

## When the King Returns, Part 2

Luke 19:15-19

April 23, 2023

We're back in Luke 19 this morning and so I would like to invite you to open your bibles to Luke 19 and the parable that we've been looking at that starts in verse 11 of Luke 19. This is part 2 of a 3-part look at this fascinating study of stewardship through the lens of the parable of the minas. Stewardship is a common, common theme in Jesus' teaching. And in particular all through the travel section of Luke's Gospel that started back in Luke 9:51 and goes through the, right through the, the verse, verse 28 of our chapter, chapter 19.

That whole section is called the travel section of Luke's Gospel. And during that time, obviously as he travels around, making his way steadily toward Jerusalem, but he travels through Galilee and then into Judea and Perea, Jesus is preaching the kingdom of God and healing and doing powerful miracles that validate his word and validate his role as the true prophet of God and the true Messiah. So, as he's preaching and preaching



the kingdom of God to those who do not believe, those who follow him and do believe on the side, he's teaching them.

He's teaching them about things that really matter. He's teaching them to exercise a faithful stewardship of their life and their talents and their time and their energies and their resources. He's teaching them, not only by what he says and what he teaches, but by how he himself is living. He's demonstrating a faithful stewardship in their midst, living for the glory of God, living for the future, living for the kingdom that he preaches. And he's calling them to join him in exercising a good stewardship.

So, he's preparing his disciples for his soon departure, which is his death, burial, resurrection, and then his ascension into heaven from Jerusalem. At this current moment, Jesus and his disciples are in Jericho. They're just eighteen miles from Jerusalem, just a six hour walk up that, you know, thirty-three hundred feet from Jericho below sea level, to Jerusalem way above sea level. Just eighteen miles, about six hours.

And so, as they are there in Jericho, having just seen his healing of the blind men on the road into Jericho and also seeing his salvation and the salvation message and all the themes that are coming out of the salvation of Zacchaeus, the people are really excited. They are filled with religious fervor, no doubt in conversations with the disciples that accompany him. They know what's just up the road from Jericho. They know what's about to happen. So, they, there is a messianic expectation that is electrifying every conversation.

And so, Jesus sees the need here to set expectations for his disciples, to stop them from thinking that the kingdom is coming now, that all their days of work and waiting and all that are over, but instead, really, they're going to shift into a new phase of work and anticipation. He wants to prepare them for in his extended time away for their separation. He wants to help them to focus on what their job is going to be as stewards of the gospel that he is entrusted to them.

So, with that in mind, just as a little bit of a reminder of where we've been, an introduction to the text, let's take a look

in, at the parable, read it in its entirety, this parable that encourages good and faithful stewardship. Luke, 19:11 to 27. "As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they suppose 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 those 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 have 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 you 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, and 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 the one who has the ten minas.' And they said 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.'"

As you can see, it's a, a simple story. There's a nobleman that takes a trip, travels to a land far away to go there, receive a kingdom, and then come back. Even in spite of the hatred of his fellow citizens, he takes on this trip. But before leaving, he entrusts equal sums of money to ten of his slaves, and he instructs them to engage in business while he's away. So, the nobleman, when he returns, having received the kingdom, he settles accounts with them. He rewards the faithful, he recompenses, rebukes the unfaithful, and he punishes his enemies.

Simple story. And we looked at the setup last week in verses 11 to 14, the king and his resources, we saw the nobleman, a man of noble birth and noble character. How he used a small but not really an insignificant, but it was a small sum of money. And he used that small sum of money, a very little, to test his servants. He's a man of noble character. He's got noble concerns, and he had noble designs in the test that he set up. We can see the interests of the noblemen are not really material in nature, but they are relational in nature.

Think about that for yourself. What he gives you, what he requires of you to be a steward of in this life. It's not really about what you gain, the amounts, it's not material in nature, his concern is relational in nature for each one of us; that's this nobleman here, pictured in the parable. Before he returns to set up his kingdom, to govern the kingdom that he's received, he wants to test and prove and reveal the true character of his servants. He wants to find them. He hopes to find them when he comes back. He wants to find them loyal and reliable, dependable. That's what he's after. He's after character in them.

It's been a joy to my own heart, and maybe it's been the same for you. But to see how this parable portrays the noble character of our Lord, and to see in particular the picture of our Lord's person, the person of Christ, to see his work, to see in this parable, really what's revealed is his kindness to us. What really is the goodness of his nature. Our Lord is a king, high, majestic. I mean way beyond our rank. And yet he's a king who loves us. He's one who is attentive to each and every one of us. In his concern, he's eager to return to us and to call us to himself.

I've rejoiced to see these aspects of our Lord in this parable. And we know, based on the parable, based on so much in Scripture, the promise of his coming is as certain as the promise of his departure. Just as he said he would go, and he did, he will most certainly return. Obviously, we've seen his departure. We've seen the death, burial, resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ. We've seen that miraculously fulfilled in the pages of Scripture, in the testimony of the apostles and the prophets.

And so, for all who love him, for all who long for his soon return, what an encouragement we find here in this parable about the fulfillment of his word. Just as he wants us to be reliable, dependable, loyal, so he too has been reliable and dependable, trustworthy. His word is true, and his calling us to trustworthiness is exactly what he's demonstrated in all of his life and all of his character.

