

The King and His Glory, Part 3

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.""

Some observations about this parable, just the opening part of this parable which really revealed the designs of our Lord for his disciples. The king and his noble designs, the king and his noble designs, or if you like, noble intentions. And these

aren't pithy statements, so stay with me, here. The nobleman seeks the authority of the kingdom in order to exercise benevolent rule. The nobleman seeks the authority of the kingdom in order to exercise a benevolent rule. So he's unlike Archelaus. He's unlike any of the Herods, this king. He's unlike any worldly ruler, this nobleman in the parable and the one he represents unlike them, because the use of his authority is for benevolent rule in order to rightly represent the supreme sovereign, in this case not Rome, but God, to represent the supreme sovereign rightly, the one who gave him the authority. He wants to demonstrate what that sovereign is like.

He uses his, his authority accordingly. The nobleman takes a long journey, it says, to a distant country. And the verb tense, there, is showing purpose. It's for the purpose of receiving a kingdom for himself. The point is that he goes there to gain authority, to get power for himself, in order to rule over his citizens. Now is that a bad thing? You look around the public square today, look on social media, and those who seek power are condemned for seeking power. We understand why. As they say, "Power corrupts, and absolute power abso, corrupts absolutely." We understand that.

Is it a bad thing that he seeks power, that he seeks authority, that he goes to get this king? And the language, here, the syntax, is very clear. It's for himself, or a date of advantage, for his own advantage he's seeking this. So is it a bad thing that he goes for the purpose of getting authority for himself? Well, the answer to the question hinges on whether his rule is beneficent or tyrannical, and it's a matter of beneficence or ty, tyranny based on what? His character. Is this man good, or is he evil? If tyrannical, it's another round of Herodian cruelty. If beneficent, all is well.

So how noble is this nobleman really, really? The issue of character becomes paramount. It really comes to the forefront in this parable. The further we read on, the more abundantly clear are this man's noble designs. The nobleman's travel plans are fixed, firm, and set in stone. The nobleman's travel plans are fixed, firm, and set in stone.

Yeah, the nobleman's going to be gone for a while, but his return is absolutely certain. It's certain according to the text here, and Jesus telling the parable. It is firm, it is certain. He is taking the journey, it says, "for the purpose of receiving a kingdom for himself," and also for the purpose of returning. Both of those verbs, to receive and to return, both of those

verbs are infinitives of purpose, so what's true of the one is true of the other. His return, just as his departure to receive the kingdom, his intention to get that authority and power for himself, just as certain as that intention is, so is the intention of his return. His return is guaranteed, his expectation guaranteed, just as his expectation of gaining the kingdom is certain.

The character of our King is unquestionably good, his reign perfectly righteous, benevolent. His word is true, it's trustworthy, it's certain. He went away just as he promised that he would, which means he will most certainly return, just as he promised that he would. How did he leave? Bodily, physically, literally he ascended into Heaven. What did the angels tell the the, the gaping, gazing Apostles as they watched him ascend into Heaven? "Why are you staring into the air? Go get to work. He'll return just as you saw him go." It is certain; his return is certain.

The nobleman provides his servants with resources. And get this: The nobleman provides his servants with resources to test and to prove their character. Notice the nobleman provides these ten servants of his with resources, and it's not to enrich himself; it's to test these ten men, to test, you could say, the

nobility of their character, the loyalty of their character. Why? Because he has an eye on their fitness for future service. And so loyalty, nobility of character, that's his concern. That's his design in giving them the mina.

We pointed out earlier, to hand out only ten minas, one mina apiece, compared to this nobleman's vast resources relative to what he's actually good for financially, ten minas are hardly anything. So the modesty of this sum shows us making money for himself is hardly the point. It's not the point. He had plenty of money. What he wanted to discover is what money can't buy. He's testing the loyalty of these ten.

In the context of the parable, the story here, why would it be important for this nobleman to know the character of these ten closest slaves before he comes back? Because he's about to be a king, right? He's about to be a king. So when he returns, the servants of his household, these servants who are transacting business in his name and making investments in his name and carrying out orders in his name, what they do and what they don't do, how they speak and don't speak, how they act and refuse to act, the character that they demonstrate reflects upon their king, not just a nobleman, now he's elevated to a new position, and it's more consequential. The higher the authority,

the higher the prominence; the higher the power, the more consequential the influence. How they act, how they represent him, it sets the tone for the entire kingdom.

Character is the issue, not only in the parable, but most importantly in the economy of Christ and his kingdom, most importantly in the economy of Christ and his church, right? The nobleman, he's rich. He is totally unconcerned about money. What he does care, care about is character. Tells us a lot about the nobleman, doesn't it? Shows nobility in his character because his concern about productivity, he does care about productivity, it's really a test of loyalty, a test about, he's, he's really testing for character. The character he seeks in his servants is patterned after his own character, patterned after his own goodness. He's looking for goodness in them that's like his own.

