

I invite you to open your bibles this morning, to today's scripture text, which can be found in the book of Luke, the 19th chapter, verses 11-27. Which can be found on page \_\_\_\_ in your pew bibles. We continue in our series "Taking care of God's gifts" Today's scripture reveals a lesson of stewardship.

Our Fathers Word: Lk 19:11-27

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. '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.'"

NIV

Let us consider what it means to live a life of proper stewardship that is pleasing to God. Stewardship of God's grace, His gifts and talents, and His provisions; the blessings he has bestowed upon us for being faithful in our relationship with Him through Christ Jesus. We seek him as beggars, completely dependent upon Him, knowing all that we require physically, and spiritually will be provided when we seek our Father in Heaven, giving thanks, and obeying his commands. This stewardship, is greatly relevant to our Christian perspective towards our worldly resources, as they pertain to our eternity with God. We must consider biblical stewardship, as we are being taught here, in The Parable of the Minas, by our King Jesus.

This is unique among the parables of Jesus, because it is the only one whose story is in part based on an actual historical event. It tells about a king who went away to receive a kingdom and whose subjects did their best to stop him receiving it. Anyone in Judaea, on hearing the parable, would immediately remember the historical circumstances on which it was based. We will cover that event in just a moment.

Jesus has been speaking and teaching, coming up the road from Jericho, headed towards Jerusalem. He has interacted with Zacchaeus, the short little man who climbed up into a tree so that he could see Jesus. Jesus has just pronounced that salvation has come to Zacchaeus's house, and then he said, in verse 10 " **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.**"

The conversion of Zacchaeus was a fulfillment of the very purpose of Christ's coming into the world, to seek the lost, and to save that which was lost. As they heard these things, he spoke the parable.

In today's scripture, we join our Savior Jesus and his followers as He neared his destination in Jerusalem. Where he was about to make what we know as the triumphant entry; when the colt of the donkey is going to be brought to him, He rides the colt into the city, the palm leaves are waived, and they say "Hail the King of the Jews" and he enters into Jerusalem with great fanfare. This is about to happen, and He knows it is about to happen. Many of his followers thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately, at any moment. That Jesus had arrived to set up His throne to rule over His Kingdom right then and there. So, he speaks this parable to them. By doing so, He freed them from this misconception. He showed that there would be an interval between His First and Second coming, during which His servants were to be busy doing His work.

The Lord Jesus Himself *is* the certain nobleman who went to *Heaven* to await the time when He would return to set up His Kingdom on earth. The ten servants symbolize His kingdom servants; us. He gave each one a mina and told them to do business with this mina until He came again. The minas represent the talents God has gifted us with.

While there are differences in the talents and abilities of the servants of the Lord, there are some things which they have in common, such as the privilege of sharing the gospel, and representing Christ to the world, and the privilege of prayer. It is these gifts that the mina speaks of.

You see, all of life, has been entrusted to us, as a stewardship. A steward is a servant, who is entrusted with the responsibility of managing someone else's property. Like a property manager. He is expected to discharge his duties in the owner's best interest, not in his own best interest.

A steward has been given the resources, and the authority, to carry out his duties. That's what a steward is. All of life has been entrusted to us as a stewardship.

Our time, our creation, the world around us, our bodies, our gifts and talents, our families, all a stewardship. Our knowledge, our possessions and money, the gospel, there is nothing that you and I have today physically or intellectually, there is nothing that any of us have, that we did not receive, that we did not get, from the owner, the master. There is nothing that we have that was not given to us from God.

it's helpful for us to set historical context behind this story, because it will help to illuminate this. As the Jews who were listening to Jesus, as he was heading towards Jerusalem in the triumphant entry, in the weekend of the crucifixion, and the resurrection. That's what's coming.

Archelaus was the son of Herod the great. Herod the great was the king in Israel, when Jesus was born. Shortly after the birth of Jesus, Herod the great died. Shortly before his death he appointed Archelaus to be the next Herod, the next king.

Archelaus was a sensual, vain, wicked man, given to not keeping his word. In fact, once, when the pharoses demanded the caducean (sad u cean) high priest be removed, Archelaus agreed to remove him as high priest. But only after his kingship had been confirmed by Cezar Augustus in Rome.

So even though his father had appointed him, Cezar had to affirm that appointment. The pharoses pushed the issue with Archelaus. In response Archelaus dispatched Roman troops unto the temple mount, into the courtyard of the temple, and history tells us that 3,000 Jews were massacred. Soon after that, Archelaus, realizing he had a rebellion on his hands, quickly travels to Rome, to be confirmed by Augustus, as the king.

