

Luke 19:11-27
June 7, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: When we were kids, did your parents ever say to you, “We are going to leave and run some errands. Or, we are going to have dinner with some friends. While we’re gone, I need you to do “x” by the time we get home. Do you recall what happened?! [Let people engage – some respected the parents order and obeyed it; some put the tasks off until the last minute; and some just ignored their parents and rebelled.]

Transition: As you can see, there are varying kinds of responses that children give when parents give them assignments! Some of you respected and obeyed your parents. Some of you found more fun things to do and procrastinated right before your parents got home; and some could have just ignored their parents’ instructions and got in trouble for it.

In today’s text, Jesus tells His disciples a parable because they and others who were journeying with Him to Jerusalem had the wrong notion that He would institute the kingdom of God *immediately*. They didn’t realize that He would suffer and die, be raised again, ascend into heaven, sit at the right hand of God, and that *many years would go by before He returned to establish His kingdom*. Jesus wanted to let His hearers know what they were supposed to be doing in His absence. They were not supposed to sit around waiting for Him to return. Rather, they were to be actively doing business for Him with what He entrusted to them. The day will certainly come when He will return. At that time, each of us must give an account for what we have done. Let’s read the text to learn what His expectations are of us as His disciples while He’s “away.” Let’s begin.

BOOK:

The Parable of the Ten Minas

¹¹ While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹² He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas (one mina = 3 months wages) ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

¹⁴ “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

¹⁵ “He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

¹⁶ “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

¹⁷ “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

¹⁸ “The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

¹⁹ “His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

²⁰ “Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. ²¹ I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’

²² “His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?’ ²³ Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’

²⁴ “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

²⁵ “‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

²⁶ “He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷ But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

- This parable shows that every servant has been given the same gift and that the difference in results is not due to differing gifts, but to differing levels of diligence in using the gift.
- We all have been given the same gospel and we are told to do business with it for our King during His absence.

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

- It reminds me that we live in a world that is hostile toward God and does not want to submit to Jesus as Lord and King. It is in just such a hostile world that we are to do business with the gospel, multiplying it by investing it in the lives of people.
- It makes me uncomfortable that there is always a risk in doing business in a hostile environment. But the greater risk is not to do business at all. Am I willing to do His business, realizing people might react negatively toward me? Am I more about political correctness than sharing the gospel while the “king is away?”

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

- The question is, does this unfaithful servant represent a true believer who loses his rewards, who is saved, yet so as through fire ([1 Cor. 3:11-15](#))? Or, is he a person who professes to know God, but by his deeds he denies him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed ([Titus 1:16](#))?
- J. C. Ryle observes, “Hard thoughts of God are a common mark of all unconverted people. They first misrepresent Him, and then try to excuse themselves for not loving and serving Him” (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* [Baker], [Luke 11-24](#), p. 305)

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

We are living today in the period between Luke 19:14 and 15 when our Master is absent but will return according to His promise. We have been given a task to perform, and we must be faithful until He comes. What will the King say to us when He returns? Will His words mean reward, rebuke, or possibly retribution? “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 253-254)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Master Who Rewards the Faithful (Luke 19:11–27)

Passover season was always an emotionally charged time for the Jews, because it reminded them of their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. This annual celebration aggravated the misery of their bondage to Rome and made them yearn all the more for a deliverer. Of course, there were subversive groups like the Zealots who used commando tactics against Rome, and politicians like the Herodians who compromised with Rome, but most of the Jews rejected those approaches. They wanted God to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies and send them their promised King.

Jesus knew that many of the people in the crowd were hoping to see Him establish the kingdom, so He gave this parable to clarify things. Many of the people who listened no doubt connected it with an event in Jewish history that had occurred many years before. When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., he left Judea to his son Archelaus, who had to go to Rome to have the inheritance approved. Not wanting Archelaus as their ruler, the Jews sent fifty men to argue their case before Augustus Caesar, who did ratify the inheritance without giving Archelaus the title of “king.”

Jesus explained that the kingdom would not come until a future time, but that His servants had better be faithful now to do the job assigned to them. In the parable, you see three different responses to the Master.

Faithful obedience (vv. 16–19, 24). Each of the servants received an amount of money equal to three months' wages for a laboring man, so you can figure out its buying power today. *Occupy* means “do business, put my money to work.” They could give the money to investors and earn interest, or purchase goods and sell them for a profit. The important thing was that they give back to their master more than he had given to them. How they did it was up to them, so long as it was legal and profitable.