Now we have seen how the nobleman chose to resource his servants. How he set them up to work and invest and gain during



the period of his physical absence from them. And as we noted, he didn't give them a huge amount of money. He gave him enough. Not a huge amount of money, but enough. It wasn't insignificant. It was, a mina was about a hundred days wages. So maybe three months of wages, three months of work, worth of money.

And as we said clearly we could see by that the noblemen's concern is not really about making money. How do we know that? Because he doesn't give them a lot of money, just a little. The smallish amount is just enough to test their character. How so? Because those who have poor character, they react badly when they get less than what they think they deserve.

When those with poor character are entrusted with less responsibility than they think they're ready for, then they think they're entitled to, those with low character, those with hearts of pride, those with self-centered interests and self-centered ambitions, they tend to resent the master. They tend to become embittered in their hearts. Oh, it may not come out overtly, but just below the surface it's seething. It's tainting their thoughts and their judgments.

So, this is the perfect amount of money to test character. Will all ten servants serve the nobleman faithfully? Will they work just as hard with this little as they would with a whole lot? Will they be loyal, joyful, obedient in his absence or will they despise the master's kindness and refuse to do his work and share in his interests?

Listen when you and I, when we are entrusted with little, whether it's little in our own estimation or it's little in the estimation of others whose opinions we regard, like family, or friends, or coworkers, to be tested with little, to see if we'll work and serve anyway. Joyfully, cheerfully, eagerly, zealously, hardworking people, hardworking Christians, serving kingdom interests, and not our own interests, not serving our own pleasure, our own ambitions, our own schedules, but serving our king and counting that to be a greater pleasure than whatever ambitions or desires we can come up with. Whatever hobbies we love to entertain ourselves with.

Do we count his work, his kingdom priorities to be more important, more joyful to be a part of? Again, we don't work with the little for the sake of praise or approval or visible success. The idea here is to test our hearts to see if we'll work because we love Christ, because we love to do what honors him, because we love to work in the things that honor and please him, no matter what it is we're doing or how much we have or what it is he asks of us.

As Jesus says in Luke 16:10, "One who is faithful and very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much." The little tests you, tests your character, tests your heart. What do we do with what we've received? Will we regard the little or will we disregard it? What's revealed in our character? Well, that's one reason Jesus tells this parable, I think, in order to set our expectations, revealing his expectation of us during the interval in the period of time that he's away.

And in the interest of true friendship with us, in the interest of genuine partnership with us, true fellowship with us,

participation in our Lord's work is what he's after. In the interest of our future usefulness in his kingdom, our Lord tests us not by giving us a lot, again, by giving us little. He intends to, through this test, through this proving, through this exposure, he intends to improve our character, because, let's face it, any of us could be in the position of those servants who have bad character at first, right?

All of us have struggled with some of these attitudes. Not one of us have been perfect in this regard. And so, with the test and with the proving, with the time that we struggle and fight to invest the little that he's given us, he improves our character; he matures us in his grace, helps us to see his goodness, helps us to see his intentions and his design in testing us and in so doing, he prepares us for our future with him that we would work with him and for him, and work for the purposes of extending his kingdom. That's what this is all about.

So, if we'll pay attention to the details of the parable, we will see in this and through this our Lord's affection for his

servants, our Lord's affections for each one of us. His desire for us, his interest in us. It's a mark of genuine discipleship that our hearts are aligned to his. Eager to obey, eager and zealous to do whatever he asks, proving to be industrious with whatever he gives us, striving to excel in pleasing him as good and faithful slaves who love the master. That's the big picture. That's what we see here.

So, looking back at the parable for today, we're going to cover verses 15 to 19. We've already covered 11 to 14 last week. Today, 15 to 19: The king and his reward and for next time we'll put off for now. The next time we'll look in verses 20 to 27. The king and his reckoning, which is the longest section which is a, it ends the parable on a note of warning. A note of warning. So, as we look today at the king and his reward verses 15 to 19, we'll break this down into three parts.

The king's return, the servants' report, and the king's reward. All right, I'll repeat those as we go through. But here's the first point, verse 15, the king's return, number, point number 1, the king's return. Verse 15 says, "When he returned, having

received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, so that he might know what they had gained by doing business."

All right, let's break that down just a little bit, starting first with the significance of the king's return. The significance of the king's return, it says when he, that is the nobleman, when he, the nobleman, returned, having received the kingdom. So that means the nobleman has become what? King, right? So, this nobleman, this king, when he returns, having received the kingdom. This means his bid for the kingdom was successful. What he set off to receive, he actually did receive. And that's significant for two reasons. It confirms first the nobility of his character, and it also confirms the reliability of his word.

So, by receiving the kingdom what he, what he has accomplished, what he set out to do by receiving that kingdom, it confirms the nobility of his character and it confirms the reliability of his word. Last time I gave you the historical backdrop for this parable, something that is kind of invisible to us as English

readers of the text in this time and this generation far removed from the events. But it wasn't lost on the people of Jericho, who are listening to this for the first time.

I described the troubled bid of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great. Herod Archelaus, he had a troubled bid for the throne of Judea when his father, Herod the Great, died in 4 BC. He wanted the throne. He wanted to ascend and succeed his father in the kingship of Judea. And that bid of Archelaus for the throne ultimately failed, because just before Archelaus's departure go to go to Rome and stand before Caesar and appeal for the kingdom, he had his horsemen and his soldiers slaughter some three thousand pilgrims at the temple in Jerusalem.

