards to assault the sniper’s position. When he was about 10 yards away, the sniper shot him in the stomach. A group of Special Forces soldiers would ultimately capture the gunman and he was sentenced to death. As for Lofaro after five major surgeries and experiencing a forty-five day coma, he survived and received a peace-time medal of honor for his heroic efforts.

Craig Mullaney later asked Lofaro about how you really know if you are ready to handle combat or not. Lofaro answered him, “You don’t know that until you get there. . . what you know for certain is that it will be chaotic and loud. . . You’ll be more scared of letting down your men than anything the enemy is going to do to you. You will then lead from instinct and judgment. That is the price of a salute.”

Mullaney then understood that everything that was conveyed in a salute to his men and from his men to him brought so much to the equation.

* In every salute was the training in the classroom and in the field.
* In every salute was the camaraderie with fellow soldiers but also with the loneliness of being a sentry.
* In every salute was every new stripe and advancement but it was accompanied by the blisters and the bruises of long forced marches.
* In every salute was the determination when your own morale was low but you were doing your best to keep the morale of your followers at a high level.
* In every salute was eating last after all of your men had the opportunity to eat.
* In every salute was the discipline of rising early and seeing through a tough assignment.
* In every salute was the strength of the entire armed forces rising from the lowly private extending to the top general at the top of the ladder.

-In every salute were the highs, the lows, the ups, the downs, and everything that went into making a soldier and being a soldier.

1. **THE COMPONENTS OF “WELL DONE”**

-Just as this member of the U. S. Army said that in the salute there were multiple ingredients of sorts rolled into that salute, there are components of that “well done” we are to receive from the Lord.

-When we are blessed to hear that “well done” from the Lord because of our faithfulness, it will contain every high, low, up, down, and everything that went into the process of us becoming saints of God.

-All that we have to do is look to the life of the Lord and we will see the same pattern that He walked, we will have to walk out also.

**1 Peter 2:21 KJV** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

-Every “well done” has places that qualify us, places that help us to transition into God’s greater purpose, places that move us into greater avenues of holiness, places of enormous struggle, places that we have to die, and places that are carved out for meeting others.

1. **Nazareth—A Small Place**

-There are places of qualification for us. Nazareth, the home-town of Jesus, was such a place for Him also. It was a place that was about as routine and insignificant as it could be. It was a placed scoffed at by some as being a place on the other side of the tracks.

-In fact, one of the stinging and sarcastic things said about Jesus came in the form of a question:

**John 1:46 KJV** And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

-It was asked by one of soon-to-be disciples, Nathanael.

-But it was in that qualifying place that Jesus learned the character of work. He had a home to retreat to and fellowship in.

-It was a place where he had to learn. He learned the history of the Jewish faith, studied the Holy Scriptures, and heard the challenge of a call to service.

-It was a place that he had to grow. He grew from a child to an adult in that little village that many snubbed and had little regard for.

-We cannot despise the small places because they are what shape the soul to hear the words, “well done!”

**A Little Place**

Father, where shall I work today?

And my love flowed warm and free.

Then He pointed me out a tiny spot,

And said, “Tend that for me.”

I answered quickly, “Oh, no, not that.

Why no one would ever see.

No matter how well my work was done

Not that little place for me!”

And the word He spoke, it was not stern,

He answered me tenderly,

“Ah, little one, search the heart of thine,

Art thou working for them or me?

Nazareth was a little place

And so was Galilee.”

-How we desperately need an anointing of humility in our generation!

**Romans 12:3 KJV** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

**Proverbs 16:18-19 KJV** Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. [19] Better *it is to be* of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.

**Matthew 18:4 KJV** Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

-“Well done!” will have its fair share of humility in it.

1. **Sea of Galilee—A Place of Transition**

-If Nazareth was a little place, then the Sea of Galilee was a place of transition. John 6:1 tells us that Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

-The Sea of Galilee was a place of play but it was also a place of work. There were times of recreation along the shore but there were other times that back-breaking work was involved in manning the boat, fishing the waters, and mending the nets.