A delegation of 50 Jews from Judea traveled to Rome to oppose his appointment. They didn't want the Herodians ruling over them. They were joined by 8000 Jews who were living in Rome at the time. Cezar Augustus confirmed Archelaus anyway, as the next king, the next Herod. When Archelaus traveled back to Jerusalem he had all of the Jews killed that stood up in opposition to his kingship. So, into that context, which happened some 10-20 years before, Jesus speaks this parable.

Several key thoughts emerge from our text. **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. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'** The kings command was very clear. Jesus gives us a very clear command regarding *his will* for **us** to DO *his* business until he comes back. Also notice that this command was given by one who had the authority to give this command. This nobleman, or this king, had the right to tell these servants what to do. It says in verse 13, "**So He called ten of HIS servants.**" So, this nobleman was going to travel to get his Kingdom, and then return. He has the absolute right to rule over his subjects, because they are his servants. He was giving them a *job to do*, before he returns.

Also take notice that the command was given to those identified as servants, they belonged to him, they had pledged their allegiance to serve Him with their lives. We should not confuse these servants with the citizens described in the next verse. The word that Jesus uses here in this parable for servant is the Greek word **doulos (doo'-los)** which means slave, or bond servant.

The main reference in the use of this word is to the relationship that this person has to the master. So, the emphasis is not so much about the activity being performed, although that is important, but it really comes down heavy on the relationship with the master who is requiring the activity or the action. So, it speaks of one who is in a permanent servitude to someone else. It speaks of a bond servant who is all together consumed with the will of his master. He has no rights of his own, he has no will of his own, he is completely given over to the will and the pleasure of his master. So, the primary focus is in service.

Jesus calls ten of his servants who are in a relationship with him, who have dedicated their entire lives to serve the pleasure of the master, of the King, and he gives them a job to do. Notice also here, the command specifically gives the Kings expectations. He says, "Do my business until I return." They were each given the same amount, which was the equivalent of 3 months wages for the working class. They were each given the same command, "Go and do business for me." They were each given the same obligation, it was not optional. He didn't say, here, take these minas and IF YOU FEEL LIKE IT, I really would love it if you would go out and do some business for me while I'm away. He didn't say if you're not busy, and you can find some free time when it's not inconvenient for you, go out. He didn't issue this command as an option.

This also reiterates the lesson we learned last week, the principle of ownership. God is the owner of all assets. God owns it all. Everything belongs to him.

It also reveals to us the principle of trust. God entrusts us as his servants to accomplish his purposes on his behalf. He gave his servants the minas, our gifts and talents, then went away, and left them to use it as they could and as they thought best. He did not in any way interfere with them, or stand over them. He left them entirely to their own devices. That is the way in which God trusts us. That is the beautiful thing about God, he trusts us to do *His work*.

This parable is revealing our King Jesus' trust in us, his servants. We have been given these minas, our gifts and talents, and we have been commanded specifically to go and do business for Him until he comes back. What is his business? Preach the gospel, and teach them to obey all the things I have commanded. Seeking and saving the lost. The very purpose of Christ's coming into the world, to seek the lost, and to save that which was lost.

Notice in the next verse, 14, the context in which the servants do the king's business, could not be more challenging. While the command couldn't be more clear, the context couldn't be more challenging. 14 "But his subjects hated him," so the citizens of this land hated him, they are lost! It continues to say that the citizens "sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'" But Jesus was going to march into Jerusalem in just the matter of a few hours. They were going to hail him as the Messiah, and yet how quickly that would turn around.

He would be arrested, and as he is brought before Pilot, they would yell “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We will not have this man rule over us!” They had a very strong emotional reaction against the King.

Jesus said in the book of John during those prayers and comments with his disciples, right before his arrest, he tells them, (Jn 15:18-20) **18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. "**

You know that the world hates Jesus, before it hated you, so don't be shocked when the world hates you. When they hate your message, when they hate the business that you are seeking to carry out in Jesus' name. Don't be surprised when persecutions come, don't be surprised when they oppose you, don't be surprised when they seek to distract you from your mission. Don't be surprised. Certainly, if they hated Jesus they are going to hate you too. The citizens not only hated the king, they rebelled against the king. They will oppose Jesus' rule by an act of violent, open resistance. They don't want Jesus to rule over them, to tell them what to do. They don't want to submit to His laws or His authority.

Yet Jesus, tells his disciples, I want you to go out into all the world, and do my business until I come back. Preach the gospel, and teach them to do what? Obey all the things I have commanded.

Our citizens worldwide in our time, are saying the same thing, we will not obey, we will not let him tell us what to do, we'll do it our own way, we'll figure it out ourselves, we know better. Citizens rebel against the King's rule.



This parable tells us of the king's test. A test in the principle of perseverance. God must be obeyed in spite of circumstances, obstacles, and distractions. The master must be obeyed. Notice, next in our text, servants will give account to the king when he gets back. Showing us the principle of accountability. As always, the king's trust was a test of whether or not the servant was faithful and reliable in his routine affairs. Sometimes, a person justifies a certain large inefficiency in the ordinary routine affairs of life, by claiming that they have a mind above these things. God does not. It is precisely in these routine duties that God is testing us. This demonstrates the principle of faith.

