

The King and His Glory, Part 2

Luke 19:11-14

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.""

So second point: the king and his noble character, the king and his noble character. Proof of good breeding is good character, and the proof of good character is good and noble behavior. So Jesus is referring to himself, isn't he, when he

refers to this nobleman, when he tells the tale of a nobleman who went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. He is the one of most noble birth who acts in accordance with his true nobility, submitting to the father's will to receive for himself a kingdom, after which he will eventually return.

Jesus has been looking forward to the time when he will take on this task for a long time now, since the beginning, since before the beginning, of this travel section. He's been looking forward to this time when he is going to ascend into Heaven, when he's going to take that long journey to receive for himself the kingdom. He started thinking about this before setting his face toward Jerusalem in Luke 9:51. He talked about it with, remember, on the Mount of Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah appeared there with him in glory. Luke 9:31 says there, "They appeared in glory and they spoke of his departure," the word departure, literally, the word *exodus*. He is leaving. He is about to accomplish it at Jerusalem.

This is what he's thinking about in, comes to the Upper Room discourse, John 14:1-3. He told all of his Apostles, he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled." I mean, if they could only see as he sees at that point, right? "Let not your hearts

be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and I will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also." Oh, don't be troubled. My going away is a good thing. I go to receive a kingdom. I go to prepare a place for you. I'm coming back.

So he is the nobleman who will go away, and in this time frame, here, he'll go away very soon, go away to a far country. He will ascend to heaven to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. He's going away, far away, and he's going for a long time, and he's going to come back.

There's more to see about the king's noble character. That's not all I have to say. There's a whole lot here, and you'll hear it coming out along the way. But there's the king and his noble birth, noble character, and now the king and his noble concern. While this nobleman is away, while the nobleman is away, he expects his servants, and it says ten of them, here. We presume them to be the closest to him.

It's, it's unrealistic that a nobleman of this stature, who's going to go and receive a kingdom, would only have ten servants. Obviously, these are ten not only household servants,

but ten close-in household servants. We would assume that they are closest to him, they are most trusted to him, favored by him. And the nobleman expects these ten servants to use the money that he's about to give them to make more money.

This is his noble concern, to make money. You say, What? To make money? Noble? Yeah, to make money, noble. That's what we see here. The verb is *pragmateuomai*. You can hear the word pragmatic in that verb. That's where it comes from. The meaning of the verb is to engage in business, or it could be translated to conduct trade, or make money, or gain and turn a profit. So he's saying, Go, be successful. Trade, invest, work, make money, be profitable. And he doesn't expect them to do this out of their own pocket. He provides the resources. He gives to each one of these ten servants a mina.

Now a mina, it's not an insignificant amount of money. It's not a, not a nothing sum, but it isn't a large sum of money. A mina was valued at about one-sixtieth of a talent of silver. A talent of silver is a large amount of money. So, but a mina was about, maybe three months' salary. So whatever your three months' salary is, kind of factor that, that's a mina. Different for all of us, I know, but three months is three months to all of us. So if a denarius, think of a denarius as one day's wage,

a mina is worth about a hundred denarii or a hundred days' wages. That's about the sum of a mina.

So when the nobleman becomes king, returns to his own country, we see his first order of business is to get an accounting from his servants, to find out what investments that they made, what trade they conducted, what profit they earned. He's eager to see how things went with those who are closest to him, with those who know him, those who are of his own household.

This nobleman-become-king, his concern for them, we should understand, it's heightened by the fact that, as we see in verse 14, that he left his ten servants to conduct their business, as it says in verse 14, in the climate of hostility, the opposition of all of his citizens; they hated him. That's going to affect these servants, isn't it? For sure. He is concerned, then, he has it on his heart to get back, find out. Hey, how did you guys do? How did you guys fare? Because he knows it's a tough field out there. It's a tough market, especially if they represent this nobleman.

Christian, keep that concern in mind, just a little footnote here, the concern of your Lord, who is the King, his concern while you conduct kingdom business and await his return.

He loves you and cares for you. Like this nobleman, he knows that you live and work and do the work of the ministry in a hostile climate, that you conduct your ministry affairs and your kingdom business among a citizenship that is rebellious against your king.

I read a comment by one Jewish comedienne. She was blaspheming Jesus Christ, and she said, If he returns again, we'd kill him again. That's the attitude of the world against Jesus Christ. They hate our Lord. They killed our Messiah, and they would kill him again if they get the chance. They won't. But our Lord knows that about our affairs here. He's not unaware. He knows that. He cares for you, and he's going to return soon.

This is what Jesus is thinking about as he tells this parable, even as he starts it out. As he's telling the story, he's thinking about his own departure, receiving the Kingdom, returning, and rewarding his people. He's, he's thinking about the environment that they're going to be left in when he leaves.

Jesus' story, here, as he tells the story, we don't see it explicitly on the pages here, but as we read passages from Josephus, it's very, very clear to us that Jesus is alluding to a common practice of client-kings, especially those who served

as vassals of Rome in the land of Judea. They journeyed to Rome to seek the authority to rule in Judea. It's common practice.