We are given a report on only three of the ten servants, and the first two proved to be successful. The first servant brought ten pounds more, the second brought five pounds more, and both were rewarded accordingly. These men did their job faithfully even though they were promised no rewards and had no assurance that their master would even return, let alone secure the kingdom that he sought.

The Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30) is similar to the Parable of the Pounds, but their lessons must not be confused. In this parable, each of the ten servants received the same amount but different rewards, while in the Parable of the Talents, the servants received different amounts but the same reward, the approval and joy of the Lord (Matt. 25:21).

The Parable of the Talents teaches us to be faithful to use our different gifts as God gives us opportunities to serve. Some people have a great deal of ability, so God gives them greater opportunity. The important thing is not how much ability you have but how faithful you are to use what you have for the Lord. The person with the least ability, if he or she is faithful, will receive the same reward as the most gifted church leader.

In the Parable of the Pounds, each servant has the same deposit, which probably represents the message of the Gospel (1 Thes. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:11; 6:20). Our gifts and abilities are different, but our job is the same: to share the Word of God so that it multiplies and fills the world (1 Thes. 1:8; 2 Thes. 3:1). Only 120 believers met together on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15), but

before that day ended, there were 3,000 more (Acts 2:41). And before long, there were 5,000 believers (Acts 4:4). In time, the Jewish leaders accused the disciples of “filling Jerusalem” with the message! (Acts 5:28)

When it comes to witnessing, all believers start on the same level, so the reward is according to faithfulness and achievement. The faithful servants were rewarded by being made *rulers* of various cities. The reward for faithful work is always—more work! But what a compliment to be entrusted with the management of so many cities! How we serve the Lord today will help determine our reward and ministry when He comes to establish His kingdom on earth. Faithfulness now is preparation for blessed service then.

Unfaithful disobedience (vv. 20–23). At least one of the ten men did not obey his master and as a result lost even the pound that the master gave him. It is a basic principle of the Christian life that wasted opportunity means loss of reward *and possibly loss of the privilege of service*. If we do not use the gifts God gives us under His direction, why should we even have them? Somebody else can make better use of the gifts to the glory of God (see Matt. 13:12 and Luke 8:18).

“It is always so,” wrote Charles Haddon Spurgeon; “the gracious and faithful man obtains more grace and more means of usefulness, while the unfaithful man sinks lower and lower and grows worse and worse. We must either make progress or else lose what we have attained. There is no such thing as standing still in religion.”

This servant was unfaithful because his heart was not right toward his master. He saw his master as a hard man who was demanding and unfair. The servant had no love for his master; in fact, he feared him and dreaded to displease him. Rather than lose the pound and incur his master’s anger, he guarded it so that he would at least have something to give the master if he returned and asked for a reckoning.

It is sad when a Christian is motivated by slavish fear instead of loving faith. While there is a proper “fear of the Lord” that should be in every Christian’s heart, that “fear” should be the respect of a loving child and not the dread of a frightened slave. “Nothing twists and deforms the soul more than a low or unworthy conception of God,” wrote Dr. A.W. Tozer. How important it is that we do the will of God from our hearts (Eph. 6:6).

Outright rebellion (vv. 14–27). The “citizens” or “enemies” are mentioned at the beginning and the ending and are an important part of the story, for most of the people in the crowd that day were in that category. Jesus was near Jerusalem, and in a few days He would hear the mob shout, “We have no king but Caesar!” (John 19:15) In other words, “We will not have this Man to reign over us!”

God was gracious to Israel and gave the nation nearly forty years of grace before judgment fell (Luke 19:41–44). But we must be careful to see in this a warning to all who reject Jesus Christ—Jew or Gentile—for during this time while He is away in heaven, Jesus Christ is calling men everywhere to repent and submit to Him.

The FAITHFUL SERVANTS obeyed because they trusted their master and wanted to please him. The UNFAITHFUL SERVANT disobeyed because he feared his master. But these CITIZENS REBELLED because they hated their king (Luke 19:14). Jesus quoted Psalm 69:4 and told His disciples, “They hated Me without a cause” (John 15:25).

We are living today in the period between Luke 19:14 and 15 when our Master is absent but will return according to His promise. We have been given a task to perform, and we must be faithful until He comes. What will the King say to us when He returns? Will His words mean

reward, rebuke, or possibly retribution? “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4:2).

