

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS, THE TALENTS and THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS or GAINING ETERNAL LIFE IN THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM



1. Consider this familiar ancient fable, ***The Ant and the Grasshopper***:

"In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"'Why not come and chat with me,' said the Grasshopper, 'instead of toiling and moiling in that way?'

"'I am helping to lay up food for the winter,' said the Ant, 'and recommend you to do the same.'

"'Why bother about winter?' said the Grasshopper; 'we have got plenty of food at present.' But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew: It is best to prepare for the days of necessity." (Aesop's Fables)

Heeding this ancient wisdom would be a wise move on our part. The Second Coming is approaching as surely as winter. Now is the day to prepare.

2. President Spencer W. Kimball: "One type of oil is the oil of **family prayer**. It illuminates us and makes us bright and cheery but is difficult to obtain at midnight. One drop or two will not keep the lamp burning long....

"Another type of oil is the oil of **fasting**. **The last midnight is late to start disciplining our lives in preparation for the great day of the Lord...**

"Another oil is the **Word of Wisdom**. This too is hard to find at midnight. **One cannot hope that the**

drops of oil accumulated in a moment can make up for years of neglect....

"Another oil that is not available at midnight is the indispensable oil of **home service**. This rare oil of service is accumulated through **visits to the sick**, through lending a **helping hand**.

"There is another rare, indispensable oil without which no one can be fully prepared. We must have the proper amount of this never exhausting oil, **the oil of temple ordinance**." (from an address delivered in Kansas City, Missouri, Sep 1978 - see Church News, 05/13/95)

3. Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "Salvation is a personal matter. It comes only to those who keep the commandments and whose souls are filled with the Holy Spirit of God. **No man can keep the commandments for and on behalf of another; no one can gain the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in his life and give or sell that holy oil to another**. Every man must light his own lamp with the oil of righteousness which he buys at **the market of obedience**. Few doctrines are more evil and wicked than the false doctrine of supererogation, which is, that the saints, by doing more than is necessary for their own salvation, build up an immense treasure of merit in heaven, which can be dispensed and assigned to others so they too can be saved." (Mortal Messiah, 3:468)
4. President James E. Faust spoke of those who seem to have received fewer talents or gifts: **"If their talents are used to build the kingdom of god and serve others, they will enjoy the promises of the Savior**. The great promise of the Savior is that they 'shall receive [their] reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come' (D&C 59:23)." (Ensign, May 1994, p6)
5. Elder Marvin J. Ashton: "It is our right and responsibility to accept gifts and share them." (Ensign, Nov 1987, p20)
6. "But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them." (D&C 60:2)
7. "For all have not every gift given unto them; for there are many gifts, and to every man is given a gift by the Spirit of God. To some is given one, and to some is given another, that all may be profited thereby." (D&C 46:11-12)

8. According to the above verse we have all been given gifts. Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: "Let me mention a few gifts that are not always evident or noteworthy but that are very important. Among these may be your gifts--gifts not so evident but nevertheless real and valuable.

"Let us review some of these less conspicuous gifts: the gift of **asking**; the gift of **listening**; the gift of **hearing and using a still, small voice**; the gift of being **able to weep**; the gift of **avoiding contention**; the gift of **being agreeable**; the gift of **avoiding vain repetition**; the gift of **seeking that which is righteous**; the gift of **not passing judgment**; the gift of **looking to God for guidance**; the gift of **being a disciple**; the gift of **caring for others**; the gift of **being able to ponder**; the gift of **offering prayer**; the gift of **bearing a mighty testimony**; and the gift of **receiving the Holy Ghost**." (Ensign, Nov 1987, p20)

9. Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "There is an eternal principle that states: **Service is essential to salvation**. In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus dramatized the truth that to gain salvation men must keep the commandments and be guided by the Holy Spirit. Thus, Obedience is essential to salvation. By now giving the parable of the talents, he completes the picture. Not only must mortals keep the commandments to gain an inheritance in the Father's kingdom, but **they must also get outside themselves in service to their fellowmen**. It is one thing to be virtuous and pay tithing; it is another to persuade others to walk in paths of purity and to **make their means available for the building up of the Lord's earthly kingdom**. The Lord will not be satisfied with the salvation of Moses alone; he expects that great lawgiver to guide all Israel to the summit of Sinai. **Both obedience and service are essential to salvation**." (Mortal Messiah, 3:468-469)

