

The King and His Glory, Part 1

Luke 19:11-14

We're looking at Luke 19, verses 11 and following. For Jesus, Passion Week is still ahead of him. In fact, from this point in Scripture, it's right around the corner, literally up the hill and before leaving Jericho, an important city where so much has happened already. We've seen the healing of the blind men, the salvation of Zacchaeus. We've seen the Messiah's mission statement there in Luke 19:10. Here in Jericho, Jesus has one more lesson to teach, in the form of an amazing and profound parable.

Let's read this parable together this morning as we begin starting in Luke 19 verse 11. "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. He said, 'Therefore a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Engage in business until I come.'" But his citizens hated

him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us."

"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. The first came before him, saying, "Lord, your mina has made ten minas more." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant. Because you've been faithful in very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Lord, your mina has made five minas, and he said to him, "And you are to be over five cities."

"Then another came, saying, "Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief, 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." 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. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?"

"He said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him, give it to the one who has ten minas." They said to him, "Lord,

he has ten minas." "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. But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here, and slaughter them before me."" "

This is Luke's version of a story that maybe you recognize from another portion of Scripture as being somewhat similar, the parable of the talents, which is recorded over in Matthew 25:14-30. That is another version of this same story, and in that version in Matthew 25, that Jesus is going to tell once again in the coming week, we understand that Jesus has used this basic idea of a nobleman or a homeowner going away and entrusting something to his servants and then returning and getting an account. This is the basic idea. He uses it in two different ways, one here in Luke 19 and another time in Matthew 25.

They are different, quite different, and they have different, different purposes, different intents, different audiences, different settings, and much to, much we could say in that regard. But suffice it to say that the version here is unique to Luke's Gospel. Luke is the only one that delivers this parable in this form, and it has a unique purpose, as we are going to see.

And as usual, Luke starts into this parable by giving us, as the narrator, he gives us the context in verse 11. Verse 11 says, "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." So the opening phrase, "As they heard these things," that connects the parable back to the previous context, which means the setting is still Jericho.

It's right before Jesus ascends up to Jerusalem to complete the journey that he began back in Luke 9:51. This is the final act in the travel section of Luke's Gospel, that large section that goes from Luke 9:51 all the way up to the end of this parable in Luke 19:28. That's where this stops. So this is the final act in the travel section in Luke's Gospel, as he, Jesus, heads into Passion Week. Within a week, he'll be on the cross.

"As they heard these things." That phrase reminds us of Jesus' audience. The they, Zacchaeus, everyone at his house, that's the they. He's got his tax collector friends, associates, those people probably of ill repute, who are there at his home. There are curious citizens of Jericho who have no doubt followed Jesus down the street, heard all this commotion, and Jesus'

teaching and affirming Zacchaeus as a son of Abraham, they're there, too.

The Apostles are there as well, along with other disciples who've been traveling along with Jesus down the road into Jericho, and they intend to go up into Jerusalem for the Passover feast. So other disciples, pilgrims who are heading up to the feast as well, who see the band of disciples traveling with Jesus, and they join them and travel along the road with them. They're all there. "As they heard these things." That's the, they.

"These things." What were they hearing? "These things" that they were hearing refers to the teaching. It was prompted by Jesus' conversation with Zacchaeus. Most of that conversation, by the way, is not recorded here. You understand that there's a lot of conversation, a lot of talking, a lot of teaching going on that doesn't make it into the Gospel record. Otherwise, this book would be a lot bigger.

Luke has condensed what's necessary for us at the direction of the Holy Spirit, but we know what the teaching was about. We know what the conversation consisted of because the entire record of Luke's Gospel provides the background of Jesus' teaching ministry, so we can fill in whatever gaps there may be.

Jesus is still at it. He's still preaching the good news of the kingdom of God, as it says over and over through Luke's Gospel. That's what he did everywhere. He preached the good news of the kingdom of God. He's still doing it.

And Luke gives two reasons that Jesus proceeded to tell the parable. So we're to understand that while they were all of them listening intently to Jesus' teaching, he's a captivating teacher, no one can turn away. And while they're all listening intently and probably quite excitedly at this point to what he's teaching about the kingdom of God, knowing what's coming, Jesus sees the need to set their expectations. He sees the need to re-orient their perspective, to help shift their thinking away from what it has been into what it needs to be.

Why? First, because he was near to Jerusalem. Actually, he's very near, only 18 miles away. That's a mere six-hour walk. For us, used to driving around in cars, that's quite a distance. If we have to walk 18 miles, that's like mostly a marathon, isn't it, for us? Can't imagine doing that. And it's even more severe of a walk because from Jericho, at 846 feet below sea level, it goes up, ascends up the hill up to Jerusalem at 2,474 feet above sea level. That's a rise of more than 3,300 feet in

elevation. They'd be, we'd be, huffing and puffing. For them, just an afternoon's walk.