That no doubt left a mark on Caesar's mind, and certainly there were people there in the court of Caesar to remind him of Archelaus's deeds. So, this left doubt in Caesar's mind about Archaelius, Archelaus' character. A real question mark about this man's ability to reign and govern effectively and even gently, have a gentle hand in his representation of Rome. So due to the cloud of doubt, Caesar withheld the full kingship of

Archelaus and the title of king, and called him instead in Ethnarch until he was able to prove himself and demonstrate his character, which, he never did.

By contrast the nobleman in Jesus' story, he possesses the character of a true king. He is fit to rule. He returned to his native land, verse 15, "having received the kingdom." Having received the kingdom, the passive sense there, where this nobleman has to go and not take a kingdom for himself. He's not going to conquer and take over something. Instead, he's receiving, he's the passive recipient.

If they, if he is a recipient, the passive in this sentence, well, who's the active giver of the kingdom? Well evidently, we see an invisible sovereign in the story, who is in the white space in the text. This invisible sovereign is the one who confers the kingship upon the nobleman and that obviously represents whom, that's God the Father, right? So, the greater sovereign, this is the one who knows the good character of the nobleman.



The invisible sovereign in the story here is the one who trusts this nobleman, knows his character and he entrusts the kingdom to him. So, the nobility of this man's character is confirmed because the great sovereign in the story, this significant person who is supreme in his sovereignty and supreme in his authority and power, though he's invisible, he is ever present and he has confirmed the nobility of this man's character. He's granted him the kingdom. He's entrusted the kingdom to him.

In the king's return, having received the kingdom, it also confirms the reliability of his word. We know that he departed, verse 12, with two purposes in mind. Yes, the first was to receive the kingdom. The second was what? To come back, to return to his native homeland. So, he told his ten servants in verse 13, "engage in business until I come."

And the final verb is in the present tense, as we said last time, making it emphatic here. I am coming, you might say, I am most certainly coming. It's emphatic. It is sure. It is certain. It is reliable. And the verb is *erchomai*. I am coming. And the

verb in verse 15, the, in our text has that word *erchomai* at its root.

So, there's an obvious connection Jesus is making between the promise of I am coming and the fact that I have come.

*Epanerchomai* is used here. And that's the verb for I've returned, I've come back. We see that same verb, only two uses of it in the New Testament, one here and the other in Luke 10:35, in The Parable of The Good Samaritan.

It's when the Samaritan promised to, remember he found the man injured and you know, the priests had passed by and all the Levites passed by and left the man bleeding and dying on the road. And the Samaritan stopped, helped the man, put him on his own animal, dressed his wounds as best as he could, took him down the road, put him in an inn, and paid the innkeeper for the care of the hurt man. And he said in Luke 10:35, "I will repay you. So anything extra I will repay you when I return."

He uses that same verb there, *epanerchomai*. Strong assurance you can count on this innkeeper. Both uses of *epanerchomai*, the only

two times the verb appears in the New Testament. Both times they show someone who is intent on keeping his word and actually does keep his word, who's faithful, reliable, trustworthy. So, in the king's return, Jesus wants us to see how receiving the kingdom, number one, confirms the nobility of the king's character, number two, the reliability of the king's word. Confirms his nobility and confirms his reliability.

The second thing who, we see here, upon the king's return, we see his primary concern. We see his first order of business. We could call this the first priority upon the king's return, the first priority upon the king's return. Just prior to his departure, Jesus revealed to us in verse 14 a pretty significant detail that not all was well in the land.

This man's citizens hated him, and they sent a delegation after him saying we don't want this man to reign over us, so the nobleman leaves anyway. And he leaves knowing that he's got a rebellious faction in his own country, in his own homeland, this uprising that is seeking to unseat him. That's confirmed as the

delegation meets him before the sovereign that he's going to stand before.

So obviously the fact that he's returned and having received the kingdom means that delegation from his rebellious citizens is unsuccessful. They weren't able to stop the sovereign from seeing the nobility of his character and conferring upon him and entrusting in the kingdom, But the king knows that upon his own return, he's going to have to deal with these rebels. He's going to have to cleanse and purify his land of all factions and all trouble for the good order of his society.

So, we would expect that suppressing an uprising is going to be foremost on his mind, paramount, the very first thing he wants to take care of. Not so, right? What do we see is his primary concern? When he returns what's his first priority? Well, closest to his heart, preoccupying his mind is to summon his servants and see how they did. Is that what you would do? That's what he does.

Jesus says in verse 15, "He ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they'd gained by doing business." And this reveals a couple of important things about this king. First, we see this king is a pretty cool customer, isn't he? I mean, he is confident. He is untroubled. He's confident, he's composed, he's poised, he's dignified, he is kingly, you might say. He's acting every bit the nobility of the king that he is.

This is a man who sets his priorities, rightly. He is setting his priorities by putting the world into perspective, putting trouble into perspective. Relative to those men that he loves and cares for. He is, by comparison, relatively unconcerned about the rebels and their petty little coup attempt. He'll get to that. Let's deal with the small stuff later.

We read earlier in the service, Psalm 2:2, about the rebellion and uprising of the earth's most powerful people. The kings of the earth, those who "set themselves and the rulers that have taken counsel together against the Lord, against his anointed, saying, let us burst their bonds apart, cast away their accords

from us." Oh, good luck with that, right. Beloved keep that in mind.

