

Matthew 25:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Analysis

Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man—Sklēros ei anthrōpos (σκληρὸς εἰ ἄνθρωπος): 'You are a harsh/austere man.' The servant's theology is catastrophically wrong—he views his master as cruel and exploitative. This reveals the root problem: not inability, but a distorted view of God's character. Fear rooted in false belief produces disobedience masquerading as caution.

Reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed—The accusation (therizōn hopou ouk espeiras, θερίζων ὅπου οὐκ ἔσπειρας) paints the master as unjustly profiting from others' labor. But this is slander—the master gave the talents, providing the seed. The servant's warped theology led to paralysis: if God is harsh and demanding, why try? This is the lie that neutralizes countless believers.

Historical Context

Absentee landlords were often despised in first-century Palestine for extracting profit while peasants did the work. But this master wasn't a landlord—he entrusted his own wealth to servants for their opportunity to profit. The servant projects cultural stereotypes onto a generous master, revealing how cultural assumptions can distort our view of God.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. Do you secretly view God as harsh and demanding, making obedience feel like drudgery rather than joy?
2. How have false beliefs about God's character paralyzed your spiritual initiative?
3. Where do you accuse God of being unfair when He's actually been generous?

Interlinear Text

προσελθὼν δὲ καὶ ὁ τὸ ἐν τάλαντον
came Then and G3588 G3588 the one talent
G4334 G1161 G2532 G1520 G5007

εἰληφὼς εἰπεν Κύριε ἔγνων σε ὅτι σκληρὸς
he which had received and said Lord I knew thee that an hard
G2983 G2036 G2962 G1097 G4571 G3754 G4642

εἰ ἄνθρωπος θερίζων ὅπου οὐ ἔσπειρας καὶ
thou art man reaping where not sown and
G1488 G444 G2325 G3699 G3756 G4687 G2532

συνάγων ὅθεν οὐ διεσκόρπισας
gathering where not strawed
G4863 G3606 G3756 G1287

Additional Cross-References

Luke 15:29 (Parallel theme): And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

Jeremiah 2:31 (References Lord): O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

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