So they're very near to Jerusalem, and we have to remember that in the setting, the Apostles are there, Jesus' disciples, they are there, and they know what it means to arrive in Jerusalem. They know that the arrival in Jerusalem is very meaningful because Jesus has been telling them about this and the significance of getting to Jerusalem.

And we understand they don't fully get it, do they? They don't really understand the significance. They don't understand the rejection, suffering, death that he's about to endure; kind of get a glimpse of it, that something significant is happening. But he's probably speaking in metaphors. He speaks in parables a lot. There's probably something I'm not getting here. So they postpone their misunderstandings, knowing that it'll be sorted out later.

But they do know that something very significant, something really important, is about to happen. You can imagine them talking excitedly about all these things with the citizens of Jericho. In fact, everywhere they go, whoever they talk to, whether it's along the road or in the towns, villages, cities, they are talking about everything that they have seen and heard:

who Jesus is, what he's like. Is he really like this all the time? they say. Yes, yeah, he is, and you should hear. Listen, come in close. I'll tell you what I've seen in private.

They talk about what he's been doing over the past couple years, miracles he's performed, truths he's been teaching, how he confronted and exposed as frauds the Jewish leadership, and people loved those stories, right? So everything that they anticipate, including the fulfillment of messianic hope, that's what the disciples and all the Apostles are talking with the people about. There's a messianic buzz electrifying this crowd of people. It's stimulated by the disciples of Jesus, who are telling everyone that he is about to finish his journey. He's about to reach his goal. He is so close to Jerusalem. And this closeness, the nearness to Jerusalem, acts as an accelerant on the fire of excitement among those who are eagerly anticipating all that they think is about to happen once he arrives.

Which is a second reason that Jesus tells the parable, according to verse 11, because of what they think is going to happen, because they supposed that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately. They presumed it would happen at once, that the kingdom consummation, all the passages of the Old Testament, would be fulfilled in an instant upon his arrival.



In this case, it's the kingdom of God. It becomes visible to the observer. *Anaphaino*, originally, it was a nautical term; it was the experience of sailors on the high seas after a long voyage. They've been traveling and seeing nothing but water in every direction, and as that ship rolls over the horizon, and as they come within the sight of land, they anticipate reaching their destination. Their eyes become focused; they're peeled for familiar, expected landmarks.

Same thing with these people. They think that they are looking over the horizon, seeing the familiar, expected landmarks to show up. They think they know what they're looking for. They think they know exactly what to anticipate. They have expectations about the shape of everything that's about to happen. Lots of people like that today, right? Lots of people watching videos online, listening to podcasts, lectures about all those end-times gurus, feeding the love of sensationalism among people with tasty, apocalyptic morsels, cobbled-together prophecies woven together with headlines, and all mixed with really bad theology. People swallow that stuff hook, line, and sinker.

And people then and now, we're no different. All these people, they think they know what they're looking for. They have

read their Bibles. They've studied the prophecies. They've been sitting at the feet of rabbis and end-times gurus themselves, and they've set their expectations about what the kingdom of the Messiah is going to look like. Not, not just the ignorant masses either, not people who are untaught, uneducated, but the disciples, the Apostles are like this, too. They're near Jerusalem. They think they know what's going to happen when they arrive, and they're wrong.

What they failed to see is what you and I can't help now but know for sure. They did not know that there would be two comings of the Messiah, two comings of the Christ, a first coming and a second coming. They didn't realize that. The first coming we know now is the coming of the Suffering Servant who came to die for his people, to purchase his people through the atoning work of the cross. Jesus came to save his people from their sins. That's one coming, and everything that happens after that is to proclaim the work of Christ on the cross.

The second coming, as we understand from Scripture, is going to be to come in glory. When Jesus comes again, he will come to reward and recompense and execute justice on the earth. It is so clear to us now, on this side of the cross, with the New Testament delivered to us, everything explained to us, all

the historical events narrated for us and, and interpreted for us, we understand this now.

In fact, it's so clear now, that this doctrine of the second coming of Jesus Christ is a test of Christian orthodoxy. Anyone who teaches that Christ has already come, that person is teaching heterodoxy. That person is a heretic. They violate orthodoxy, promote non-Christian doctrine. Such people, Paul said, are "deceivers and liars," 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3. They're to be rebuked, called to repentance; and if they don't repent, they're to be rejected.

Prior to the cross, though, even Jesus' closest disciples didn't understand this. They didn't understand the two comings of Jesus Christ. They were unable to discern the gap in time when Jesus the King would be physically absent from them, his bodily absence from them, and that interval of time created between his first and second coming. Even after his resurrection, we know the Apostles were still asking Jesus the same thing, right? Acts 1:6, "Lord, will you at this time?" I mean, we've got the death and the burial, resurrection, glory, yay, you're here. So it, will you at this time, restore the kingdom of Israel? How did Jesus answer? Patiently, got to say.