If you're ever tempted to be discouraged by what you read in the news, if you're ever troubled and overcome by the unrelenting sin of sinners, by all the destructive agendas, by all the depraved policies, political, social evils, it can all seem like such a big noise on earth. But you know what, from heaven, from the perspective of heaven, this rebellion and uprising appears as it really is, petty, pathetic, laughable. Like a bunch of little ants shaking one of their little legs up at heaven and saying, we will not have you roll over us. Until the boot comes and stomps the ant.

"He who sits in the heaven laughs." No wonder he laughs. Are you kidding me? The anointed one, the Lord, holds them in derision. So, the king, he'll address the rebellious. He'd get to them in due time. For now, his first order of business, verse 15, he orders these servants to whom he'd given the money to be called to him, so that he might know what they'd gained by doing

business. Again, is this about money? No, it's not about the money.

The increase in the money is, yes, one indication of productive activity while he's away. But it's, it's the activity itself that he's interested in. Which demonstrates this activity on their part, demonstrates loyalty to him. That's what he really wants to see. If it were about the money, as we've said, he would have given them a whole lot more mona, money than a mere one mina apiece. No, he's interested to be with his servants. He's interested to have them in his presence, which is why he's prioritized meeting with them before he attends to any other business.

This, you can imagine, would be a joyful occasion, kind of like a debrief after a long absence, a period of long separation. What a joy to be together after a successful mission. He's going to find out how they did, see how they fared you know what that seven-year period of tribulation on earth means for the church. As were raptured into heaven for seven years spending time

debriefing. Spending time over a feast, enjoying company, sharing stories, catching up.

You know how much, you know how much I want to know. You know how many questions, you know how many questions I ask. Even my curiosity is going to be totally satisfied at that time. This makes perfect sense, doesn't it. That the Lord would start here? That he'd prioritize his own servants. After he has received his kingdom and after he's returned to his homeland, where many of his citizens indeed hate him, the first priority has to be really to make sure that his own servants, those closest to him, those who are of his own household, he needs to know who's really with him, who's on his side, who shares his interest, and what a joy it is then to find faithful, loyal servants, those who share in his love, those who share in his work.

Again, when we peel back the metaphor, the parable, to reflect upon the reality that this represents how comforting it is, isn't it? How encouraging it is to remember our Lord's interest in each and every one of us; to be mindful that while he is away, he's thinking about us, all the time. He is praying for



us. Romans 8:34 says he's interceding for us according to the will of God. He loves us. He's eager to return. He's eager to summon us to himself and let us all together rejoice in exchanging stories in us, telling him how we did. Not as if he doesn't know.

So, now that the king has returned, how did his ten servants do? Let's consider a second point, number two, the servants' report. Number two for today at our outline, number two the servants' report. And just a little point of grammar. Servants', it's going to show possession there, but we're talking about two servants that are faithful servants. Apostrophe after the last S okay. So, servants' plural with an apostrophe after the last S if you put it between the T and the S, that's one servant showing possession of his own reports of a singular report. I'm trying to show two reports here, servants', apostrophe after the final S. Thanks for that little interlude of grammar. Just sets my mind to ease, okay, put's my heart at rest?

In verses 16 to 21 we hear from three of the ten servants. And the three reports that we receive here represent all ten of

them. It's not necessary for our Lord to tell number one came, number two, number three, number four, number five, all the way up to ten. He doesn't do that. That would be tedious. And so, he's only trying to get to the gist. The main point. So, he gives three reports, two of them from the faithful, one from the unfaithful, and the three represent all ten. So, we don't know what the other seven are like. We don't know what category they fit into, but we'll just take it in proportion that it's two for one.

All right, today we're going to look at the first two servants, the faithful ones. Will put off that unfaithful servant until next week. Notice the report of the two faithful servants', verses 16 to 19, "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 have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' The second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas'. And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'"

This is a time of joy in this report. And the report of the faithful servants shows, you know, being succinct and concise. We know that more could have been said if this were a real story and a real situation. But more conversation here and recording that does not serve Jesus' point in the parable. He's trying to get us to the main point. And there we could see obviously some different, differences in the two faithful reports. But, most important are the similarities in here. And so, if we boil this down into two observations, two similarities, we can see clearly an emphasis on faithfulness in these servants and also an emphasis on their humility.

So the two things we see here that I think that rise to the surface here of our observations, faithfulness and humility. First, the evidence of faithfulness in the servants' report. Both servants report an increase. And that increase points to their industry and the productivity that they engaged in while their Lord was away.

Now there is a difference in the verbs that each servant uses to report his own increase, even though the ESV has translated

both of them in exactly the same way, "your mina has made," how many ever more. Jesus uses the two different verbs there, and he may use those two different verbs as synonyms. And if they are synonyms, which some commentators have taken it that way, they're synonyms. He's just being interesting and telling the story, he's just varying up the language and the grammar. And that's possible, but I don't think so.

I think Jesus intends to tell the story to show using two different verbs, about talking about the increase he's showing. Even if this is a subtle point, it wouldn't be lost on the 1st century readers in Greek. He's distinguishing between the way these two servants had been productive. The manner in which they went about being productive. I think that that's what's being portrayed here. And what it shows us is that these two servants, they're different men.

