

In our passage for today, Jesus gave the crowd a prophetic parable that tells His followers what to expect in the near and distant future. It is an encapsulation of two thousand years, giving us a window into the only things that really matter.

*<sup>11</sup> As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.* Luke 19:11 In chapter ten the seventy-two were sent out ahead of Jesus healing the sick and telling them "the kingdom of God is near you" (10:9<sup>i</sup>). The crowd around Jesus was growing as they headed to the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. Expectations were high that Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem and declare Himself king. They thought the day was approaching when the Lord would be king over all the earth (Zechariah 14:4,5<sup>ii</sup>,9<sup>iii</sup>). They were just seventeen miles from the place where the eternal King was to establish His kingdom and at the very season they expected it to happen. Twelve apostles and seventy-two heralds - the numbers sound like the twelve tribes and seventy-two elders of Israel (Numbers 11:25,26<sup>iv</sup>), the making of a new government, and it was, but not yet of an earthly kingdom. This is why Jesus gave this parable to those who "supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately." He had to dampen the excited crowd's expectations and turn them in a different direction.

The kingdom will appear at the Second Coming. Jesus' feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and His enemies will be destroyed. He will be the ruler of this world for a thousand years (Revelation 20:6<sup>v</sup>). Even then mankind will rebel against Him. In eternity, no one will be able to say, "Well, if Jesus had been in charge instead of corrupt politicians, if we had seen Him and experienced His goodness, we wouldn't have chosen to reject Him."

The kingdom will appear and endure for a thousand years. And after that final rebellion He will reign over the new heaven and new earth forever, but this was not the time (Revelation 20:7-9<sup>vi</sup>). That present time was the time to redeem the people of God, establish the kingdom in our hearts, and fill His followers with the Holy Spirit.

*<sup>12</sup> He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.* Luke 19:12 In this parable, Jesus is represented by the nobleman. He came from a far country, the heavenly realm to receive for Himself a kingdom. Jesus was on earth to establish this kingdom in the hearts of His followers but would be returning to the place He came from. That is the ascension. Receiving a kingdom means a higher authority, God the Father, will give Him the kingship.

This kingdom is in the hearts of those won over to His love and who ask Him to reign in them as their Lord. You, fellow believer, are part of His kingdom. When we recognized that He could do a much better job of running our lives than we ever could, we asked Him to reign in us. When we realized that His love for us took Him to the cross to redeem us, we saw we could have no better Master than He. Long live the King of kings! Amen? We gladly submit to His lordship.

*<sup>13</sup> Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.'* Luke 19:13 While Jesus was here, He addressed what we are to do as His servants. We are to love one another and make disciples (John 15:12<sup>vii</sup>; Matthew 28:19<sup>viii</sup>). Everyone in a kingdom is a servant of the king. We were servants of our desires which usually meant servants of sin (John 8:34<sup>ix</sup>), but then we choose a better

way. We chose to serve the King. The King gave each servant the same amount of money and asked them to "engage in business" until He returned. A mina is equal to three months wages. The Bible often has the physical representing the spiritual. In this world it would be buying and selling or investing in something that would turn a profit. It could even be to plant a field and harvest it. Three months is the maturity time for many different crops.

In the spiritual realm what does that mean? God has invested in each of His servants a deposit of the Holy Spirit which is evidenced by the fruits of the Spirit. We have been entrusted with the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:4<sup>x</sup>). Our King does not want a financial profit. He wants more disciples, people who come out of darkness and into the light. He wants people who see that reigning over their own lives is a disaster, and realize it is better for Him to reign in our hearts. So, with that which He has invested in us, we go out and make disciples (2 Timothy 2:2<sup>xi</sup>). We do what He does, to seek and to save the lost until He returns (Luke 19:10<sup>xii</sup>).

This is unlike the parable of the talents in which Jesus gave each person a different amount according to their abilities and calling. That parable explains the differences in callings while this one is speaking of the one thing all who are in Christ have in common and are called to do.

*<sup>14</sup> But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'* Luke 19:14 The sad reality is that in this world most people do not want Him to reign (John 1:11<sup>xiii</sup>). They want to reign, not just over themselves but over as many people as they can. They refuse to see their own condition. They think they are wiser and more capable than God to run their lives. They want to do what they want even if it leads to destruction. In the parable, these people send a delegation after the nobleman, and telling the one in authority that they do not want him to reign over them. They would rather have a king of their choosing.

Jesus' audience would have identified with the setting as this is what happened when Archelaus inherited half the kingdom from his father Herod the Great. Upon Herod the Great's death, Archelaus went to Rome to ask for the title of king over his half of Herod's territory. A Jewish and Samaritan delegation with the help of some of Herod's family went to plead with Caesar and the senate to reject Archelaus as the inheritor of half his father's kingdom. 8000 Jews living in Rome joined the delegation. They told of Archelaus slaughter of 3000 Jews at Passover and his torture tactics. They also accused him of corruption. Caesar did not give him the title of king but did allow him to rule over half the kingdom of his father.

The parable was something they could relate to, only most listeners would be sympathizing with the delegation. That is exactly the way it would play out the following week. Most people do not want Jesus to reign over their lives. The main difference is of course that Jesus is infinitely greater and more benevolent than Archelaus.

*<sup>15</sup> When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business.* Luke 19:15 The nobleman returned as king (Philippians 2:9-11<sup>xiv</sup>). This pictures the Second Coming. He has been given a name above every name and every knee will bow before Him (Philippians 2:9,10<sup>xv</sup>). There will come a day when Jesus will inherit the kingdoms of this world. Revelation 11:15 tells us *<sup>15</sup> Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The*

*kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."* That is when the kingdom will appear, and we will all give an account of ourselves to God (Romans 14:10<sup>xvi</sup>). When that time comes, He will ask His servants to report what we have done with the deposit He had given to us. What did we do with the Gospel and the Holy Spirit? His deposit is so priceless and generous that He expects it to produce fruit. Did we share the Good News? Did we disciple others and teach them to live for the King? Did we hear and follow the instruction of the Word and the Holy Spirit? **What has the King gained by His good deposit in us?** This part of the parable points to the Judgment Seat of Christ where the believers will receive what is due them for what they did, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10<sup>xvii</sup>). Many Christians are unaware that we too will stand before Jesus and give an account. Numerous verses tell us this is the case (Romans 14:10<sup>xviii</sup>). It is not a judgment of heaven or hell but of eternal rewards.

*<sup>16</sup> The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.'*  
*<sup>17</sup> And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'* Luke 19:16,17 The first servant reported that he had turned the single mina into ten. We do not know how long the nobleman was gone, but it must have been some time to produce a tenfold increase. The servant was wise and faithful. The servants do not boast of what they have accomplished or how hard they worked. Notice their response, "Sir, *your* mina has earned." So, as a reward, he was given ten cities to rule over. While it will be a joy to serve the King, the position also means the faithful will be among those closest to the King, reporting and communing with Him frequently. What spiritual initiatives await us are far beyond our present imaginative abilities.

This is the principle we read of in Luke 16:10<sup>xix</sup> which tells us that the one who is faithful in the least will also be faithful in much. Heavenly responsibility and rewards are based on how faithful we were in this life to do what God assigned us to do. It has nothing to do with salvation, but rather of heavenly reward. The one phrase followers of Christ long to hear is "*Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.*" Matthew 25:23<sup>xx</sup> Live in the light of that coming day.

*<sup>18</sup> And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.'* *<sup>19</sup> And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'* Luke 19:18,19 The second servant had gained five times the original amount and was awarded rule over five cities. That is like taking five-thousand dollars and turning it into sixty-thousand and the reward being overseeing two or three-million worth of revenue! These men are not overseeing little villages but cities. The concept is that what God has in store for us is so much bigger than our present experiences that we have a hard time imagining it. Our just and holy God is looking for every opportunity to lavish His rewards on us. He does the work in and through us. We just yield ourselves and watch His life in us touch others. And for that we are rewarded beyond anything we can describe (2 Peter 1:10,11<sup>xxi</sup>). We just need to be faithful to obey and let His life flow through us.

*<sup>20</sup> Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; <sup>21</sup> for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.'* Luke 19:20,21 A third servant had stashed the money in a secure place. His reasoning was that the nobleman expected results and made gains where he did not even invest. In other words, the nobleman

expected something for that deposit and the servant was afraid to lose any of the money. His description of the character of the nobleman is that he is severe, a word that can mean virtuous to the extreme. That is true. But that should have caused him to do his best to invest it wisely.

This reminds me of some monks. They are so afraid of losing their faith that they hole up and speak to no one. They hang on to their deposit so they can show they did not lose it, while all the while knowing God wants us to use it. Use it or lose it!

Now since this deposit is the Holy Spirit and the Gospel, and we are speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, this cannot represent the person losing his or her salvation. But it does mean the little reward he or she may have received goes to others. Heaven is still heaven, and all sin is forgiven, and all tears are wiped away, but there are differences in glory as Paul described in 1 Corinthians 15 (1 Corinthians 15:41<sup>xxii</sup>). A person's good works can be done in his or her own power and are therefore meaningless, consumed into ashes, and yet he or she may be saved from the wrath of God (1 Corinthians 3:15<sup>xxiii</sup>).

*<sup>22</sup> He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? <sup>23</sup> Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'* Luke 19:22,23 By our words we will be justified and by our words we will be condemned (Matthew 12:37<sup>xxiv</sup>). The servant's excuse condemned him. He declared that he knew the master expected a return for His investment. That is just and right. His attitude toward the master was that of a person toward a tyrant. The way the master rewarded the other servants proves otherwise.

Our justifications often sound like this servant's excuse. "God, I didn't help that person because I know you want me to use my money wisely." The problem with that thought is that doing what God instructs is wisdom. We should listen to the excuses we make. They will often cause us to change our mind. I know from experience, justifying inaction does not mean God looks the other way.

The king asked the servant why he did not at least deposit the money in a CD and make some interest. This shows that the servant would not even do the very minimum. He feared the nobleman, but he did not honor him or carry out his assigned task.

*<sup>24</sup> And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'* *<sup>25</sup> And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!'* Luke 19:24,25 The king ordered the money be taken from him and given to the first servant, the one who made ten times the original amount. The attendants thought it seemed a bit unfair because he already had so much. Want something to get done? Ask a busy person to do it. Why? Because that person is busy accomplishing things. He or she has a work ethic and understands responsibility. Sometimes we see someone who is highly active for the Lord and touches many lives and wonder why God does not help us to be more like them. While we all have differing gifts and abilities, be careful, for it may be simply because we are not as faithful to follow through on what God has already asked of us.

*<sup>26</sup> 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.'* Luke 19:26 As is often the case, Jesus ended the parable with a word of eternal truth. The more someone is faithful in the least, the more will be given to him or her. I remember asking God to show me insights into the Word. In my spirit I recalled this verse. Then I changed my prayer to, God help me share

the truths from your Word that You have already shown me. I knew if I would be faithful to share, God would show me more to share.

Do you want God to use your life in a greater way? Be faithful with the deposit He has given you. It is a spiritual law just as there are natural laws. And the second half of the law is true as well. If I am not faithful to use the blessing given to me, any reward will go to others. We are given the deposit of the Holy Spirit and the Gospel to share with our fellow man. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We should all be ready to give an answer of the hope that lies in us and live in such a way that others will ask (1 Peter 3:15<sup>xxv</sup>). We should all watch for someone who is ready to be discipled and invite them to study God's Word with us, or at the very least we should give them the material that can train them. And we should support those who are called and gifted to be evangelists and missionaries. This is why 25% of the church income go to those causes.

*27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.*” Luke 19:27 Jesus concluded with a final warning. What happens to the delegation that did not want Him to reign? Judgment! This is the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11<sup>xxvi</sup>). Resisting the good reign of God condemns us (John 3:17<sup>xxvii</sup>). This sounds so harsh from our democratic perspective but consider it from the heavenly perspective. These who resisted the reign of Jesus want to reign over God. They want to be god. Jesus is good, gracious, merciful, holy, righteous. They are selfish, arrogant, brutal, and unjust.

Archelaus cruelly executed people who resisted his rule, but God will judge those who resist His righteous reign with perfect justice. Repent or perish is not just a sign that fanatics hold up. It is another spiritual truth (John 3:36<sup>xxviii</sup>). Would we rather see those who are selfish and unjust continue to fight for power forever? This parable is good news. One day evil will end. One day Jesus will return as King and reign in righteousness. One day, sin will be no more, and only the faithful will be about God's business and enjoying serving Him with a joy beyond anything we can imagine (Psalm 45:7<sup>xxix</sup>). What will He say to you on that day?

Jesus' parable tells us the purpose of His coming. It told the listeners not to expect to see the kingdom right away. It told them He would be rejected, but that He would return to reign. And it tells us what to do until He returns to reward us. What has our King gained by His good deposit in us?

## Questions

- 1 What is this parable about?
- 2 What is Jesus trying to correct?
- 3 What did Jesus come to do?
- 4 What investment has He made in us? Why?
- 5 What does the accounting represent?
- 6 What is required to receive heavenly rewards?
- 7 How great is the reward in comparison to what we did?
- 8 Who does the last servant represent?
- 9 Who ends up with more responsibility? Why is that good?
- 10 Review the summary truth.
- 11 What is the final warning and to whom is it given?

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<sup>i</sup> **Luke 10:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

<sup>ii</sup> **Zechariah 14:4-5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward. <sup>5</sup> And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.

<sup>iii</sup> **Zechariah 14:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.

<sup>iv</sup> **Numbers 11:25-26 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. <sup>26</sup> Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.

<sup>v</sup> **Revelation 20:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

<sup>vi</sup> **Revelation 20:7-9 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison <sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

<sup>vii</sup> **John 15:12 (NIV)**

<sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

<sup>viii</sup> **Matthew 28:19 (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>ix</sup> **John 8:34 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

<sup>x</sup> **1 Thessalonians 2:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

<sup>xi</sup> **2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

<sup>xii</sup> **Luke 19:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

<sup>xiii</sup> **John 1:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

<sup>xiv</sup> **Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

<sup>xv</sup> **Philippians 2:9-10 (NIV)**

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>xvi</sup> **Romans 14:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

<sup>xvii</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

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<sup>xviii</sup> **Romans 14:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

<sup>xix</sup> **Luke 16:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

<sup>xx</sup> **Matthew 25:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

<sup>xxi</sup> **2 Peter 1:10-11 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

<sup>xxii</sup> **1 Corinthians 15:41 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **1 Corinthians 3:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Matthew 12:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

<sup>xxv</sup> **1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

<sup>xxvi</sup> **Revelation 20:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **John 3:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **John 3:36 (NIV)**

<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

<sup>xxix</sup> **Psalms 45:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.