So all the people, as they're listening to this, they know exactly what Jesus is talking about, talking about the vassal kings. In particular, this is the Herodian dynasty. This is exactly what they've done for decades. They witnessed this most recently in the region, particularly under the Herods. And as client kings, the Herods served as vassals of Rome, and at the pleasure of Rome, the pleasure of, the conference of authority and power from Rome upon them to rule in Judea.

All the Herodian kings had to go and seek, and then receive authority from Rome, from the senate early on, and then later on from the emperor. So it started with Herod the Great. I won't go into all the history of this because it would take too much time, but Herod the Great, you understand, was not a Jew. He was an Idumean; that is to say, he was a descendant of Esau. Therefore, Herod the Great was, as the King of the Jews as he liked to be known, he was always insecure about the lack of true Jewish nobility and identity that he had as a king. He didn't possess any.

And so he went about to make a name for himself, ingratiate himself to the people of the land, and when they didn't love



him, he killed them. He was a ruthless, cruel, barbaric king. But Herod went to Rome several times to seek authority to rule in Judea. It was Julius Caesar who first appointed Herod procurator of Galilee in 47 BC. Mark Antony appointed him tetrarch in 41 BC. In the very next year, Herod went again to Rome to oppose the claims of Antigonus. He did so successfully, and so the Roman Senate appointed Herod king of Judea, the title that he wanted, in 40 BC.

He ruled, very cruel, barbaric reign, but not without a lot of, you know, investment into the land and, and a lot of ingenuity and rule and skill and leadership. But he was still a cruel and barbaric king, and when he died, when Herod the Great died in 4 BC, this time of a transfer of power, it was an uncertain, tumultuous time, and not only because of the transfer of power and the succession of authority. That creates times of political upheaval and social turmoil. We see that everywhere around the world, and we're starting to see it more and more in our own country, aren't we? Transfer of power, very tenuous times.

But so this was happening around 4 BC when Herod died. The transfer of power created a very tumultuous time of upheaval in the land of Judea, in particular in Jerusalem. So because of

this time of uncertainty and tumultuousness, it's not just because of the transfer of power; but because Herod's reign was marked by cruelty and barbarity, the people did not want that kind of a ruler again. They weren't keen about having another Herod on the throne. That's all that they had to choose from. They really didn't have a choice, did they? They're underneath authority of Rome, and they're subject to whatever Rome decides.

So when Herod's son, one of his sons, a surviving one, there weren't very many of them left because Herod killed a lot of them, but when Archelaus, his son, was making his bid for the Judean throne, as he intended to succeed his father, the Judeans opposed him, and they started opposing him in a subtle way. They just started demanding favors, and they demanded more and more favors, more and more favors, until they reached a point where he could not cross. And then they revolted. So they started demanding favors and then revolted to outright rebellion and open opposition to him.

At the beginning, they knew that Archelaus would be inclined to curry favor with the people. It's a time of a transition of power, so they began by demanding lower taxes and demanding, that's what all of us demand, right? Lower taxes.

Lower taxes and you'll be our man; you'll be our king. They demanded that he would ease annual payments, tax payments.

So for time Archelaus acquiesced. He granted their request; he lightened their tax burdens. And then the Judean people took a step further. They demanded, again, a reduction on taxes, but this time, now, for the goods bought and sold publicly, which he also granted. So they're just taking step by step to see how far we can push, what kind of accommodations he'll make. Will he dance to our tune? Since Archelaus is moving in their direction, they keep up the pressure, and then they take one step too far.

As is always the case in times like this, there's a radical minority. Might call them, we'll use our term from our day, activists. They're, they're, too, seditious, disloyal, subversive, scoundrels, zealots politically, religiously. And these zealots, these activists, use the common people for their good, for their purposes. They stir up the common people who don't really know why they're being stirred up or what, to what purpose, in what direction. But they stir up the common people against the new king, and they demand that Archelaus make reparations for some rebels that his father had punished, killed.

Archelaus couldn't do that. He had just given a seven-day celebration to honor his father in funeral services, and now to repudiate his father's decisions, it's just something he couldn't do and maintain his political credibility, maintain some modicum of his own authority. He drew the line there. He flatly refused. So the people, stirred up by these rebellious zealots, these common people, they were moved by them to rebel against Archelaus.

As usual, it wasn't the activist minority that suffered, really. It was the ignorant masses who suffered big time. It was during the Feast of the Passover at 4 BC. That's the same year that Jesus was born, by the way; also the year that Herod the Great died. But this, in 4 BC, during the Feast of Passover, this subversive faction provoked a confrontation with Archelaus in the temple. People gathered there for the Feast of Passover and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the gatherers, a mob, and they rioted against Archelaus.