They're different men with different gifts, different talents. Both of them, though faithful, both of them measured and commended for their faithfulness, their reliability, both of them being pleasing to the Lord and equally so, equally pleasing

to the Lord. So, the first servant in his report he uses the verb which is *prosergazomai*, *prosergazomai*, which may indicate that this increase that he brought to the Lord came by trade or by investment. Okay, if so, then "Lord your mina has made ten minas more" is really more like "Lord your mina has earned ten minas" more or the R.O.I on your mina, the return on the investment of your mina, ten minas. That's really what he's saying.

Now, one to ten, to call that an incredible rate of return. That is an understatement, isn't it? Good rate of return for investing stocks, according to some sources, and is an annual rate of seven percent or so. If you get above that man, you're doing really well. He's describing, Jesus' describing here a one thousand percent increase, one thousand percent, which means I want that guy as my money manager, don't you? This guy is effective.

Some criticize Jesus here as being unrealistic, or maybe even in the context of tax collector Zacchaeus sitting there, maybe he's inserting some level of suspicion into the story, as if

this servant has obtained his profit by dark means, like as a tax collector charging exorbitant interest or defrauding people. That's ridiculous. Okay, that is not true. What they fail to remember this is a parable. It's a story that Jesus makes up. So clearly they've missed the point and failed to discern that this remarkable detail, this element in Jesus' parable. As in all Jesus' parables, these are often clues to deeper meanings.

It's to grab our attention and say, wait, what? What? That doesn't make total sense a thousand percent increase, a thousand percent rate of return. What's going on here? In this case, it's not too hard to see what Jesus alludes to. There's no mystery really about the hint that he's laying down, but we'll come back to that in a moment. But in the case of the first servant, just focusing on his gifts and talents and abilities and what it is he's kind of designed by God to do.

*Prosergazomai* refers to the gain that comes from trade or investment. So, this servant is wired to be more of a manager. He's exercised very diligent, attentive oversight, investing the Lord's mina. He has been on top of it. This servant didn't just

put the mina in the bank and let it accrue any small amount of interest. He's not lazy. He didn't hand it over, hand it over to some broker, leave it to someone else and forget about it while he goes and does other work. This guy is watching over the Lord's money, personally, very attentive to it. So, he's a white collar guy and hard and faithful in his work.

In the case of the second servant, the second servant in reporting his mina's increase, he uses the verb *poieo*. It's common verb *poieo* to make or to do, and that probably refers to an increase that's gained more by sweat equity, by good old fashioned hard work, elbow grease. *Poieo* can be used of making something material or building something, or even crafting something. So, then the production, the manufacturing of that thing, it's so it can be sold, resulting in a profit.

So perhaps this guy is more the artisan, the Craftsman, the tradesman. He's more of a blue collar guy who's more gifted at working with his hands. He's more satisfied in producing and holding a tangible product than he is in sifting through spreadsheets. As every small business owner knows though, being

able to make something and manufacture something and produce something, that's really only one part of building a successful and profitable business.

The other side is the really tough stuff for those who are really good with their hands. It's the management side of a business, right? Hiring the right people and firing the wrong people. It's about making accurate bids. It's about buying materials when prices are lowest. It's about managing timetables and schedules. It's about jobs and workflow. It's about motivating people, managing people, treating them well, motivating them.

This guy, has all of that. He has the whole package. It's remarkable. And again, if somewhere in the range of seven to ten percent is a healthy profit margin and running any business, this servant has done exceedingly well. Again, he's gained a five hundred percent profit in his business. So, both of these servants, if they lived today and there's, their pictures, are going to be plastered all over the covers of investment in



business magazines: *Forbes, Barron's, Money, Bloomberg, The Economist.*

They're going to be highly sought after business gurus, leaders, conference speakers, going in all the motivational shows. Making extra money, ten thousand dollars a pop on conference speaking fees, doling out all their wisdom and advice. That's the level that these guys are at. And remember too, don't forget they have demonstrated faithfulness in a climate of absolute hostility against their master, against who they represent. So, they've had to work against the grain. They've had to push past the headwinds, against their business.

Means these faithful men have really proven themselves, haven't they? Reliable. They've demonstrated they're loyal to the Lord when it cost them something. They've been tested and they've been found to be dependable. Now, for many, this kind of fantastic success would be way too much for the ego. These are faithful men. And second thing we see in this report is the evidence of humility. They're humble men. They're faithful and they're humble.

We see the evidence of humility in the servants' report. It starts out by both servants addressing their master as *kyrios*, as Lord. He's the Lord. And when he asked him a straightforward question, what do they do? They give him a straightforward, concise, succinct answer. They not only call him, Lord, they treat him as Lord. And then they attribute their increase not to their own ingenuity, not to their own intelligence or their own diligence or their own hard work. They attribute the increase to what the Lord gave them to the Lord's mina.

What does it say? Their Lord, "Your mina has gained." It's "your mina has gained." It's not my work. I really did a lot of work for that 10 minas, and I really did a lot. I appreciate you acknowledging it. I've just been waiting for your return because I knew you'd appreciate. You're a hard working man. I'm a hard working man. No, he says it's your mina. Your mina is, is what gets, it's not really even the mina.

It's the, it's that pronoun, possessive pronoun your. That's what gets all the glory here, right? The mina of you. That's

what's driven the productivity, that's what's gained. And that's the only thing, really, that explains one thousand percent return on an investment or a five hundred percent profit in a business. It's not their own doing. The gain is attributable only to what they've received from the Lord.