Consider his goodness in a few observations, here, that he didn't make the servants cough up a mina out of their own wages. He gave a mina to each one of them. He's good. He doesn't send them out of his household, cut them off from his name. They're his servants. He'd have them be involved in his work and conduct business in his name, invest with his credit on the line and his reputation on the line. He's happy to have them representing him while he's away. He's a good nobleman.

He didn't place an expectation, notice, on the results of their activity, but on the mere fact of their activity, their productivity. He simply says, "Engage in business until I come." What's going to please him is not what the result is or what the outcome is as much as their faithfulness in doing and being active in working, even if it comes to naught because of the rejection of the people.

Finally, the goodness of the nobleman's character is revealed in that final verb in verse 13. It's not as apparent maybe in the English translation, but it's the verb, present-tense, verb, "I am coming, I am coming." He, this is his goodness in setting that hope before these ten servants. And what is the hope? The promise of his own return. They don't care about his stuff. They don't care about his money. They don't care about his titles. What they care about is him. And so he says, "Conduct, engage in business until," and then it's a verb, present-tense, "I am coming." The hope is in him, again reveals his goodness.

The nobleman is interested in the heart of his servants. He's interested in the heart of his servants, which is exposed by their working, not concerned in the outcome of their works. Again, this is his design. It's to expose the heart. It's to



reveal the heart. The difference between loyalty and disloyalty, it is clear and evident in verse 14 by way of contrast. What marks the difference between loyalty and disloyalty? It's the presence or absence of love for the king. In verse 14, the citizens of his own country, they hated him, and their actions are consistent with their hatred. We'd expect, then, the actions, by contrast, of the servants who love the king are going to be marked by faithfulness in their work, by loyalty, by hard work, by productivity, by industry.

The citizens, *hoi polotai*, from which we get the word politics, these citizens, as citizens are in any country, they're endowed with rights. They have, they have privileges of citizenship, and it's in the nobleman's country. They're underneath his authority. They take advantage of all his goodness. They have rights and privileges, benefited from his goodness. They've conducted business and made a profit in a just, equitable society that he has set up, he regulates, he is enforcing. They benefit from his goodness.

The reference to citizenship here means freedom and privilege and opportunity, the ability to make money and build wealth. The citizenship that they have ought to produce gratitude and contentment and loyalty and love. But it obviously

doesn't. In their own words, We do not want. What does, want, point to? Want points to a loveless, spiteful hatred. "We do not want this man," literally, it's this one, almost like spewing it out of their mouth. This guy. "We don't want this one to reign over us." They are refusing to submit to him, refusing to obey him, refusing to love him. That's their heart, dark toward him.

By contrast, as we see in the next section, verses 15-19, the faithful servants of this nobleman-become-king, marked by loving submission, humble gratitude, loyal affection, hard work, industry, and get this again, we, they conduct their business, they carry on trade, invest minas in a climate of bitter hatred toward their master, in the context of an unjustified animosity of rebellion among the citizenship against its king, against their king, against their lord, their master; and the nobleman knowingly leaves them behind, seemingly without any advantage in their own homeland.

Unlike the privileged, wealthy citizens, they're mere slaves. That's the word being used here. It's the word *doulos*. So they're owned. They're not owners. They're under authority. They have no authority and power of their own. They're not citizens. They're despised by the citizens of their own land rather than regarded, respected as they ought to be.

In fact, unlike the disloyal citizens who hate their king, these servants love their king and they conduct in business, they trade, they make investments, all under a cloud of suspicion from the people around them. Rather than being an asset, their love for their nobleman is a liability in their own land; rather than being a credit, their love for their king being trouble to them and scorn, not praise and admiration as it should.

Well, it's not just a small sum, the single mina that tests the loyalty of these ten servants. It's also the context of the public animosity toward the, toward the master, the hatred of the citizens, that tests their loyalty. Living a life of loving, submissive service to the king, loyal to him when everyone else hates him, to continue doing that for the lifetime, that exposes the heart, doesn't it? Hard to invest in such a climate, right? Hard to see how anyone loyal to the hated nobleman-become-king can earn anything or make any kind of a profit if his true allegiance is known, if his love for the king is known. But as we're going to see, it's the nobleman's mina that seems to have its own supernatural power to earn.

