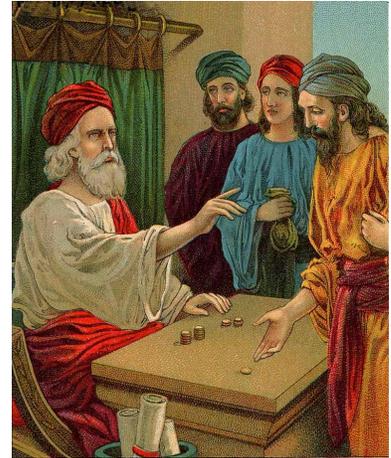


Scripture Readings: [1 Thessalonians 4:9-11](#) ✕ [Psalm 97:1, 7-9](#) ✕ [Matthew 25:14-30](#)

Whenever we find Jesus including three characters in a parable, we know that the attitude of the third character will be key to the lesson He is trying to teach us. The best example of this is the third character in the parable of the Good Samaritan, mentioned after the priest and Levite, who pass the wounded man on the roadside. It is the response of this third character – the Samaritan – that becomes the focus of that story.



In the parable of the Talents, the third servant saw his master as “a demanding person, harvesting where [he] did not plant and gathering where [he] did not scatter.” Because of his fear of his master, he buried what he had been given for safekeeping. The other two servants had a much more generous view of their master; this gave them the freedom to take initiatives and well-judged risks with what they had been given.

Jesus reveals to us a God of endless generosity, whose goodness has no limits, who is ever-faithful even when we are not faithful. God does not want us to fail, but He does want us to take reasonable risks for the good, trusting that He will be with us. God will continue to befriend us whether or not our labors prove fruitful. Perfect love drives out fear.¹ The assurance of God’s love should drive out the kind of fear that left the third servant in the parable paralyzed. If we are generous with what we have received, we can entrust the result wholeheartedly to God. ✕

¹ [1 John 4:18](#)