

Religion

Parable of the Talents

By JIM RYAN
33rd Sunday in O.T.
Nov. 18
Matt. 25:14-30
Parable of the Talents
Clues Which When Pulled May Unravel A Parable.



Religion and Reality
By JIM RYAN

1. A slave in the ancient world was considered a human being, but he was, nevertheless, property; he was inferior. The fate of the slave was regarded not as an accident, but as a fact of nature.

"If a master decided to set the slave up in business in order to claim the profits for himself, he gave the slave a sum of money called a periculum and full financial autonomy, along with the right to sign contracts on his own initiative and even to plead in court, so long as his master's affairs were involved and the peculum was not revoked."

However, the master also had the right if the slave deserved the ultimate punishment, to hire the municipal executioner to do the job, paying only the cost of the pitch and sulphur needed to burn the victim.

Romans didn't free slaves; they behaved as good masters. Slaves were regarded as overgrown children. A slave could not marry or have children. Lovemaking and childrearing were like the breeding of livestock. A bad slave was regarded as a bad tool.

A master might free a slave, but this was not an admission of the injustice of slavery. To free a slave was a merit for the master and a sign of love.

In Rome in 5 B.C., there was one slave for every two free men.

In Athens, three out of four residents were slaves.

In Palestine, a Jew could be punished to up to six years of slavery for theft or debt. He was not unlike a wage-earner. But if you were a pagan born into slavery you stayed there for life.

2. A talent was the most important Greek coin which corresponded to a weight of silver, estimated to vary from 24 to 34 kg; even as much as 41 kg. The Roman tax on Galilee and Perea during the time of Christ was 200 talents; Herod's annual revenue was 900 talents.

3. Small hoards of coins and jewelry are still found by chance or by archaeological exploration in Palestine. Invasion and thievery were concerns to timid Palestinians. American Express didn't have offices in the Middle East at the time.

4. Note the sow and harvest language of the impudent slave. A seed sown in the ground will produce an ear of corn; but a talent buried in the ground lies

dead. Capital must be sown in the market place to earn a return. The impudent slave mixed up the categories: silver is sown in a different way than seed.

Something Else
I spent 15 hours last Saturday driving to and from Ottawa following the Walkers for Nitassinan. If you remember, they passed through Georgetown last month on their way to the nation's capital.

Nitassinan is the homeland of the Innu, one of the last hunter-gatherer peoples in the world.

Recently, the Canadian government has shown interest in their land as a training site for Nato pilots. Jets have been overflying the Innu lands at a height of fifty feet, a manoeuvre that enables them to avoid being picked up by radar.

Walkers from Halifax and Windsor finally arrived in Ottawa last Saturday.

It was a pretty bleak day. I felt like the impudent slave in tomorrow's parable: thrown out into the darkness.

Except I don't feel as if I've been impudent.

Where were the members of Parliament? Not one of them from any of the political parties in Ottawa appeared on the Hill to greet the Walkers.

If I was bugged, and I got there in a heated coach, imagine how the Walkers felt.

Endnote: The material on Slavery is taken from Vol. 1 of A History of Private Life, edited by Paul Veyne. The book was published in 1987 by Harvard University Press.

Bible Digest

"And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction." Jeremiah 32:33.

Have you turned your face or back toward God? I encourage you to turn your heart and face toward the Lord. You need Him more than you realize.

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:15.

The grace of God is truly amazing. Let's take time to thank the Lord for saving us.

"Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint." Proverbs 25:19.

Remember when you're tempted to be unfaithful to family, friends and work that you are like a toothache and a pain in the foot. Don't be a problem. Be faithful to the Lord and others and be a blessing.

"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." 2 Thessalonians 3:13.

Don't give up, Child of God. You are making a difference. Keep going for the Lord.

"Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men; to give every one according

to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 32:19.

The Lord keeps the best set of records in the universe. Honor Him and He will bless you.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints." Ephesians 5:3.

The Lord's people are to be a holy people. Remember, you may be the only professing Christian that some non-Christian knows. Live for Jesus.

"For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." Jeremiah 31:25.

The Lord wants to meet the need of your heart. "Take your burdens to the Lord and leave them there."

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4.

Dad, are you encouraging or discouraging your children? Be a Godly example for them. They need it in the world in which we live.

"Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name." Psalm 86:11.

Set your whole heart on the things of God. He has your best interests at heart.

Evangelical Fellowship urges religious instruction

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, representing 27 Protestant Christian denominations and several Christian organizations and individuals, believes that the attempt to eliminate religion from the public school system will lead to defective education for public school students in Ontario.

Without an introduction to the role and importance of religion, students will have an incomplete understanding of the history and nature of Canadian society and societies around the world, states the fellowship in a press release.

Students will also lose the opportunity to develop insights on how to better understand the nature of spirituality and later, as adults, will be deprived of the basis required in making choices about what to believe. Nor will they learn about the Judeo-Christian sources underlying the values of human freedom, justice and fairness, which are critical to our religiously pluralistic society.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada has recommended, therefore, that the religious dimension of human life and society be addressed across the curriculum, as well as in opt-in religious instruction courses. Local school boards should be empowered to design with the input of parents and local religious leaders - a religious instruction program best suited to the religious composition of their student population.

Multi-faith group submits statement to NDP

On Oct. 10, the Ontario Multi-faith Group of Equity in Education, representing Aboriginal, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities in Ontario, submitted its "Multi-faith Statement on Religious Education and Justice for All in Ontario" to the Hon. Bob Rae, Premier of Ontario, and the Hon. Marion Boyd, Minister of Education.

In its statement, the Multi-faith Group affirms the right of and

responsibility of parents to educate their children in conformity with their religious or ideological beliefs. This human right has been recognized by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), both of which have been endorsed by Canada.

The Multi-faith Group affirms also that, in a pluralistic society, all religious and ideological com-

munities are entitled to legal equality and equal educational opportunity, and that such equality is guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code without discrimination based on religion.

In light of Premier Rae's promises to "listen to the people," the Ontario Multi-faith Group states it is looking forward to a period of fruitful cooperation with the Government.

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