So, the king comes back, and the servants are evaluated. Let's not forget, the hatred of the world has no power to keep the king from coming back. They couldn't stop his return, and he recalls them to make account of their stewardship. The first had a thousand percent return, the second, five-hundred percent return. This demonstrates the principle of fruitfulness.

Notice what he said to them, well done my good servant, and they both receive the same accommodation and they both receive their reward. Why? Because they were faithful. Because they were faithful over very little, have authority over very much. Faithful service results in greater opportunity and greater responsibility in the service of the King. The reward that the faithful servants received was not one which they could enjoy by sitting down, folding their hands, and doing nothing.

One was put over ten cities, the other five. The reward of work well done was more work to do. The greatest compliment we can pay a person is to give them ever greater and harder tasks to do. The great reward of God to the person who has satisfied the test, is more trust. God expects us to be resourceful with what he gives us. That's what stewards do.

He then evaluates another servant. He evaluates the wicked servant. This guy shows up and says, "here's your money. Its in my handkerchief, here you go. You can have it back. I didn't do anything with it. But at least I didn't lose what you gave me." The king asks him why didn't you obey my command? Why didn't you do business for me while I was away? He refused to do business for him because he was afraid of him. He had a wrong view of God, he had a wrong attitude towards God, which led him to wrong conclusions about God, and ultimately wrong actions towards God.

Notice what the king says, "out of your own mouth I will judge you." Our mouth reveals our own heart. The servant did not live up to what he knew about the master, and Jesus says out of your own mouth I will judge you. Out of the abundance of your heart your mouth is speaking. What you talk about reveals what you think about. In this case it revealed what this man thought about God. Who he served. Jesus, God, calls him a wicked servant.

Why was he a wicked servant? Because something is expected of servants. What is expected? Obedience is expected. Because the master expected obedience, demanded obedience. The command was very clear. He was a wicked servant because he knew what he was told to do and he did not obey him. So the king takes away his mina and gives it to the faithful servant.

Use God's resources rightly, or lose everything. Wicked servants will suffer loss. The loss of rewards, the loss of increased responsibility in the service of the King.

But notice what happens to the citizens who have rebelled. Notice verse 27, "bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me. So, the king demands complete destruction of those who would not have him rule over them. The king will judge with sovereign authority.

So, in this parable we have seen several principles of stewardship. Let's do a quick review of them. The principle of ownership, God is the owner of all assets. The Principle of Trust, God entrusts us to do his accomplishments, his purpose on his behalf. The Principle of Perseverance, God must be obeyed in spite of circumstances, obstacles, or distractions. The Principle of Fruitfulness, God expects us to be resourceful with what he gives us. He expects us to take care of it and to use it. To multiply it in his service. The Principle of Accountability, God will require us to give and account to him one day. The Principle of Faithfulness, God will give greater responsibilities to those who have been faithful in small amounts.

What does God require of his servants? Faithfulness and fruitfulness. 1 Cor chapter 4, verses 1 and 2: *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

So if Christ returned today, will he find you faithful? With your talents, your time, your knowledge, with the gospel? Will he find you faithful? How are you using your talents, your time, and your treasure? Are you living and serving as a faithful servant?

Or are you bringing in everything God is giving you, and using it for yourself, for your own agenda. That's the difference between a faithful servant and a wicked servant.

One who will hear well done my good and faithful servant, and one who will be stripped of all rewards, and all opportunities for further service. There is no standing still in the Christian life. We either get more, or we lose what we have. We either advance to greater heights, or slip back. May we be good stewards, slaves of Christ, living to please to Him.

**Gracious Father,**

Thank you for our Master and Lord Jesus Christ, sent here to seek us and save us when we were lost.

Father, we pray that we would be faithful servants.

Faithful servants, regardless of opposition, the distractions, or the difficulties of the task, that we would clearly embrace what you would tell us to do.

That we would see ourselves in our relationship to you, that indeed you do own all the assets. We know it all belongs to you, everything.

We thank you for entrusting it to us, to manage, to do your business until you come back and call us into your presence.

Help us to be faithful, that we keep our faithfulness in the small things, the little things, the teaching of Sunday school class, the glad fulfillment of reading our Bibles, the faithful sharing of the gospel. Reaching out to the lost and inviting them to church, here, with us to worship and give thanks to you Lord. That in all these things we will be found to be faithful servants.

Knowing that you will reward faithful stewards, with increased responsibility in service in your Kingdom.

Help us by the power of your Holy Spirit to achieve that end, by your grace, and for your glory.

Amen.