

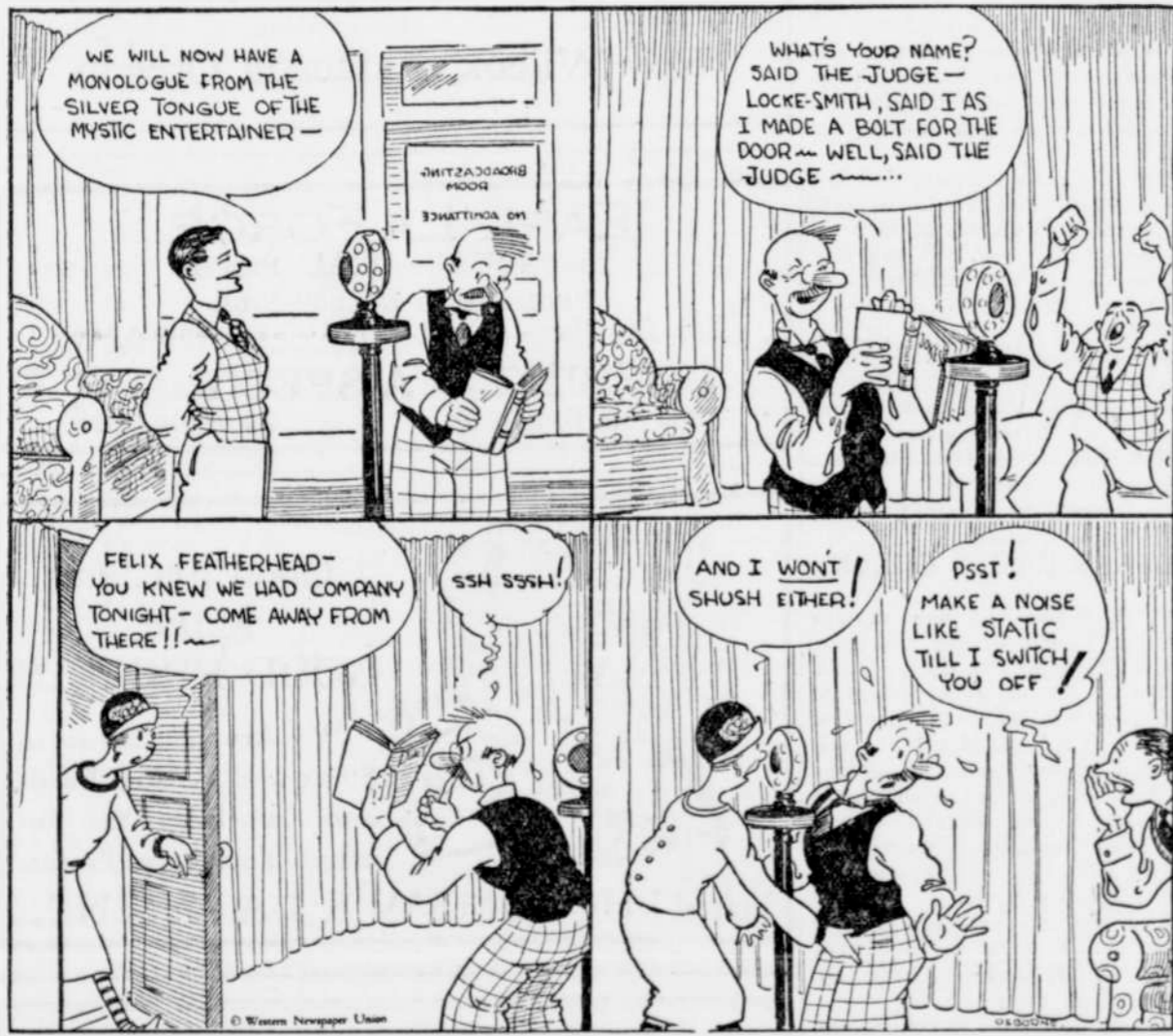
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Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of Day and Evening Schools, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for February 6

THE PRACTICE OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

LESSON TEXT—Matt. 25:14-30.
GOLDEN TEXT—Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

PRIMARY TOPIC—The Story of the Three Servants.
JUNIOR TOPIC—Three Stewards and How They Kept Their Trust.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—What It Means to Be a Steward.
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Scope and Spirit of Christian Stewardship.