"It's not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority."

And then he sets their minds on the work that is yet to be done. He focuses their attention on the commission that he has given them, the work that's to be done and accomplished and pursued in the interim, in the gap-time. Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when my Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Same thing here in our text. It's pre-cross. It's prior to his death, burial, resurrection, prior to Passion Week. And so they have a misunderstanding that needs to be sorted out. They've misperceived things. They've misunderstood. So in order to correct the popular misconceptions about the coming kingdom, in order to mitigating against this, honestly, an overwhelming and indomitable messianic zeal on the part of the people, Jesus tells this parable, and he's going to set right expectations about the kingdom.

Now, looking more closely at the parable, let's take a look at the basic divisions that are there. The story's pretty straightforward, right? A nobleman takes a long trip to a faraway land to go receive a kingdom despite the hatred of his

fellow citizens, and before leaving, he entrusts equal sums of money to ten of his slaves. He commands them to engage in business while he's away, and when he returns, having received the kingdom, he settles accounts. He rewards the faithful, he recompenses the unfaithful, and, rather ruthlessly, he slays his foes.

So in verses 12-14, Jesus sets up the entire scenario, and that's what we're going to focus on today. In verses 15-19, Jesus shows the king returning and rewarding the faithful. Then in verses 20-27, the longest section, by the way, Jesus shows the king dealing with the unfaithful and eventually killing his enemies. So as I said, and you might have guessed walking in here, you could have predicted this, that we're not going to try to tackle all 17 verses today. You're not a prophet, you're just experienced, all right?

But we'll take the story in three parts, okay, three parts, and we'll do this over the next couple weeks. So the king and his resources we'll cover today, the king and his reward next time, and then following that, the king and his reckoning. So the king and his resources, the king and his reward, and the king and his reckoning. So here, today, the king and his resources.

Let's read verses 12-14 once again. "'A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Engage in business until I come." But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us."'"

Pretty straightforward, and for the first part, the set-up about the king and his resources, this is really, this set-up is really about how this nobleman-become-king, as Jesus shows him giving resources to his ten servants and then putting them to work while he's away, this reveals a lot about the character and the nature of this king. In fact, the king and his resources, you could also call that the king and his character because what he does with his resources tells us a whole lot about his character, what this king is like.

So let's get into our outline, and you can write this down as number one: the king and his noble birth, the king and his noble birth. Let's just make a, the obvious plain. Let me just say it, because you're all thinking it right from the start. We know that as Jesus introduces this nobleman, we know right away that he is talking about whom? About himself. That's right. It is the inescapable conclusion of the story that this is really

about Jesus going away and then returning and rewarding his servants, or recompensing his false servants, or dealing justice to his foes.

So the nobleman pictures Jesus as the Messiah in his role as the Messiah. This is Jesus the King, and he's setting expectations for his disciples in particular during the time that he is away. This parable should, I mean, it did it for me even as I'm reading, and I'm sure it's done it for all of you; it, it sobered me. Hopefully, it sobered you as well, to think like, Huh. I've been entrusted with something by my King who's gone away, and he's given me a, a mina to use, to invest, to work hard with, because there's going to be a reckoning. There's going to be an accounting, a time of accounting, when he returns. Huh. What is that mina, and what am I doing with it? I think we're all saying the same thing because we can all see this is about Jesus Christ. He's setting expectations for us, his disciples, during the time that he's away.

So as Jesus introduces the character, he refers to him as a nobleman. Says there, nobleman, the word *eugenes*. It literally means well-born. We get the word eugenics from that word *eugenes*. Good genetics. So basic meaning of *eugenes* refers to a family line; it refers to good breeding, being born into a good

family, into, born into nobility. And most certainly that applies to Jesus, right? Is there anybody on the whole entire planet, in the entire history of mankind, that has been more nobly born than Jesus Christ?

Think about it this way. There's only one nation chosen on earth, the nation of Israel. There's only one tribe of that chosen nation that is chosen to rule, the tribe of Judah. Only one family in that chosen tribe and in that chosen nation; it's the family of David. And of the family of David, there's only one that can be the promised son that can succeed the eternal throne, as it says in 2 Samuel 7, the Davidic Covenant.

There's only one who can exercise that everlasting rule on an everlasting throne in an everlasting kingdom, and that is the Son of God, "the Son of the Most High," as Gabriel announced to Mary in Luke 1:31. He told her, "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus," the same name as Joshua. "He will be great, and he will be called Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." So the birth of Jesus, it is the most noble of any birth, of all





human births at any time, in any place, any generation, anywhere in the world. He is nobility of nobility.