

YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A LITTLE.....ENTER INTO THE JOY OF YOUR MASTER - Biblical Commentary by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

Matthew 25,14-30

“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who 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. 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.’ 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 scattered no seed, 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 sown and gather where I scattered no seed? 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 everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

With Jesus the relationship with God, the Father, changes. No longer servants of the Lord, but children of the Father. But a wrong idea of God can ruin a person's existence and prevent the transition from servant to son.

Let's see what Matthew writes to us in his Gospel, chapter 25, 14-30. Jesus is speaking of the Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. *“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants...”* in the Eastern world all the employees of an important person are called servants even if, as in this case, they are high-ranking officials.

“.. and entrusted to them his property.” This man does not leave his assets in custody, but transfers them. The verb "to entrust" used by the evangelist means "to give". *“To one he gave five talents,..”* Talent was a very important measure of value, a talent was between 26 and 36 kg of gold and corresponded to about 6,000 denarii, that is to say 20 years of wages for a worker, therefore a fortune.

So, “... to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.” . . The master knows his officials and knows their abilities. “ *He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them,..* ” and so does the one who received two. The first earns another five, and the other earns another two, they act like the master, as if the talent was theirs.

“*..he who had received the one talent..* ” attention a single talent is not a little. a talent was about 30 kg of gold or 20 years of wages for a worker, so a huge fortune, but he remains a servant, he does not feel like a master “*.. went and dug in the ground..* ” Burying this talent is like burying one's life, but he also does so because, according to rabbinic law, if one buried the money that was given to him, in case of theft, he was not required to return it

So he takes all precautions, he doesn't believe in his master's generosity “*..and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came ..* ” the evangelist speaks in the present, to represent an action that continues in the community of Jesus, “*..and settled accounts with them.* ” He does not come to have what he had given back, but to see what they have done with it. “ *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.* ’ Well at this point the master, does not ask for the talent to be given back, but rejoices and exclaims “*Well done,..* ” and this exclamation resembles that of the creator in the book of Genesis when God, the creator, admires his work, “*.. good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little..* ” he says a little, but it is an enormity, an immense fortune, 150 kg of gold, an extraordinary fortune, and the owner says it was little.

“ *I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.* ” He invites him to be part of all his possessions, of all his life and makes him pass from the status of servant to that of master, free like him. Likewise for he had received two. Instead the situation is different for the one who had received a talent.

“*He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew ...* ” he thinks on what he knows, but it is the wrong “*..you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,..* ” but this is a distorted image that is not justified by the narrative. In the narrative we see not an only generous master, but an extremely generous one, who not only does not want back the enormous fortune he left to his officials, but even makes them part of his entire heritage, his entire life.

“*.. I was afraid,..* ” Here is where the evangelist wants to arrive, a distorted image of God, the fear of God can be fatal to the person, who is afraid to act out of fear of reproach, or of making a mistake. John will say in the first letter (John 1 ,18) “ *Nell'amore non c'è timore,..... e chi teme non è perfetto nell'amore.* ”

“*I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent..* ” while the others took possession and acted freely, he remained a servant, and underlines “*..in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.* ’ He never considered it his own. And here's the master's reaction. “*.. his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? .* the master does not agree with the image that the servant has of him, it is a distorted image.

“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.” The fear of making mistakes, in the individual, has paralyzed his action, his growth. And here is the sentence. *“So take the talent from him ..”* he did not know what to do with it, it was a fortune and he did not know how to use it, indeed for him this fortune that the master had given him had become a reason for anguish, anxiety and concern. Then the master tells him *“... give it to him who has the ten talents. ”*

This individual is not punished for doing something bad, he simply did nothing. And here is the sentence, *“..to everyone who has will more be given,..”* that is, whoever produces and makes use of what is given to him *“..he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.*

Those who produce love receive from the Father a greater capacity to love. Who instead does not love, he who does not direct his life for others, remains without anything. *“And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness.”* He is worthless because he didn't know what to do with this fortune

In reality, he is already there because by burying talent he buried himself, *“ In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ’* It is the desperation for having failed one's existence.