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 252-253)

i. Jesus’ teaching on stewardship of responsibilities (19:11–27) (Matt. 25:14–30)

This parable brings to a close the section of Jesus’ teaching in response to rejection (Luke 12:1–19:27). It also concludes the subsection of Jesus’ teaching about the coming kingdom and the attitudes of His disciples (17:11–19:27). Jesus’ disciples should be like the grateful ex-leper (17:11–19), persistent in prayer (18:1–14), childlike (18:15–17), like the former blind man (18:35–43), and like Zacchaeus (19:1–10) as opposed to the rich ruler (18:18–25).

This Parable of the 10 Minas sums up Jesus’ teaching to the disciples. Each disciple had duties given to him by Jesus, and each was to carry out his responsibilities. But the parable was addressed not only to disciples. It was also addressed to the nation at large, to show that it too had responsibilities. If the nation did not turn to Jesus, it would be punished.

19:11. Jesus gave this **parable because ... the people** with Him **thought** He was **going to** reinstitute **the kingdom** immediately. Since they were close to **Jerusalem**, Jesus wanted to dispel any disappointment on the part of His followers.

19:12–14. The **man of noble birth** obviously represented Jesus. Because His followers thought the kingdom was to be set up immediately, Jesus said the nobleman in the parable had to **go to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return**. He would have to leave them before the kingdom would be set up. Before leaving, **he called 10 of his servants and gave them 10 minas**, 1 apiece. A mina was about three months’ wages, so its value was considerable. They were to invest the **money** while he was gone. Another group of people, **His subjects**, did not **want him to be ... king**. Obviously, this group represented the religious leaders in particular and the nation in general.

19:15–26. When the **king ... returned**, he called **the servants in to find out what they had** done with **the money** he had entrusted to them. **The first** two servants had used the money to be productive for the king. One had earned another **10 minas** (v. 16), and the second had earned another **5 minas** (v. 18). Each of these servants was commended by the king and given a reward commensurate with the amount of money earned (vv. 17, 19).

Another servant had done nothing with the **mina** given to him. His **words** to the king, **You are a hard man; you take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow**, were used against him by the **master** (v. 22). If he were right then he should have at least banked the **money**—then the king would have received his money back **with interest**. The implication was that the servant did not really expect the king to come back. He was not at all concerned about the king’s return so he did not bother with the king’s business. Matthew related that the third servant was thrown out of the kingdom (Matt. 25:30). This indicates that this servant really belonged to the group of people who did not want the king to reign over them (Luke 19:14). His money was taken away and given **to the one who** had done the most for the king.

19:27. In contrast with the two servants who had expected the king’s return, the **enemies** of the **king** were put to death in the king’s presence. The analogy of this parable was clear to Jesus’ hearers. Jesus was going away to receive a kingship. When He returned, He would establish His kingdom. Until that time His followers were to fulfill the responsibilities He gave them. On His

return He would reward the faithful commensurate with their service to Him, and His enemies would be judged before Him.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 1551). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

19:11–27 This parable is different enough from Mt 25:14–30 so that most scholars think the Gospel writers had independent traditions of an original. But why the tradition would preserve the same story in such different forms is not clear, and it is more likely that Jesus told similar stories under different circumstances.

Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, pp. 315–318). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

B. Dedication to a Distant Kingdom: Serving with Patient Intelligence (19:11–27)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *God’s kingdom will not come in its fullness until the king returns at a time he determines. His slaves must serve him with intelligence, waiting for his return.*

19:11. Having made his way up the dangerous winding mountain road from Jericho, Jesus came to the entrance of Jerusalem. The crowds were following him and listening to his teaching. They made it clear to Jesus that they thought the moment had arrived. It was time for him to bring in the kingdom. Evidently, they thought he would enter Jerusalem as a conquering king, ready to throw out the Roman government and take charge. He could use the miraculous powers he had shown and call on God to send the angelic army, and a son of David would once more occupy the throne of David. Jesus sought to dash such expectations. He used his normal method: telling a parable.

19:12–14. In the parable a man traveled to another country to be crowned king of the country where he had been living (see “Deeper Discoveries”). To test their responsibility, the king gave each of his ten slaves one mina. It took sixty minas to make a talent. The man entrusted almost nothing from his standpoint to the slaves, but each of them had over three months’ pay. Would the slaves wait idly while the master was gone, living on the unexpected windfall? Or would they obey the master and put the money to use and earn a profit?

The man seeking the kingship had to deal with other people besides the slaves of his household. He had citizens of the kingdom. These people were not slaves. Rather, they claimed power and influence in the kingdom. They had resources of their own, independent of this king. They used these resources to send their own delegation to the far country, trying to prevent his appointment as king. They did not want this man as king.

