

## **Wednesday, 23 October 2019**

Mt 25:14-30

True Stewardship in the Kingdom of God

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### **Contextual Exegesis**

Today's passage is located in Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Mathew, where he speaks of the Kingdom of God and the key to its access. Jesus advocates the disciples to endure through the difficult times and to live a life anticipating the second coming of the Lord. Today's Gospel puts forward the instructions on how to live in the world during the interim time, before the second coming of the Lord.

However, this is one of the most abused Biblical passages in the New Testament, as many try to interpret it out of its eschatological context, particularly in terms of economic prosperity. Hence, a contextual analysis is characteristic of all passages in Mathew's eschatological discourse (23:1-26:2). These passages are to be understood only from their eschatological perspective. If described out of context, today's passage would be a justification for amassing wealth for oneself, as earning of talents.

Our reflection on today's Gospel may be summarised under the following themes:

### **1. Wise Servants and the Foolish Servants**

In this passage one would observe a dichotomy between the Wise Servants and the Foolish Servants. The wise servants are engaged in i) the "Master's work until he comes," and they ii) "live for the unexpected time in the here and now" of this world; whereas, the foolish ones are immersed in i) "his/her egoistic works" and thus they ii) "abuse power."

Thus, the passage envisages the role of human life as true stewardship of worldly possessions, and not that we are to hold them selfishly. In other words, the parable reminds us that the possession and power are 'entrusted,' things, not anyone's possession in this passing world. Therefore, Jesus invites all of us to be like the wise servants carrying Master's work, without abusing or misusing the possessions and power delegated to each of us.

To which of these two categories do I belong to - wise or foolish?

### **2. 'How' of the Waiting**

The parable of the wise and foolish servants comes after the parable of the wise maidens, who is accepted in the Kingdom of God (25:1-13). If this describes the need of 'wise-waiting' for the Lord, the second parable speaks of the 'how of this waiting.' It should not be a lethargic slaying of time but a meaningful and dynamic engagement with the world, with an option for the 'other.' Through today's Gospel, I am invited to examine the how of my waiting. Do I suffer from indifference like the third servant; an indifference that keeps me in a self-contained enclosure, away from my community?

### **3. Risking Oneself for the Lord**

The third servant in the parable laments that he was afraid of losing Master's money (v.25). Such an attitude undoubtedly is what one might term as escapism. In fact, a

true Christian needs to solely think of what profits the Lord, even placing oneself at risk for Him. Do not even try to secure one's well-being, without risking for the Master. Hence, 'faithfulness in waiting', and 'being industrious for the Lord', are the two right modes in this waiting for his second coming. The rest of the chapter (25:30ff.) speaks of this industriousness for the Lord, while being in the world. Accordingly, it is one's **concern for the other** and timely action for the empowerment and welfare of the other, are the proper credentials one needs to own for the sake of the Lord. Therefore, **becoming a Good News for the other** is the mission of every Christian. In other words, risking oneself for the Lord, or for the sake of the other, is true mission.

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