

## ***The Man Who Wouldn't Try***

As children of God, our dearest wish is to hear the final commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant." The hope of hearing those words at the end of our journey helps us suffer the trials of this world, and brings us comfort when we part with loved ones.

Two people who received this reward are described in Matthew 25. The five and two talent servants have been upheld as positive examples in many lessons through the years, while the one talent man is pointed to as a warning against laziness in the kingdom.

And yet, I fear that many of us see ourselves in that one talent man. And even if we don't see it, we certainly follow in his footsteps more often than we should.

It's very easy to see the accomplishments of others. It's easier still to think of those accomplishments as something unattainable for ourselves; such lofty endeavors are best left to people more talented, more suitable. How many times have you said or thought, "I wish I could do that"?

When we think this way, we are falling prey to the same thinking that the one talent man did – we forget that *one* isn't the same as *none*. We also forget that even if there really is only one thing we can do for our Lord then we had best get busy doing it rather than lamenting all of the things that are beyond our ability. How much more productive could we be if we were to focus on what we can do rather than on what we can't?

Moses, one of God's most faithful and noteworthy servants, attempted to reason with God by this logic, and failed. When presented with the enormous task of facing Pharaoh and leading the Hebrews out of bondage, Moses very quickly protested that he was the wrong man for the job.

**"Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." (Exodus 4: 10)**

This was hardly Moses' first excuse that he offered in his attempt to dodge the work God had for him. But the Lord was no more impressed with this excuse than He had been with the previous ones.

**"Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?" (v. 11)**

We need this reminder just as much as Moses did. Complaining to God about all of the abilities we do not have will not give us a "pass" – especially because He is the one who gave us those abilities in the first place. He knows the exact inventory and limits of each and every person far better than we do. Telling Him that He did not properly equip us for the work He has given will not do us any favors. We must not forget that if God has commanded us to do something, then we can safely assume that our ability to obey that command is within our reach.

But our spiritual productivity is not threatened merely by throwing this sort of pity party; falling stagnant and being content with our abilities rather than expanding them is equally dangerous. How much more do you think the one talent man would have been able to do if he had raised his own expectations to meet the ones that his master had of him?

God is better than anyone for seeing untapped potential in the most unlikely places. He has made apostles out of murderers and fishermen, out of doubters and tax collectors. He has made kings out of shepherds and military leaders out of men who had hidden from their enemies. And He has raised prophets out of men who were heartbroken and weary by a nation left desolate from sin.

Numerous characters in the Bible story give the reaction of "Who, me?" when they are given a task by God, and every time God assures them that yes, they are exactly what He is looking for. With such examples, what reason do we have to doubt His hope for what we can accomplish by His strength?

The question then, is not whether we are the five or two or one talent man. Some of us have a larger "toolbox" than others, and some of us might only be able to do a few things for God's kingdom. But as we see throughout Scripture, it is not how much we can do that truly matters – it is how much we are willing to try. That is the mark of a "good and faithful servant".

**- by K. M. Smith**

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## ***Is God Using Miracles Today?***

Recently we've heard some brethren suggesting that God may, in fact, still be using miracles to accomplish His will. "At least," they say, "it can't be ruled out." We disagree.

In any discussion of miracles it is important that a true definition be in place. W. E. Vine says miracles are "works of a supernatural origin and character, such as could not be produced by natural agents and means." In other words, a miracle occurred in Bible times when the laws of nature were suspended and something beyond the scope of the natural realm took place. Biblical examples of miracles would include the virgin birth of Jesus, Jesus walking on the water, the dead (even those dead for several days) being raised, etc. These things simply could not happen in the natural course of things - they constitute true miracles.

Be careful not to apply the term 'miracle' to things that are wonderful and amazing – but still within the realm of nature. The birth of a baby, for example, is an amazing thing but it is not a miracle. Science fully understands, and complete explanations can be offered, for how a baby is conceived and born. It is all in accordance with the laws of nature, and no miracle is involved. The virgin birth of Jesus, on the other hand, was a miracle. See the difference?

Also, remember that miracles were intended as a "sign" (a term used synonymously with the word "miracle"). These "signs" served to reveal and confirm God's truth. For example, Jesus' miracles proved that He was the divine Son of God, and when other inspired men spoke and wrote, their miracles confirmed that the message they proclaimed was truly from God. If, as some folks are suggesting, God may still be working miracles, but 'we can't know for sure,' our question to them would be 'why?' What purpose would be served if the miracles provide no verifiable sign?

Now, the question remains: Does God use miracles today? The answer is NO! We know this because:

- 1) Miracles served the specific purpose of revealing and confirming God's Word (Mark 16:17,20). That work is now completed, and miracles are no longer needed.
- 2) The means by which miracles were passed on (baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the laying on of the apostles' hands) are no longer available.
- 3) The scripture specifically says miracles would end when God's complete revelation was made known to man (1 Cor. 13:8-13)

Miracles served an important role in God's eternal plan, but that role is now finished. There are no miracles today.

***- by Greg Gwin***