Certainly, behind such an image stood the Pharisees and other religious leaders of Israel. God sent his Messiah to be their king. They rejected Messiah and even collaborated with enemy government officials to prevent him from gaining the kingship. They did not realize that Jesus never intended to establish an earthly kingship. Rather, God used their opposition to Jesus to achieve his plan of redeeming the world through the blood of his Son.

19:15. The opposition failed. The man became king in the far country and returned to rule. This again parallels the kingdom of God. Jesus journeyed to heaven after his death. There the resurrected Lord sits on the throne at God’s right hand. He is king, but his opponents cannot see

that. They think they have won the victory. Instead, Jesus is on his way back. He is coming. One day his kingdom will be evident to all the world. Then what will happen? The story tells us. He summons his slaves to whom he has entrusted responsibility. He wants to know how they have done with his resources.

19:16–19. The first slave passed the examination with flying colors. He had earned one thousand percent on his investment. Now the king rewarded him with even more responsibility and power. The least on earth, a slave, became powerful and great because he was a faithful steward, responsible over all he received. The second slave made only five hundred percent profit. Again, the master rewarded him with more authority and responsibility.

19:20–21. The story does not follow each of the original ten. It simply illustrates the two extremes: great faithfulness and utter failure. The third slave exemplifies the latter. He knew the king's habits and feared what would happen to him if he should lose his money. So he gave the king back what he had received. But this was not faithful obedience. This was not responsibility. This was lazy, fearful idleness. He did not put his money to work as the king ordered (v. 13).

Verse 21 makes interpretation of the parable difficult. If God or Jesus is seen as the returning king, then this description hardly fits. It is a caricature of the king who so graciously gave the money before he left and who so richly rewarded some of his slaves when he returned. This is the only servant who attempted to describe the king, and his description was wrong. He represents the worst side of the Jewish religion of his day—a side that thought it had to obey God at any cost and in the smallest detail of the law. Otherwise, God would become the angry judge, throw the book at them, and punish them beyond imagination. This is the natural outcome of legalistic religion. It changes God from a gracious redeemer who gives laws because he knows the life that is best for us to a mean tyrant who forces us to obey laws for his own pleasure and cheats us out of what rightfully belongs to us. Legalistic religion concentrates so heavily on the religious system that it gets out of touch with the God it claims to represent.

19:22–23. The king took the disobedient slave's words at face value. This is not to say the king accepted such a description. What monarch would publicly admit to such a character profile? The king simply says, "If this is the system he is seeking to follow and this is the god he is trying to please, then he will be judged on that system." That system makes even more demands for obedience. Why did he not follow the command of the king rather than retreating in fear? If nothing else, let someone else do the work. Just put the money in the bank and receive common interest on it. Then he would have had something to give the master.

The slave's excuse makes no sense. Similarly, the judgment scene in Matthew 25 shows people totally unaware of how false their religious conceptions are and how wrong their expectations of heavenly reward. The religious system Jesus found in place in Israel did not work. It was not based on intelligent reasoning, consistent actions, or a true understanding of God. The people who practiced it faced judgment.

19:24. The judgment involved taking away what the slave had. The most faithful of the slaves got even more reward and responsibility. The evil slave was left with nothing. His whole system disintegrated. What he thought he controlled, he lost. So the Jewish religious system would face terrible judgment in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the temple, but the individuals would face ultimate judgment when the Messiah returned in all his glory.

19:25. The crowd, or perhaps the other slaves, saw this as unfair. Why take away what little the one had to give to the one who had enough? This represents the response of legalism, a system built on eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, absolute justice. Jesus' kingdom represented an

entirely different type of system. It was a system of grace to the faithful and trusting, but judgment for those who trusted themselves rather than leaning on God's grace.

19:26. This summarizes the story in proverbial form (see 8:18). Jesus divided people into two classes: those who have and those who do not. The latter class includes very religious people who think they know God and believe they have the only way to gain his rewards. In reality, they do not know God at all. They are evil. They will lose the religious power and responsibility they have and will face the king's final judgment.

19:27. The class of those who do not have includes another group. These not only think they have the way to God all locked up, but they actively oppose Jesus. Here Jesus spoke directly to the Pharisees and scribes who would soon lead him to Pilate and Calvary. They were opposing him. They did not want his type of relationship to God. They refused to acknowledge him as king. Eternal slaughter and death awaited them. Active opposition to God brings even greater punishment than refusal to do things God's way.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 19:11-27). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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