

## The Parable of the Ten Minas

Luke 19:11-27

<sup>11</sup> Now while they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> So He said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then to return. <sup>13</sup> And he **called ten of his own slaves and gave them ten minas**, and said to them, **‘Do business with this money until I come back.’**<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.’ <sup>15</sup> When he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that **these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be summoned to him so that he would learn how much they had made by the business they had done.** <sup>16</sup> The first slave appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’ <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, **‘Well done, good slave; since you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to have authority over ten cities.’**

<sup>18</sup> The second one came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’ <sup>19</sup> And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’<sup>20</sup> And then another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I kept tucked away in a handkerchief; <sup>21</sup> for I was afraid of you, because **you are a demanding man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.**’ <sup>22</sup> He \*said to him, ‘From your own lips I will judge you, **you worthless slave.** Did you know that I am a demanding man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow?’<sup>23</sup> And so why did you not put my money in the bank, and when I came back, I would have collected it with interest?’ <sup>24</sup> And then he said to the other slaves who were present, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’

<sup>25</sup> And they said to him, ‘Master, he already has ten minas.’ <sup>26</sup> ‘I tell you that **to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.**’ <sup>27</sup> But as for **these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.**”

Note: The worth of a mina varies depending on various commentaries. From a three-month wage to a day’s wage in today’s worth. Here, I will go with one interpretation that considers ‘mina’ as a Greek coin about \$224 worth today.

### Introduction

Recap: Throughout this summer, we have covered seven kingdom parables. A consistent theme lies within all parables. They are: 1) Christ came to earth and started His kingdom project 2,000 years ago. 2) It has been advancing each day ever since. 3) God’s full

reign/Kingdom is going to be fully realized on earth in God's appointed time, a.k.a. Kairos. 4) On that day, God will gather all peoples from the surface of the earth and separate them into two groups, 'the righteous and the wicked' or 'sheep and goats.' 5) Each group will go into their eternal destination, one of the following two places: Heaven or Hell.

Today's text deals with eschatology. What is eschatology? *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines eschatology as "The department of theological science concerned with 'the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell.'"

Today's text talks about three things in the end times: first, Christ will come again as the Lord of all and as the King of kings; next, what we do with God's gifts while we await His return. Finally, it also talks about what happens to those who don't want Jesus to be their king.

## **Content**

The context of today's text: Jesus' walking towards Jerusalem. Not casually, but with determination. He knew what was awaiting Him in the Holy City: death. He was going there to fulfill His mission through and through. He had already told His disciples that He was going to be betrayed and handed over to the Romans to be executed in public. He would die on the cross to save the sinners from their sins. His disciples knew that their time with Jesus would soon be over.

As they accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem, they were convinced that the end of the world was near, and His return would be imminent. To keep them from such a false understanding on the end times, Jesus gave this parable of the Ten Minas: the story of a noble man, his slaves, and the people who didn't want him to be their king.

A little bit of historical information would enhance our understanding of the parable. When Jesus told the story of a noble man who 'went into a distant land to receive a kingdom for himself,' the audience immediately connected the noble man to Herod the Great in their own history, because that's what actually happened about 60 years before their time. Indeed, in 30 B.C., Herod, a noble birth (but not a prince: his father was a high ranking official in the kingdom) went to Rome to be endorsed by the Roman Emperor as king of Judea--Wikipedia.

Of course, the audience also understood that the noble man in the story refers to Jesus Christ, the slaves are the people of God, and those who reject the king are those who refuse to take Jesus as their Lord and King.

Three lessons come to my mind:

**First, God Wants You to Keep Using His Gifts until Christ Comes.** Think of the noble man again: he gave ten minas to ten slaves, one mina to each slave. He commanded them to do a business with his money saying, **‘Put this money to work until I come back’ (keep trading until I come back)** (v. 13). Like the story, until His return, Jesus commands us to utilize the talents that God has given us. Put them to work, Christ commands. Notice here that every slave got his share of mina. Likewise, every child of God has received God’s gifts and talents for God’s kingdom and purpose. No one can claim or blame God that s/he didn’t receive anything from God. Furthermore, the king in the story was least concerned about how much gain his slaves would make from investing the money in business (v. 15). Rather, all he wanted to see was whether and what they did something with it. Likewise, having granted His blessings to all of us, God commands us to do something with them until Christ returns. He really doesn’t care how much fruit we would bear as long as we use them faithfully.

Folks, consider what gift God has given you. We can begin with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, effecting of miracles, prophecy, the distinguishing of spirits, *various* kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). Here are some more examples: musical talents, athletic abilities, finances, time, life, health, serving, compassion, to name a few. Whatever they may be, do not waste them. Start using them to the glory of God. Honor the Lord by putting your gift to work.