He sent soldiers there to the temple environment to caution them, and the people started throwing rocks at them. Isolated, some of them stoned them, killed them, put them to death. And so he had a rebellion on his hands. He had a riot on his hands happening in the heart of Jerusalem. So Archelaus deployed

soldiers and horsemen, and that's when things really got out of hand, 3,000 Jewish pilgrims slaughtered. Three thousand. Little, little bit of an overreaction. Some of them were foreigners. It's bad, bad press. The rest of the people fled into the surrounding Judean mountains. Festival over.

So it's shortly after this incident that Archelaus has to travel to Rome and try to secure his power. Tough sell. In fact, his half-, it was made more difficult because his half-brother Antipas, who was another of Herod's sons, Antipas wanted to make his own bid for the throne in Judea. He came waving a piece of paper, the will of his father. He sailed to Rome ahead of Archelaus, appealed to Caesar. He's there to undermine his half-brother Archelaus.

And so Archelaus, running a little late to Rome, he gets there coming in behind Antipas, and Antipas has already been making his speech before Caesar. He's made convenient use, believe me, of this temple uprising, and he's argued rather well. Slaughtering 3,000 of his future subjects while they innocently worshipped at the temple. Is this a leader? Is this your new leader? That's bad leadership. This is Herod the Great, part 2. O, Caesar, I just want to do your merciful and gracious bidding.

So to support Antipas in his bid for the throne, and it really wasn't more to support Antipas, it was more to undermine Archelaus, the Jews sent an official delegation to Rome. Fifty Jewish ambassadors, elders of the people, went to Rome. They gathered the most respected Jews in the city of Rome together, and they all came before Caesar, and they tried to decry Archelaus in the Royal Court. They attempted to depose him before Caesar.

The Jewish delegation, it was effective in shaking Roman confidence in Archelaus and reducing the power that Rome may have conferred upon Archelaus, but they were unable to do exactly as they'd accomplished. They had hoped to not only get it rid of Archelaus, but any Herodian on the throne in Judea. They wanted Judea to be declared a Roman province, which would get rid of the Herods altogether and install, instead, a governor.

Other virtues, though, before Caesar commended Archelaus to him, he was a convenient option, he was a known quantity. So Caesar granted him a portion of his father's kingdom, but not all of it, and he withheld the title of King of Judea, King of the Jews, and made him an ethnarch instead until he could prove himself.

Archelaus never did prove himself. From 4 BC to 6 AD, he ruled, but ruled ineffectively. He was cruel. He was barbaric. He exacted enemies on these Jews who sent that delegation after him, and they hated him all the more. And so he was ultimately banished in 6 AD, and the Jews actually got what they originally asked for. Judea did become a Roman province, and it ultimately set up the situation that would fulfill all biblical prophecy, that is, Jesus' crucifixion on a Roman cross under the power of Rome and under the governor, Pontius Pilate. That would have not happened had all this history not taken place.

And that's getting ahead of ourselves, isn't it? Let's get back to Jericho, the day that Jesus told this parable. Just all that to say, the Jews would have had this in mind. The citizens of Jericho would have had all of this in mind because the Herodian palace is still out there, a prominent, visible sight in Jericho. Its baths, its reflecting pools, decorative artwork, statues that lined a well-watered, well-groomed gardens. It was beautiful.

So everyone in Jericho, everyone living throughout Judea, they all knew the history of the region. These so-called noblemen who scurried off to Rome, vying for authority to rule

over the Judean area so that they could legally rape, pillage, and plunder the land and its people. They all knew this story.

So as Jesus speaks in verse 14 about these people that hated him, sent a delegation after him, the minds of the people would immediately remember the history of the region. They hated Archelaus, the Jewish delegation that followed him to Rome saying exactly this: "We do not want this man to reign over us." People may have been justified, may have been justified in rejecting Archelaus as their king, I mean, bloodthirsty, cruel, pragmatic, uncaring.

But what about this nobleman? What's he like? What about this king in the story? What about this king that the story is alluding to, referring to? If this king, i.e. the Messiah, if his birth, his character, his concerns, if this king is of the highest nobility, and if he acts with impeccable integrity, and if he manifests unquestioned goodness, then what can justify any rebellion from his citizens? Nothing, right?

In the context of Jesus' life, and in view of the coming rejection of the actual citizens of the actual Judea and the actual Jerusalem, man, this becomes a poignant indictment of the people as they are stirred up against the true King of the Jews, who's of noble birth and noble character, with noble concerns,



stirred up against the true King by a power-hungry religious political elite, a small faction of Jewish leaders who want to hold on to power in Jerusalem, want to hold power and authority and sway over the people. This condemns them. Why? Because of the nobility of the King.

The main point of the parable here, though, is to set expectations for Jesus' disciples, to let them see the environment that they live in, the kind of place that they're going to live in while the nobleman-become-king is away. He's trying to get them to think and prepare their minds for a longer period of waiting for the Lord's return and to teach them what faithful waiting looks like. So the expectations that the nobleman sets for his servants in the parable, the expectations that Jesus sets for his disciples here, they are the same expectations set for you and for me.