



Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem
* *Knights of Malta* *

July
2021

Chancellor's Update

One Talent

In Matthew 25 v 14 ff. Christ condemned the man who did nothing with his *One Talent*.

Let us see what the Fathers of the Church have to say, and how it applies to us. From:

Jerome: For truly that which is written, “To offer excuses excusing sins” [Ps. 141:4] happened to this servant, so that to slothfulness and idleness was added also the sin of pride. For he who ought to have honestly acknowledged his fault, and to have entreated the Master of the household, on the contrary cavils against him, and avers that he did it with provident design, lest while he sought to make profit, he should hazard the capital.

Origen: This servant seems to me to have been one of those who believe, but do not act honestly, concealing their faith, and doing everything that they may not be known to be Christians. They who are such seem to me to have a fear of God, and to regard Him as austere and implacable. We indeed understand how the Lord reaps where He sowed not, because the righteous man sows in the Spirit, whereof he shall reap life eternal. Also, He reaps where He sowed not, and gathers where he scattered not because He counts as bestowed upon Himself all that is sown among the poor.

Jerome: Also, by this which this servant dared to say, “Thou reapest where thou sowedst not,” we understand that the Lord accepts the good life of the Gentiles and of the Philosophers.

Greg.: But there are many within the Church of whom this servant is a type, who fear to set out on the path of a better life, and yet are not afraid to continue in carnal indolence; they esteem themselves sinners, and therefore tremble to take up the paths of holiness, but fearlessly remain in their own iniquities.

Hilary: Or, By this servant is understood the Jewish people which continues in the Law, and says, I was “afraid of thee,” as through fear of the old commandments abstaining from the exercise of evangelical liberty; and it says, “Lo, there is that is thine,” as though it had continued in those things which the Lord commanded, when yet it knew that the fruits of righteousness should be reaped there, where the Law had not been sown, and that there should be gathered from among the Gentiles some who were not scattered of the seed of Abraham.

Jerome: But what he thought would be his excuse is turned into his condemnation. He calls him “wicked servant,” because he cavilled against the Lord; and “slothful,” because he would not

double his talent; condemning his pride in the one, and his idleness in the other. If you knew me to be hard and austere, and to seek after other men's goods, you should also have known that I exact with the more rigor that is mine own, and should have given my money to the bankers; for the Greek word here means money.

“The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in the fire.” [Ps.12:6] The money, or silver, then are the preaching of the Gospel and the heavenly word; which ought to be given to the bankers, that is, either to the other doctors, which the Apostles did when they ordained Priest and Bishops throughout the cities; or to all the believers, who can double the sum and restore it with usury by fulfilling in act what they have learned in word.

Greg., Hom. in Ev., ix, 4: So then we see as well the peril of the teachers if they withhold the Lord's money, as that of the hearers from whom is exacted with usury that they have heard, namely, that from what they have heard they should strive to understand that they have not heard.

Origen: The Lord did not allow that He was “a hard man” as the servant supposed, but He assented to all his other words. But He is indeed hard to those who abuse the mercy of God to suffer themselves to become remiss, and use it not to be converted.

Greg.: Let us hear now the sentence by which the Lord condemns the slothful servant, “Take away from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten talents.”

Origen: The Lord is able by the might of His divinity to take away his ability from the man who is slack to use it, and to give it to him who has improved his own.”

Greg., Hom. in Ev., ix, 5: It might seem more seasonable to have given it rather to him who had two, than to him who had five. But as the five talents denote the knowledge of things without, the two understanding and action, he who had the two had more than he who had the five talents; this man with his five talents merited the administration of things without, but was yet without any understanding of things eternal. The one talent therefore, which we say signifies the intellect, ought to be given to him who had administered well the things without which he had received; the same we see happen every day in the Holy Church, that they who administer faithfully things without, are also mighty in the inward understanding.

Jerome: Or, it is given to him who had gained five talents, that we may understand that though the Lord's joy over the labor of each be equal, of him who doubled the five as of him who doubled the two, yet is a greater reward due to him who labored more in the Lord's money.

REMEMBER to carefully use whatever talents the Lord has given us. We do not want to hear “And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Copyright 2021 by the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. All rights reserved. The O.S.J. Messenger and the Chancellor's Update are among the authorized publications of the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, Inc. and the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem-Knights of Malta. World Headquarters and Convent of the Order are located in Hughesville, Maryland in the United States of America.



Jerusalem 1048-1291, Cyprus 1291-1310, Rhodes 1311-1523, Malta 1530-1798, Russia 1798-1907, U.S.A. 1908-

<http://sovereignorderofsaintjohnofjerusalemknightsofmalta.org/>