**Next, Remember the Accountability.** Verse 15 reads: <sup>15</sup>*When he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be summoned to him so that he would learn how much they had made by the business they had done.* In the same way, at His return, Christ will hold us accountable wanting to learn what we have done with God’s gifts. To those who have done as best as they can, He will say, **“Well done, my good child!”** and will reward for their good works (v. 17). Note: the first two slaves got rewarded for their work beyond their imagination. The master gave them not only all the money but also the authority to rule over cities (v. 17, 19)! To those who have done nothing, He will say, **“You worthless/wicked child”** and take away the blessings as it happened to the worthless slave.

**The Problem of the Worthless Slave.** What was the worthless slave’s trouble in the story? It was his inaction with the master’s money, right? But note that his inaction resulted from his misunderstanding of his master (*‘you are a demanding man’*). He thought his master was an austere man exploiting his slaves. He believed that his master would take up what he did not lay down, and reap what he did not sow (v. 21).

Not wanting to work for such an exacting master, he decided not to do anything with the master's money and tucked it away in a handkerchief.

Likewise, our inaction and disobedience to God's command is often rooted in our misunderstanding of God or poor theology. We often don't want to do anything with God's gifts because we misunderstand His will and who God is! We often end up doing nothing with God's gifts because we don't even acknowledge the truth that all we have is from God and that God will hold us accountable for what we have done with them.

**Use It or Lose It:** Verse 26 reads, <sup>26</sup> *'I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.* If I rephrase it, it will read as follows: whoever has more will receive more and whoever has less will lose whatever s/he already has (v. 26). If it was bad enough for the worthless slave to keep the money in handkerchief, it was the worst to have the money taken away from him and given to the one who already has plenty (v. 24-25).

This reminds me of the law of 'use it or lose it.' This law also applies to our faith. The more we use our faith, the stronger it will be; the less we use it, whatever faith we have will be taken away. We have two choices: 'use it or lose it.' Depending on which path we take and stay on it over the years, our faith will either increase or decrease. Do not deceive yourself by believing that your faith will forever stay the same even though you haven't used it for a long time (e.g., reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and serving others). Remember the law: Use it or lose it.

**Thirdly, There Will Be Eternal Consequences to Those Who Reject Jesus Christ as Their Lord.** Listen to verse 27: Jesus saying, *"those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me."* Obviously, Jesus was referring to then religious leaders such as Pharisees and Sadducees who rejected Jesus as their Savior. However, the point also applies to those who reject Jesus to be their King even today.

Here's the thing: we are living in America--a very tolerant society where everything becomes permissible and every opinion on salvation is respected as equal. Since we are educated to be tolerant and inclusive even in the matter of salvation, many of us, even ministers of the gospel, are confused and having a hard time of accepting Jesus' own word that no one comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6).

Do you see the challenge here? Our own civility, that is, the religious correctness of accepting all religions as the equal paths to the same salvation (in other words, it doesn't matter which religion you believe; they all end up in one place, that is, heaven) directly contradicts Jesus' account that His enemies who don't want Him to be their king will not be

included in God's kingdom in Heaven. As for me and my house, I choose Jesus and what He says, not because I want to be exclusive and narrow-minded, but because I don't see any other ways to look at and understand Jesus' own words on the way to salvation:

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.<sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going."<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (NIV, John 14: 1-6).*

In fact, I always quote the first three verses (John 14:1-3) in every funeral service I officiate. I tell the bereaving family that Jesus prepares a place for the believers and take them to be with Him where He is, that is, Heaven. It surely comforts the family with an assurance that their loved one is in Heaven. It also gives them a hope to see them again in God's presence. But we cannot stop there. We must consider the context Jesus is talking about Heaven. In verse 4, Jesus talks about *the way* to the place He is going. When Thomas asked, *Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?* Jesus answered, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (verse 6). Now, in the past, I have heard someone quoting this very verse saying that Jesus is the only way to the Father in Heaven. With the same verse some folks have trouble accepting it as truth disputing that there are other ways to Heaven. Such people love the first three verses talking about going to Heaven yet reject Jesus' claim that He is the only way to Heaven! Make up your mind. Take Jesus' word as truth or call Him a liar. Don't say that Jesus is a good moral teacher when you reject His claim, because no good moral teacher lies.

## **Conclusion**

God has given you a mina, a talent or two. He wants you to use it for His glory and honor until Christ comes again. Remember the law: Use it or lose it. Use your gift to bear fruit and bring glory to God. On His return, Jesus will ask you what you have done with His mina and reward you accordingly.

Amen.