

Matthew 25:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Analysis

Thou wicked and slothful servant—Ponēre doule kai oknēre (πονηρὲ δοῦλε καὶ ὄκνηρέ): 'evil slave and lazy.' Ponēros (πονηρός) means actively wicked, not just mistaken. Oknēros (ὄκνηρός) means lazy/slothful. The master's verdict combines moral and practical failure: the servant's fear-based theology produced wicked inaction.

Thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not—The master doesn't affirm the servant's false accusation; he uses argumentum ad hominem: 'Even by your own twisted logic, you should have acted.' If you truly believed I demand profit without investment, you should have been terrified to return nothing. Your own excuse condemns you. This devastating logic exposes the servant's excuse as not just wrong but self-contradictory.

Historical Context

In Roman law, a servant who failed in his duty couldn't escape judgment by slandering his master. The master here brilliantly turns the servant's own accusation against him: if the master truly were harsh, the servant's failure to produce anything would be even more inexcusable. The servant's defense is logically incoherent.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does laziness masquerade as theological caution in your life?
2. Does the master calling inaction 'wicked' challenge your tolerance of spiritual passivity?
3. What excuses for non-stewardship collapse under logical scrutiny?

Interlinear Text

ἀποκριθεὶς	δὲ	ό	κύριος	αὐτῷ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Ποιηρὲ
answered	G1161	G3588	lord	His	and said	His	Thou wicked
G611			G2962	G846	G2036	G846	G4190
δοῦλε	καὶ	όκνηρέ	ἥδεις	ὅτι	θερίζω	ὅπου	οὐ
servant	and	lothful	thou knewest	that	I reap	where	not
G1401	G2532	G3636	G1492	G3754	G2325	G3699	G3756
ἔσπειρα	καὶ	συνάγω	ἔθειν	οὐ	διεσκόρπισα		
I sowed	and	gather	where	not	I have		
G4687	G2532	G4863	G3606	G3756	G1287		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 18:32 (Evil): Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: