

November 10, 2013
Last Judgment

"Making Investments for Jesus' Kingdom"

LUKE 19:11-27

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.'"

Jesus told this parable or story about the ten minas to people who thought the kingdom of God was coming soon. They had dreams and hopes that Jesus would suddenly set up a kingdom here on this earth where all their problems and troubles in life were solved. They wanted something similar to the Great Society we heard about in the 1960's where there would be chicken in every pot, a car in every garage and a color television in every home. Even the hippies sang about the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.

One rabbi around the time of Jesus said when the Messiah comes, "The earth shall yield its fruit ten thousandfold and on each vine there shall be a thousand branches, and each branch shall produce a thousand clusters of grapes and each grape produce a 100 gallons of wine...and the treasury of manna shall descend from on high...and then the Messiah shall return in glory." Some of those who observed Jesus perform miracles were convinced he was the Messiah who could give them anything they wanted.

There is lurking inside of all of us this thinking that if we follow Jesus closely we will be rewarded with a nice easy life here on this earth. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact the closer you get to Jesus and the closer you follow him the more difficulties you will experience in life. Jesus said we should be willing to pick up our cross and follow him.

What will you do with your time of grace here on this earth? Will you invest it wisely for Jesus' kingdom or will you cover it up and hide it because you really not all that exciting about getting involved with Jesus and his kingdom? This morning we want to hear what Jesus tells us about investing in his kingdom.

The kingdom

The kingdom of Jesus is so completely different from all other kingdoms of this world. He tell us about a man of noble birth who went to a distant country to have himself appointed as king and then to return. A king usually doesn't go of into a distant country to receive his crown. How strange it would be if some foreign country elected the president of our country.

With this part of the story Jesus wants us to know that his kingdom is totally different from all other kingdom or government here on this earth. At his trial Jesus told Pontius Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "My kingdom is from another place." Other kingdoms are built on power and success and often money. Jesus came to this earth to build a kingdom through his death and resurrection. He came to give his life for us at the cross so he could rescue us from the kingdom of darkness. In his kingdom, sinners who are lost forever experience love at the highest level and of the purest form.

Our greatest need in life is to know with absolute certainly that the Almighty God who created us genuinely loves us now in this life and for all eternity. When I look at myself honestly in the light of God's Word I can find nothing in me that would cause God to love me and care about me as Paul said, "I know that nothing good dwells in me." Everything is shaky, filled with doubt and uncertainty. Then we look at Jesus going into the depths of hell itself to pay for our sin then rising again. He does all this to bring us into this place, this wonderful kingdom of God where we are loved intensely and personally 24/7.

In the story that Jesus tells about the king, he also adds the thought that some people did not want this king in their lives. "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'" When Pontius Pilate pointed to Jesus and said to the Jewish leaders, "Here is your king," they rejected Jesus with the words "We have no king but Caesar." It is part of our sinful nature that we just don't want Jesus to be a king who does everything to rescue us and save us. We want to have some credit for saving ourselves or at least contribute something to our salvation. If you want to make people angry show them where they have sinned. If you want to make them even angrier tell them the consequences of their sin, eternal death in hell. If you really want to make them angry then tell them Jesus is the King who has done everything necessary to save them.

Before we get into the part about the ten minas, I would have you think of the kingdom of Christ in three phases. The first phase is the promise given to Adam and Eve that the Seed of the woman would crush the devil's power. The Old Testament kept pointing to the coming of this king who will rescue his people. There is the second phase where Jesus comes to his earth and then fulfills everything necessary to rescue us from the kingdom of darkness into which we have fallen.

Then there is the third phase where Jesus tells us to take the message of his kingdom and proclaim it to people all over the world. We are in that last phase. As we seek to bring people into the Word of God they will learn about Jesus and be rescued from the kingdom of darkness. This is wonderful work that we get to do in the last days before the end of the world comes. We can expect to be rejected just as Jesus was rejected. Is it worth living for this kingdom of Christ and even going all out to live for Jesus in these last days? Let's hear about the minas to learn that the investment of your life that you make in Jesus' kingdom is definitely worth every minute of your life on this earth.

The investment

Before going off in to the country to receive his kingdom, the king called in ten of his servants and gave each of them one mina, about \$15,000. He told them to put the money work while he was gone. When he returned he called in the ten servants to hear what they had done while he was gone. "The first one came in and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'" The servant does not come in and say, "Let me show what I have done." No, in humility he says, "Your mina has earned ten more."

So it is with the servants in Jesus' kingdom who boasts not of their accomplishments but of God's grace that allowed them to bring glory to the King. Those who are brought into the kingdom of never say, "I accepted Christ into my heart." They know it was the grace of God that provided complete forgiveness at the cross and the grace of God that provided the faith to believe. When it comes to living a life of glory to Jesus, they humbly confess with the Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Look at your mina has done. Look at what your grace has done.

What a glorious moment in the kingdom as the servant hears the words of the king, "Well done my good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities!" When the Lord entrusts you with the blessings of his kingdom and you faithfully handle these blessings, the Lord actually gives you more work and more responsibilities for serving in the kingdom. Imagine that! The harder you work and the more faithful you are, the more work the Lord gives you! In earthly things we cry out in pain when someone gives us more work. When Jesus gives us great responsibilities it is always, always, always a joy and not a burden.

Let me give a practical example of how this might be true in your life. The Lord gives you his Word, the Holy Bible. He puts it into your hands and into your life. He gives you time on this earth. He asks you to manage that time by devoting some of it to personally reading your Bible. Perhaps you start with investing a little each day. Then the Lord leads you to invest even more time as you grow in the Word. Or take the matter of prayer. You use the precious time the Lord has given you to pray for people. As you pray, the Lord continues to add people and other needs to your prayer list. This is also true in how we manage our money. We give our offerings and gifts to the Lord. As we faithfully manage this gift and give generously to the Lord, the Lord asks us to do even more for him. Then he humbles us by providing even more for us so that we can be even more generous.

When we think of the servant who was given ten cities and the other servant who was given five cities our thoughts go beyond this life to the places of glory that the Lord has planned for us. In this life I might not be able to see how the time used for the Lord brought great benefits to the lives of many other people. In heaven we will see the fruits of all our labors. The Revelation says that our works follow after us. We will live and reign with Christ. We see the end results of the lives we live for Jesus. Angels will envy us for the way the Lord was able to use our lives for his glory.

One of the servants had a totally different view of the mina his master had given him. When the king called him he said, "Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it in a piece of cloth. 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." The servant did not put the mina into a piece of cloth to protect and keep it safe. He kept it in a piece of cloth because he did not like the king. He even accuses him of being harsh and cruel and stealing from people. Those who don't know the love of Jesus and the glory of his kingdom have no concept whatsoever of why a Christian would devote so much time to Bible reading, prayer and worship. They see the money go into the offering plate and they say, "All the church cares about his money."

When King Jesus comes on clouds of glory with his holy angels he will destroy forever those who hate and despise him. The king told those standing by, "Take his mina away from him and give it to him who has ten minas." The time we have on this earth is a time of grace, a time to believe in Jesus and to serve him in his kingdom. Once that time comes to an end there are no second chances. Everything will be taken away from them. They will perish forever in the lake of fire. Jesus yearns and longs for everyone to come into his kingdom before the end comes. Amen.