Stewardship here includes oneself and substance. Stewardship in money is only a small part of our responsibility. This parable like that of the ten virgins is associated with the second coming of Christ. In both instances the unpreparedness for His coming on the part of the people is exhibited. In that of the ten virgins their unreadiness consisted in their failure of inward life—absence of the Holy Ghost. In this of the talents it consisted in their failure to properly use the gifts which had been entrusted to them. The first was failure to watch; the second was failure to work. By talents is meant whatever gifts and powers one possesses as gifts from God, whether of nature or grace, such as strength, reason, energy, knowledge, influence, time, money, ability to speak, sing, etc.

I. The Distribution of the Talents (vv. 14, 15).

1. It was a sovereign act. He called his own servants and distributed to them his own money. As the One who created us and absolutely owns us, He has assigned us our places and given us our several powers, intending that we put them to the best possible use.

2. It was an intelligent act. "According to his several ability." The God who made us knew our ability to use gifts, therefore has made the distribution upon that basis.

3. It was a purposeful act. The talents were given to be traded with. They were not given to be used for one's own gain and profit, but as stock in trade for the enrichment and glory of the Master.

II. The Employment of the Talents (vv. 16-18).

1. All the servants recognized that the talents were not their own—that they were responsible to the Lord for the use made of them.

2. Two servants used their talents. The five-talented man put his to use and gained five more. The two-talented man put his to use and gained two more. This shows that God's gifts can be increased. The exercise of any gift increases it. The faithful use of what we have in the place we are will prepare us for greater usefulness and honor.

3. The one hid his talent. The fact that one possesses but one talent should not discourage him, but should make him strive harder. God does not reward according to what we possess, but according to our faithfulness. The crime of the one talented man was not that he had but one talent, but that he hid the talent which the Lord gave him.

III. The Accounting for the Talents (vv. 19-30).

1. Its certainty. There is a day coming when we all must give an account of our stewardship.

2. The time. This will be at the coming of the Lord. If we have done well, we shall then have praise. If we have been unfaithful, we shall then be cast out from the presence of the Lord.

3. The judgments announced.

(1) Reward of the faithful. (a) Praise—"Well done." We all like to be praised. From childhood on through life commendation is pleasing. (b) Promotion—"Be thou ruler over many things." Promotion is desirable to all. (c) Entrance upon the joy of the Lord. The five talented man and the two talented man received the same praise and the same promotion.

(2) Punishment of the faithless. The one talented man lied when brought to account. The talent when dug up was not the same as when it was buried—it was not of the same weight. Gifts unused are lost. (a) Reproach—he was called slothful and wicked. To be called lazy is a reproach which even the lazy man dislikes. (b) Stripped—the talent which was given to him was taken from him. (c) Cast out—he was condemned on his own ground. The very fact that he knew the character of the Lord should have been an incentive for him to have exerted himself.

Pray More

If God's children would learn to pray more before making ventures, they would not need to pray so much after they are made.—Echoes.

The Cross

In conversation, the cross is the will; in sanctification, the cross is the affections.—Echoes.

Salvation makes no man lose his mind, but restores the wrecked mind.—Echoes.

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Lv. Portland	2:00	6:20	8:00	Lv. Estacada	8:00	4:30	8:30	
Clackamas	2:30	6:50	8:15	Eagle Creek	8:15	4:45	8:45	
Carver	2:40	7:00	8:25	Barton	8:25	4:55	8:55	
Barton	3:05	7:25	8:45	Carver	8:45	5:15	9:15	
Eagle Creek	3:15	7:35	8:55	Clackamas	8:55	5:25	9:25	
Ar. Estacada	3:30	7:50	9:30	Portland	9:30	6:00	10:00	

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