

63. Jesus Gave the Parable of a Long Journey

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. We also saw that we want to join Him and help Him seek the lost by sharing the Gospel with those who are not yet Christians. Jesus then went on to give a parable to show each of His followers that we are to carry out His work of sharing the Gospel until He returns. We will also see that Jesus wants each of us to be faithful servants until He returns.

This parable that we will study in our topic today is the last words of Jesus that Luke recorded before Jesus made His entry into Jerusalem just a few days before His crucifixion. As a result, Jesus gave a parable to share a command with His disciples and all who have followed Him since. We see that Jesus gave His servants a command to do business until He comes. Jesus then showed the judgment that will come to those who reject. Luke 19:11-14 says, “Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: ‘A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, “Do business till I come.” But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, “We will not have this *man* to reign over us.””

Many of the followers of Jesus thought that He was going to Jerusalem to immediately set up the kingdom of God. They were looking for an earthly kingdom. However, Jesus had told the Pharisees in Luke 17:20-21, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’” The fact that Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within you is why Jesus gave this parable to show what was going to happen.

In this parable, Jesus called Himself a certain nobleman. Jesus said that the nobleman went to receive for himself a kingdom and then he would return. However, before the nobleman left he called his ten servants and gave each a mina and told them to do business until he returned. The word translated “mina” was worth a little more than three months of wages for a hired servant. Each of the servants was then told to do business until the master returned. Here, we see that Jesus gives every Christian the opportunity to serve the Lord as we wait for the return of the Lord.

We also see that there is a second group of people. These people are called the citizens of the land. We see that these citizens hated the nobleman. Jesus was actually using a historical illustration to show how the Jews would reject Him. When Herod the Great (the one who tried to kill Jesus at His birth) died, his son Archelaus traveled to Rome to receive his appointment as the ruler of Judea. The Jews hated him so much that they sent a delegation or group of people to say that they did not want Archelaus to rule over them. He was appointed anyway but was soon removed and over the next thirty years several different men were appointed as the governor of Judea by the Roman emperor. Pilate was the fifth of these several men to become governor after Archelaus. Jesus used the rejection of Archelaus by the Jews to illustrate His rejection by the Jews.

Jesus went on to tell how He would reward those who faithfully served Him when He returns. Luke 19:15-19 says, “And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, “Master, your mina has earned ten minas.” And he said to him, “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.” And the second came, saying, “Master, your mina has earned five minas.” Likewise he said to him, “You also be over five cities.”” Here, we see that in the parable the nobleman called his servants to give a report of what they had gained by trading while he was away.

The first servant to report said that the mina of the master had gained ten more minas. The master said, “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.” The master commended this servant for being faithful. The master said that he had been faithful in something that was very little and so he was given a reward of additional responsibility for being faithful. The second servant to report said that the mina of the master had earned five minas. This servant had also been faithful and he was also given a reward of additional responsibility for being faithful. This reminds us that one of the things that Jesus desires in our service for Him is faithfulness. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” Faithfulness in service will be rewarded.

However, there is also a second thing shown by these rewards. The first servant was rewarded with authority over ten cities because of his effectiveness while the second servant was rewarded with authority over five cities because of his effectiveness. Both had been given one mina but one had done business so that his mina gained ten more minas while the other had gained five minas. Here, we see that these servants were also rewarded for their effectiveness in their service. This means that it is very important to understand the difference between success and effectiveness. The world usually measures success by numbers.

In contrast, God measures effectiveness by reproduction that produces eternal results. 2 Timothy 2:2 says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” Paul told Timothy that his effectiveness would be measured by the fact that he passed on the things that he had learned to faithful men in such a way that they were equipped to teach others. Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 4:16-17, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Paul had helped Timothy to become a faithful “adult son” and now Timothy was able to remind the Corinthians to imitate the ways of Paul and do just as Paul had done.

Jesus then went on to show that He could not reward those who were unfaithful and failed to serve Him. Luke 19:20-27 says, “Then another came, saying, “Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.” And he said to him, “Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting 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?” And he said to those who stood by, “Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.” (But they said to him, “Master, he has ten minas.”) For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.”” We see that two groups are mentioned here – a wicked servant and enemies.

The unfaithful servant had failed to do business with the mina his master had given to him. He had just wrapped the mina in a handkerchief and put it away. We see that he had a wrong understanding of the master. The word translated “austere” means *harsh, rough or rigid*. The only two places this word is used in the New Testament are in these verses. We see that Jesus calls this servant a wicked servant. We see that this wicked servant accused the master of trying to take advantage of him. He had some knowledge of Jesus but he put away what he had been given and did nothing with it. As a result, Jesus said that what he had been given would be taken away.

The word translated “wicked” is usually translated “evil” and means *bad in nature or condition*. The word is used twice in Matthew 7:18 where the word is translated “bad”. “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.” The whole context of Matthew 7:15-23 is talking about those who make a false profession of being followers of Jesus. Matthew 7:21-23 says, “Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”” True followers of Jesus do the will of the Father while those who make a false profession practice lawlessness. This describes a professing Christian who never placed his faith in Jesus.

The last group of people in these verses is the group who openly rejected Jesus and did not want Him to reign over them. We see that this group will also be judged. The final judgment of both of these last groups is described in Revelation 20:15 where we read, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Both groups will experience eternal judgment.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children grow and become fruitful Christians who faithfully serve the Lord. Then they will be able to look forward to the rewards that Jesus will give for faithfulness and effectiveness. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to be faithful servants of the Lord.