Beloved, this is the plight of Jesus the Messiah, isn't it? It's the plight of his servants in the world right now, isn't

it? It's the plight of his church. It's the plight of every single Christian, every single one of us who names his name. We're not regarded as kings, but as slaves. We're not considered wealthy, noble, or wise, 1 Corinthians 1:26 and following. We're counted ignoble, foolish, poor, stupid. We're not counted worthy of any respect or regard in this world, are we? We're despised, rejected along with our Master. And this is all by the sovereign design of our good and wise King. It is the perfect test of our loyalty and love for him.

What will we do with what we have? That's the question for us in this parable. Just as we set it up, the king and his resources, this first main section, which we just covered, really sets up the other two, and we see that the king and his resources is really about the king's character. It's about his designs to test and prove and mature our own character, to expose our hearts and let us deal with our hearts before the Lord, that we would love him fully and serve him wholeheartedly.

As I said, the nobleman gave the same resource to each one of his ten servants, one mina per servant, right? One mina, same thing. To each one of us as well, beloved, the Lord has given a mina, something that each and every Christian has in equal measure. Well, what is that? I can think of a few things, and I

just wrote down a few things because there are actually more. But let me just mention a few things. First thing that we all have if we are Christians, is we all have the Gospel, don't we? If you're a Christian, you have the Gospel. If you don't have the Gospel and don't understand the Gospel and can't articulate the Gospel, well, how can you believe in what you don't know and understand?

So obviously, if you're a Christian, you have the Gospel. That's your mina. It's the same Gospel for all of us. There's not one for this guy and another for that lady. No, it's the same Gospel, saves all of us, and it is treasure in jars of clay, isn't it? You know the pattern of Gospel teaching we've provided here: God, man, Christ, response, consequence? We go over that pattern all the time, talk about it everywhere. If you don't know, it could be because you're new to the church, but we would love to teach it to you. So just, if you don't know what I'm talking about and say, Hey, yeah, I need a little bit of brushing up, happy to do that with you. We'll help you.

The question, though, becomes are you using it? You use that mina by giving it away, giving it away. Spread the Gospel. Make sure you are Gospel, you are evangelistic people and use that mina. Are you evangelizing with that one mina, that Gospel?



The second thing we all have in common, we all have a gifting from the Lord by his Spirit. If you're a Christian, if you are united to Christ, then you've been baptized in his Spirit, and you've received a gift, at least one gift, some kind of a gifting. Peter said, "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as stewards, good stewards of God's varied grace or his manifold grace."

So are you using your gifting? Are you active in serving the church? Are you doing kingdom work in and through his church to extend this ministry? This isn't guilt-tripping. This is an opportunity for you to use the mina that God has given you, to use the gift, the, the skill, the talent, whatever it might be. And if you have trouble thinking that through, man, we'd love to help you with that. We'd love to get you involved, get you active, get you serving. There's no greater joy, no greater joy.

Here's a third thing, and like I said, I could add a whole bunch more, but I'm going to keep to these. Third thing we all have is the same amount of time. We all have the same amount of time. You say, Oh no, you don't know my schedule. Look at everything stacked on my desk. Look at my calendar. My phone's going off all the time. You know what, your minutes pass at the same rate as my minutes. We all have the same amount of time.

So the question is, how are you using that most precious non-renewable resource? How are you using it? If you were to make an hour-by-hour assessment of your day, what would that look like? Would you be proud of how you're using the minutes and the hours of your day? Would you present that before your Lord and say, See what your mina is doing? Or are you squandering time? We can use time, the resource that God has given us, we can either use it well or not so well. We can use it for Christ and his church and for kingdom purposes, or we can use it for other things.

With the Gospel, with your gifting, with your time, we could add so many other things, with your imagination, with your planning, with your priorities, with your calendar, with your relationships, we could add so many other things. Think about the mina that we all have in common, and just ask what does your use of that mina demonstrate about your heart? What does it demonstrate about what you love, what you don't love? What does it demonstrate about your loyalty or lack of loyalty? Where can you improve? Where can you grow?

Listen, beloved church, by God's grace, we're going to grow together because there is none of us who uses his mina or her mina perfectly well, right, I being first among them. So let's

endeavor to grow together, and let's rejoice to do that together by God's grace and for His glory. Amen? Let's pray.

Our Father, we love you so much. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for this parable, again, once again, a brilliant, deep, complex, multilayered narrative that helps us to understand so much. We do pray that you would help us to use what you've given us well, use this mina well for the glory of the Father, for the exaltation of your name, for the spreading of your Gospel, in order that you might receive glory from saved souls, transformed lives, and renewed minds. We do all of this that it might redound in the glory of the Father, to the praise of your great name, Lord Jesus. We do it by the power of the Holy Spirit, not in the power of the flesh. We pray that it would be so in your name. Amen.