

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA YOUNG PEOPLE

SPRING PURSUIT

BEING WATCHFUL IN LIFE AND FAITHFUL IN SERVICE

Session Five —Ministry Reading

Being Faithful in Service

Verses for Pray-Reading:

Matt. 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?

1 Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Ministry Reading:

To be "good and faithful" does not refer to being a good Christian. It refers to being a good and faithful slave. The "other five talents" does not indicate success. It indicates the goodness and the faithfulness of the slave. Superficially, Stephen failed; but according to the spiritual fact, he accomplished a good and faithful work. That is why offering only a cup of cold water in the name of the Lord (Matt. 10:42) will be rewarded for faithfulness. To be faithful is simply to be wholly for the Lord. Those who are faithful will receive the reward. Even though we are working, we need to ask ourselves, "For whom are we working?" Many times our desire for success is merely to gain the other five talents, not knowing that all successes that are not according to the Lord are still wood, hay, and stubble. The Lord desires that we be faithful. "Well done" is the Lord's praise. We want only to hear the Lord say, "Well done." We endure and suffer because we look forward to this "well done." The Lord's "well done" is priceless. Actually, it is impossible to place a value on it, for our own estimation of our goodness may be faulty.

"You were faithful over a few things" (v. 21). "A few things" refers to the work of this age. This means that even with the five-talented one, there is not as much work for him today as there will be for him in the kingdom. The "many things" in verse 21 refers to the things of the kingdom. However, we often misunderstand and wrongly consider the Lord's work today to be too vast. The church can be compared to a

school, and the believers, to the students who are learning in it. The believers will be dispatched after graduation into the future kingdom to apply what they have learned. Therefore, we can have a foretaste today of the authority of the coming age.

"Enter into the joy of your master" (v. 21). Compare this verse with Hebrews 12:2. Why is joy mentioned here, but not the kingdom? This is because the reward for faithfulness is inward satisfaction, not outward position. To rejoice with the Lord is the greatest reward, even better than the glory and position in the kingdom, for both we and the Lord are satisfied.

Verses 24-25: "Then he who had received the one talent also came and said, Master, I knew about you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow. And I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the earth; behold, you have what is yours." This does not mean that anyone dares to speak in this way. Here, the Lord was trying to reveal man's hidden intentions. "Hard" means strict. Therefore, he was afraid. He failed because he did not know the Lord and His grace. He thought that the Lord was too strict, and he himself was still under Mount Sinai. Hence, we should not be afraid in the age of grace. The Lord is responsible for success or failure, but we are responsible for being faithful. (*Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 1) Vol. 15: Study on Matthew*, p. 345-346,349).