They know, and they believe firmly with deep conviction, that the real energy driving the productivity is in the Lord's mina. It's the fact that it's the Lord's. Anybody else's mina, no power, his mina, power. And these servants, they really do get what the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians to humble them in their pride. "What do you have that you didn't receive? And if you then received it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?"

These are the same servants of Luke 17:10, after doing all that, they were commanded. They come in having worked in the field and having served the master. They say, "Hey, we're just unworthy servants. We're only doing our duty. I mean, there's nothing here to commend." They're like the psalmist in Psalm 115:1 who cry out "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give

glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!" That's what's, that's what's going on here. That's what the increases do to your love, your faithfulness. You did it. Not to us, oh Lord, but for the sake of your mina, oh Lord.

We find this kind of miraculous productivity. This isn't the first time we've seen it in Luke's Gospel. We find it in another place, in Luke 8:8, when some of the good seed of the gospel fell into good soil and it grew, and it yield a hundred fold in that field. Any hardworking farmer will tell you that kind of yield points to divine power. So, whether seeds or minas when backed by God's almighty power, the only limit to the increase is the will and the determination of God. It's just his choice.

These servants get that it's indicated by their personal humility. It's indicated by their immediate concern to praise the Lord who gave them the mina, a mina with the power to multiply in itself. So, the king returns. He hears the report of the faithful servants, and let's see his response. This is point number three, the response of the, the king when he returns.

Point number three, number three, the king's reward. The king's reward. The increase, which was, as we said, astoundingly dramatic, really seems to be nothing in comparison with the astounding nature of the king's reward. "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 have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'"

Is that not astounding? "The second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' He said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'" A mina for a city. But notice, first of all, what the king commends is what these faithful servants long to hear more than anything else. First the king commends their character. He commends their character, which for any faithful servant, that is really the only reward that matters. The returning king says to them, well done. Good job, well done.

This exclamation **εὖγε**. It, it expresses a commendation for exceptional service. Well done. Excellent, fantastic. What does

this show in the king? He's not some cold, calculating sovereign who's just like numbers guy. This guy's passionately invested in his servants' well-being. He wants to see them excel, and he loves to see them excel. And so when they do well, he recognizes it in them and he commends them. Excellent. Fantastic. It's an expression of joy. It's pleasure in him. It's satisfaction from the Lord. Is that not what you want to hear? Well done.

This is what the master had hoped to prove in these men. It's what he intended to expose in their character when he went away to receive the kingdom, and he is absolutely thrilled with their report. Again, not about material gain here that he cares about. What he commends is something no money can buy, to prove and to expose and to find out for himself the good character in these servants. They have passed the test and he rejoices to point it out in public.

I always like to say this and say this to people all the time. Praise in public, rebuke in private. Rebuke people in private. Don't do that publicly. But you praise in public whenever possible. Private praise is okay too. Praise in public, rebuke

in private. That's what he's doing here. He's praising them publicly. Calls them good servant. Good servant shows up again in Matthew 21, Matthew 23. The parable of talents. "Well done, good and faithful servants." Repeated twice there. But this idea of good is, is morally good.

It's a character of goodness in them. They have good interests, good concerns. Really, they share in his nobility. Again, this is the only reward that really matters to the Christian, isn't it? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:9. We make it our aim to what? "To please him." It's our goal. It is our constant life's ambition. To be well pleasing to him. We want to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord," Colossians 1:10 says, "fully pleasing to him" because of the good that he finds in their character.

Second, we see the king rewarding their faithfulness, rewarding their faithfulness. He gives the reward to good and faithful servants. He gives the very reward that good and faithful servants really love. And what is that reward? Is it a big paycheck? A, no. Is it titles? No. Is it fame and fortune? No.

What does it give them? The honor of more responsibility. Try motivating your young students that way. Hey, if you get this homework assignment done, you know what I'm going to give you? More homework. Isn't that going to be awesome?

That's what any faithful servant loves. It's the honor of a greater responsibility. The first servant says, he says in verse 17, "Because you've been faithful in very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." Ten cities. Likewise, to the second he says, verse 19, "And you are to be over five cities." The grammar there is emphatic in, in making the promise as ironclad as the promise of his own return. In both verses the honor of authority over cities is something that he has commanded, so it's in the imperative tense. Present imperative. Means the decision has already been made here, already been made, and all that remains then is to execute upon this decision that he's made.

For each servant to take up his newly assigned post and then get himself to work; evidently by practicing faithfulness through continual obedience while their Lord's away and that's at a time



when it would be very easy to slack off. By focusing on their faithfulness, they didn't know it, but they were making for themselves a future investment by increasing their own capacity for future service. They are extending their usefulness that they'll have to the Lord. Does that sound good to you? Sounds good to me.

The king knew before he left this principle, one who is faithful in very little, also faithful in much and now that he's returned, he finds in these servants, the faithfulness that he has hoped to find. The test is effective. The test has proved their character, and all that is left now is to assign them a fitting reward, which is the honor of more responsibility, a greater responsibility.

Again, it's a similar scene of reward in Matthew 25 verses 21 to 23, the parable of the talents coming up actually in the next week from where the Lord sits here in this vantage point. "Well done, good and faithful servant. You've been faithful over little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master." What's the joy of the master? The joy of doing his

Fathers' will. What's the joy of the servant? To do the Kings' will, which is to do the fathers' will. What's our joy? Responsibility to be involved in the work.