-Jesus traversed the waters to be with people and at other times He journeyed across the Sea to get away from people. Transitions are a fact of life—sometimes we seek them out willingly and other times they are thrust on to us without any choice in the matter.

-The motivations behind the transitions are crucial:

* Am I moving to get away from a bad situation or experience something that is new?
* Do I believe that changing locations will help me to get rid of these unwanted feelings I have in my soul?
* Would I have made this move if I had not gone through this divorce or lost this job?
* Can this transition become a new time of growth for me?

-Every well done will have its sense of transition about it. You find it all in the Sea of Galilee:

* A place of work and pleasure.
* A place of fellowship and solitude.
* A place of public ministry and private prayer.
* A place of fear and faith.

-Transitional places are never easy. We feel the tension of the security of the routine but we also experience the pull of the future that has great potential.

1. **Mount Hermon—A Place of Holiness**

-If Nazareth was a little place and the Sea of Galilee was a place of transition, then Mount Hermon was a place of holiness. Luke 9:28 tells us that Jesus went up to this mountain called Hermon.

-Just six days after departing Caesarea Philippi, Jesus, with three of his disciples ascended Mount Hermon—a peak that rose 9,000 feet above sea level and towering 11,000 feet above the Jordan Valley. From Caesarea Philippi to the top of Mount Hermon was only fourteen miles but it was trip that was motivated by a hunger for holiness.

-Mount Hermon was the location the Transfiguration. The presence of the Lord radiated with glory and Moses and Elijah appeared on the mountain and began to talk to Jesus.

-A place of holiness is where something takes place between two worlds—the physical and the spiritual.

* Holiness clears our vision and helps us to see out of this world into the next one.
* Holiness ushers in the Shekinah presence of the Lord.
* Holiness is a place of soul-altering changes.
* Holiness puts a vision inside of a man that will burn for the ages.
* Holiness is a place of revelation that affects the callings and vocations of life.
* Holiness is an event where God speaks to those who will listen.

-When we hear the words, “Well Done!” it will represent the humility we gained in the small places, the transitions of life, and the heights that holiness ushered us into the presence of God.

1. **Galilee—A Meeting Place**

-I will skip Gethesemane, a place of struggle, and Golgotha, a place of death and move on to a final scene on the Sea of Galilee.

* Nazareth, a place of humility.
* The Sea of Galilee, a place of transition.
* Mount Hermon, a place of holiness.

-One last visit at Galilee proved to be a place of meeting. The disciples minds were reeling from despair, they had lost their Savior. But the word rapidly spread after the angels brought the message. . .

**Mark 16:6-7 KJV** And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. **[7]** But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

*He is going to Galilee. . .*

-Amazing turnarounds take place in Galilee. In the hours after the crucifixion, the disciples had been stifled by fear and despair but then the command came. . . Go to Galilee.

-The “well done” will also have its share of disappointments and despairing moments but if you ever get to Galilee, the power of God can re-orient you in such a way that much can take place.

1. **CONCLUSION—WHAT JOHN SAW. . .**

-Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . Our look into Heaven is so very limited but this is some of what John saw. . .

**Revelation 21:2-4 KJV** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **[3]** And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. **[4]** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

**Revelation 21:10-27 NASB** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, **[11]** having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.  **[12]** It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names *were* written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. **[13]** *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. **[14]** And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. **[15]** The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. **[16]** The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. **[17]** And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements.* **[18]** The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. **[19]** The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; **[20]** the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. **[21]** And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. **[22]** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **[23]** And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb. **[24]** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. **[25]** In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; **[26]** and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; **[27]** and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Revelation 22:1-8 NASB** Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, **[2]** in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **[3]** There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; **[4]** they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads. **[5]** And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. **[6]** And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. **[7]** "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." **[8]** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.