

Maranatha Mirror Message



SANCTIFIED SLOTH... THE CLOAK OF PIETY

Saul of Tarsus was a man of zeal. He was doing what he thought was the will of God as he dragged followers of Jesus off to prison, beatings and death.

Then one day the Lord broke through Saul's misguided zeal and turned him around.



“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

“Who are you, Lord?”

“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.”

Saul was convicted, forgiven, restored, and called into the Kingdom.

But how does the Lord restore a believer who is lazy?

How does he convict a slouch whose sloth is wrapped in a cloak of piety?

"For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money."

Matthew 25:14-18

The servant who was given one talent knew just what to do.
He buried it and returned to his lounge chair.

If you met this man at church you would be impressed by his piety.

He could quote scripture like a pro.

He could pray up a storm.

But when he was told to go into the Vineyard and work, he disappeared.
His branch was fruitless on the Vine.

This servant simply took his gift of salvation and buried it in the earth.

Salvation is not a **"Stay-Out-Of-Hell Free"** coupon;

It's a life you live.

It's a seed that produces fruit.

It's a vine that bears grapes.



“Every branch of mine that bears no fruit he takes away. And every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”

John 15:2

To be “saved” is to be joined to the Vine.

If we stay connected, we bear fruit.

If no fruit comes from our faith, our faith is a sham.

To be “saved” is to be so filled with the life of God that we naturally produce fruit.

“Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.’”

Matthew 25:19-23

These servants took their salvation and did something with it.

The life of God flowed out of them, blessing everything around them.

They *worked* in the Vineyard, *not to* “acquire” salvation,

but because their gift of salvation *empowered them* to do God's will.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he/she who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Matthew 7:21

Doing the Father's will means labor in the Vineyard.

Joyful labor.

We don't just sit around and sing songs about the Rapture.

We serve the King right here in this place where he has put us.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

John 15:16

Whether the Master has given us five gold bars (talents) or two, or one, he expects us to do something with his riches.

To take the gift of salvation and impart blessing to the lives God sends across our path.

This is what the One-Talent Servant failed to do.



“He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed?’

Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.”

Matthew 25:24-30

It's called "Sanctified Sloth"---sloth with a cloak of piety.
Sloth that pays lip service to Jesus, but never gets around to doing what he commands.



If it turns out that we have buried our talent over there behind that tree, there is still time to dig it up, clean it off and do something with it.

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”

John 15:16



Prayer.

Our Loving Father you have given us so much. May we with grateful hearts and hearts full of faith, take what you have given us and do something beautiful with it. May we be so filled and overflowing with your life, that fruit can't help but burst out of our lives. Give us the hearts to joyfully embrace labor in the fields. And Lord Keep us from covering our sloth with piety, keep us from looking at salvation as a one time thing for ourselves, a way of getting out of work, a way to ignore the plight of others. Instead, may your gift of salvation empower us to multiply the beauty and wonder you have brought into our lives with all who cross our paths.

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