So, this is just a story with no parallel to reality? No. Not even close. He's using the parable here to illustrate the reality of his kingdom when he returns to reward his faithful servants and to be marveled at, as 2 Thessalonians 1:10 says, "among all who have believed." He's given a parable. But it's not a riddle. It's a story that says Jesus really will award his servants with this civic responsibility, with kingdom responsibility. He tells his beloved apostles, it's coming up in a couple chapters, Luke 22:28-30, "You were those who have stayed with me in my trials," in this country of citizens who hate me, you've stuck with me, you've been there. Man, I love you.

They've been faithful. "I assigned to you, as my father has assigned to me," what? "a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That's the promise he makes to the twelve.

For their investment of their mina sitting on a throne, that promise is not only for the apostles because Christ regards faithfulness is paramount for all of his servants. He rewards faithfulness in all of his servants, Paul told Timothy, 2 Timothy 2:12, "If we endure, we will also reign with him." "We will reign with him."

Matthew's Gospel, Matthew 19:28-29, Jesus takes the promise to the twelve and extends it outward to other believers as well. "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel and everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life."

We Christians as believers in the church age, though we won't sit on the twelve thrones assigned to the Lord's twelve apostles, it's their throne, not ours. We will occupy the place of judgment in Christ's future kingdom on earth, Paul tells the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, when the king returns, we will

be rewarded with important duties and responsibilities such as this. "Do you not know?" He says it to them as if. Duh, "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?"

I don't know how it's going to look. It's hard for me to picture that in my mind's eye. And then this, he says to the saints in Corinth, "Do you not know that we are to judge angels?"

Remarkable, isn't it? What profound motivation that all of this provides for us to keep pursuing faithfulness and investing our minas, doing good, to be good faithful stewards of the salvation that God has granted to us, of the roles that Christ has assigned to us, of the spiritual gifts that the Spirit has given to each one of us, of the time that we have every single day.

So, the king has commended the character of his servants. He's rewarded their faithfulness. He's assigned to each one even more responsibility. Which brings us to a third point. Number three, the king follows a pattern of reward, a pattern of reward and it's patterned on the reward that was given to him. Does it strike you as over the top magnanimous that the king rewards the first servant with this disproportionate generosity? I mean, do

the math. If one mina is equal to about three months' wages, ten minas thirty months wages, or about two and a half years' worth of work. I think I've got that math right.

If someone told you that you could right now put in two and a half years of good hard work, and in return you'd get to rule over an entire city, maybe you'd say, what city? Where is it? But setting that aside. Two and a half years of work in exchange, your entire city. Go to any restaurant, go to any show, any sporting event. You pull out the I rule this city card. Everything is paid for. You receive tax revenue, service, all that as you govern over this entire city and being someone of good and faithful character, you want to rule the city with goodness and faithfulness to bless it, to benefit it.

Does that strike you as a pretty good deal? Two and a half years of work; city, here it is. Listen, that's only a tenth of what the king gave to the first servant, a tenth because you've been faithful and very little. I.e., invest one mina and gain ten minas. You shall have authority over ten cities, so one mina gained equals one city. Same proportion of reward for the second

servant, verse 19, having put the one mina of work, the mina made five more minas. Therefore, you'd be over five cities. Same math though, isn't it? One mina equals one city. One mina gained, one city.

One commentator rightly said this, "reward is astonishingly disproportionate to disciples' effort. A mina would scarcely purchase a barn and yet for each mina gained a city is given." End Quote. Shows us once again the mina was never about the money. It was about testing the character to find, prove, and reveal faithfulness. To find capable rulers, trustworthy friends, whom he can put over his cities. Now let me come back to the point here, that the king follows a pattern of reward in giving this magnanimous and generous award.

It's patterned on an award that's been given to him in the reception of a kingdom. As we've said, the nobleman-become-king represents Jesus Christ during his first advent as a nobleman, a man of noble birth and noble character. He too had received minas from his father. We can give a lot of examples we could point to, because all of us have a lot of examples of minas in

our life, something we all have in kind. But we'll keep it really simple and really brief here.

The Father gave twelve minas to Christ and what were those twelve minas? Each one representing a man, gave him twelve men. And Jesus prayed in John 17:12, "While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them. Not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture may be fulfilled." Like that one is what you determined, father. But I have kept the minas that you gave me. I've kept these men. Keeping those entrusted to him and in many other things, Jesus Christ has been faithful, as it says in Hebrews 3:6, "faithful over all God's house."

So, what is the reward for the finite time of his testing for taking care of twelve minas, twelve men? Well, the father has given to him a universal kingdom. The father has given to him a universal kingdom, and Jesus will tell his apostles. As I said, coming up in Luke 22:29, "my father is assigned to me a kingdom." He rejoices here in the father's generosity, in the honor of a reward of greater responsibility. He had a certain

responsibility while he walked this earth. And now, having received a kingdom, is there any end to his responsibility, his oversight?

When the king returns, he rejoices to share the honor and reward of responsibility with us. He is pleased to bring us close. He is pleased in rejoicing to invite us in to join him, to share in with him the joy of serving the father under his authority and oversight, ruling and reigning with him during the millennial kingdom and then beyond, even beyond in the eternal state.

Folks, we need to see this. We need to really believe this, so that we live and order our lives rightly today.

So, we live our lives right now in view of future realities which are certain, no longer enslaved to the mandates of this present life. There's a very real continuity that exists between this life and the next. A true continuity and connection between what we do now and how we live now and what we will be doing then. How we live now affects the level of honor and reward that our Lord Jesus Christ will assign to us in his kingdom.



So listen, if the only difference between you and your unbelieving friends and family and neighbors is the fact that you attend church or is the fact that you attend this church, I just want to warn you, in love, you're in danger of winding up like the next servant that we're going to study in verses 20 and following.

Beloved Christian, stop living for the day, stop living for the week or the month. Stop living for what's happening in your next family vacation or your work schedule or whatever it is. I mean, all the things in life, your work, the different things you do, even your rest, your, your vacation, the time you spend with your, all those things are important. I'm not minimizing that. I'm just saying don't maximize that. Don't make that the thing, living this life in light of the next.

Knowing that there's a real and certain continuity that exists between right now and then. Our Lord tracks our progress. He's going to summon us into his presence on that day, for reward or for recompense. Whatever he sees is going to be exposed. It's not necessary or even possible, really, for us to know now, or

to track for ourselves how we're doing with the minas that he's giving. So much of what our mina is doing in the gain that is accruing to, by his grace, to our benefit, the Lord keeps track of that. It's, it's invisible to, it's not known.

But for all faithful servants, according to 1 Corinthians 4:5, when the Lord comes, he "will bring to light the things that are now hidden in darkness," like all the ways that our mina has gained, "and he will disclose the motives and intentions of the heart," whether good or bad, "and then each one will receive his commendation from the Lord," a fitting reward. Listen, our Lord isn't asking of us any kind of service to God that he hasn't done himself. He's calling us to partner with him in doing the father's will.

He went first and he calls us to follow. That's the mark of good leadership, isn't it? That you do and then you invite people to follow and join you in where you've already been. Truthfully, really, ultimately, we can't do the things that he's done. He's the king. We are just mere servants serving in his pleasure. Obviously, he's done the greater work, the greatest work that

can be done. Ours is childlike and utterly ineffectual by comparison.

He's the nobleman. He's the one who bears the great weight and significant responsibility. He's the king. He's the one who resources his kingdom out of his own personal wealth and provides for his people. He's the savior. He's the one who protects his people, fights all their battles. It's our king who, having ascended on high Ephesians 4:8, has "led a host of captives, and he's given gifts to men."

He's the one who fought the greatest battle, won the greatest war, and gained the greatest victory. He has now conquered sin and death. He's vanquished the devil, and he now showers us with a mina and wants to shower us then with a reward. If we'll serve him now faithfully loyally, as dependable, reliable servants. So, my Christian friend, what about you? Will you resolve to be faithful in serving your noble king? I hope so. That's been our prayer as elders. It's been my abiding prayer through this whole section.

# GRACE CHURCH



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If you're here as someone who's not yet a believer. I welcome you to our church. I'm so glad you're here. But listen, I just want to invite you. I've been there too. I've been an unbeliever once, and God converted me. He did a work of grace in my heart and changed me. And I pray that he does the same for you because if you're honest with yourself and in the quiet of your heart in those alone moments, you know that whatever has been done in your life, whatever you've invested, accomplished, achieved, it really amounts to a whole lot of nothing.

You ask yourself sometimes am I just like a rat on a wheel? Just spinning, spinning, spinning. Everything I earn and everything I build, someone comes along after me and takes it away. I just want to ask you, my nonbelieving friend, to repent and put your faith in Christ. Live no more in futility day after day after day after day, same old thing. Like the beasts of the earth who are always rooting around, looking for their next meal, scratching the next itch, finding the next pleasure. That's all our life amounts to outside of this gospel, outside of this story.

# GRACE CHURCH



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So would you put your faith in Christ, the one who died, to forgive you of all your sin and cleanse your conscience of all evil and dead works? Be covered in his righteousness and come and follow him as Savior and Lord? That's what the rest of us have done, and we as Christians, we long to live as good and faithful servants before him, because everything that we do, he keeps track of. He's noted, and nothing on him is lost. Everything accrues to benefit an eternal reward. Will you bow with me?

Our Father, we want to thank you once again for sending the Lord Jesus Christ and Lord Jesus, we thank you for teaching this parable. We thank you for what you have allowed us by the Holy Spirit to discern here, and to understand and to see and to rejoice in. And we long, like any good servant, any faithful servant would long for his master's return, that's, man that is what we long for, is to see you come back. We want to see an end to all the, the mockery and the scorn and the hatred of the citizens of your world.

# GRACE CHURCH



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We want to see you return and set the earth to rights. We long to see your face, and for us, it really is not about whatever the level of the reward or the honor that you give us. That's up to you. That's your sovereign choice, and we know that we'll be satisfied with whatever you give. What we long to see most is your face. Where we long to be is in your presence forever. We long to be doing your will, to be rejoicing along with you to do your father's will. We want to render a good account of this life.

We just ask that you would be working in the hearts of every single member of this church. And let us with, with one heart, with one mind, strive side by side for the sake of the gospel to be in true partnership and fellowship with one another, yes, but really with you and with the father who is in heaven, we pray for his glory. Lord Jesus, in your name, by the power of the Holy Spirit, amen.