

The ROI From a Returning King: Part 2

Luke 19:11-27

“Engage in business until I come”

Introduction: We entrust things that are valuable. The first time your parents let you drive the family car or the first time you were allowed to babysit your siblings for the first time. I remember sitting down with my dad before going off to college and he entrusted something extremely valuable: *our family name*. He and my mom raised me faithfully for 18 years, and at the end of the training time released me to go to college, pursue the Lord, and start a new family. The investment of those years would yield an opportunity for me to put into practice all the lessons and principles taught, with the expectation that there would be a return on that investment, that I would honor the Bakker name by how I lived.

Last week we began a look at the investment that Jesus made to His servants, with the expectation that when He returned, there would be a return, a yield of more than was given. This pattern of entrustment is not only seen in what Jesus gave His servants, but as a pattern repeated in the New Testament and Paul's epistles. Consider:

2 Timothy 1:12-13 - *But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard until that Day what has been **entrusted to me**. Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.*

2 Timothy 1:14 - *By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit **entrusted to you***

2 Timothy 2:1-2 - *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, **entrust to faithful men** who will be able to teach others also.*

The progression: entrusted to us - entrust to others - who entrust to others. This means that the gospel message is intended to be perpetuated, faithfully passed down from generation to generation.

So we come back to this story of not only faithfulness, but also of sadness and sobriety. This morning we will take a look at two groups in particular: One who knew the gospel and hid it, and in so doing, proved they did not understand it, and Two, a group that hated the King and fell under His wrath. Again the challenge is for each of us to identify ourselves in this story.

The Setting In Context (11)

Luke 19:11 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**.

Jesus' mission reiterated

Expectation of the crowd mitigated

Experience in history explicated

The Story Explained

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, "A **nobleman** went into a **far country** to receive for himself a **kingdom** and then **return**.¹³ Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.'

King's Charge

Jesus bridges this well known account into the reality of what He was about to do. He was and is the greatest Noble Man the world has known. He was going to the cross, and in His resurrection was going to go away to receive a Kingdom from His Father in order to return again one day. It was in this path that God would highly exalt Him and give Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee would bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11). In the ascension, Jesus would be seated at the right hand of the Father (Eph. 1:20), awaiting His return in power and authority (Rev. 19). *What Jesus is addressing is what would happen in the meantime!* What was the call of His servants and followers in the time between His ascension and His return.

In the parable, He gathered 10 servants to Himself, which was a representative number rather than a complete one. To each servant he gave a single *mina*, which would have been equivalent to about 3 months salary for a day laborer. This would not have been an immense amount, but enough to turn a profit. The expectation is that they would take that money gifted to them, stewarded to them, and **engage in business**. The root word for this is "pragma", which is where we would get the word *pragmatic*. They were to be active in using what was given to have something more in the end. The timeframe given to these servants was the return of the King.

Servant's response

There are three groups that are represented in this parable: **the free, the fearful, and the foes**. The free and the fearful are the servants, where the foes are those that overtly opposed the King. The first two were given the minas, the third were not. Each was given a reward of consequence based on their response to the King. Before we see how each responded, we have to clarify **two important things**:

1) The three groups were present as Jesus was walking - The first two groups were followers, or disciples, which we'll see a differentiation in the story. The free were true followers, the ones who were faithful and truly saved. The second group were those who hailed Jesus as King, threw down branches, but rejected Him when the stakes got too high and their fear of the religious leaders too great. Their faith was as deep as water on a plate, and though they did not overtly rebel, they did not know Jesus. The third group would have been the religious leaders, the Pharisees and scribes who were actively seeking to arrest and kill Jesus (John 11:53)

2) The *minas* entrusted was the good news of the Kingdom, the entrusted gospel. In **Luke 24:46-48**, Jesus laid out this charge to the disciples:

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that **repentance and forgiveness** of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power on high."

Before He ascended, His disciples asked Him the *timing of the restoration of the Kingdom*, to which He responded that no one knows the times and seasons, but that they would "*receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8) This is the gospel that is entrusted to us (1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:12) that

we seek to entrust to others (2 Tim. 1:14; 2:2). This is the investment that Jesus stewards us with in His absence, that true followers will faithfully see a ROI.

The Settling Up Defined

Free are Rewarded for Faithfulness

Now the story moves forward to the returning of the king, as He approaches each servant given a mina (v. 15). The first group He approached Him revealing that the one given mina had yielded a 10 fold gain! **Notice** the humility of this first servant. He responded to the king saying "**YOUR mina has produced this**". He did not point to his effort, nor boast in his methods, but simply stated that the king's investment made the king more. To this the king responded by saying, **Well done, good servant!** Faithfulness in something small would yield faithfulness over 10 cities in the Kingdom. The second came to him giving the king **5 minas**, which the king rewarded with 5 cities. These first two were similar in reward, neither was criticized, and both were welcomed by the king. What do we learn?

- **Gospel faithfulness now is truly gearing for something future** - This parable gives us a monumentally new perspective. Everything that we do today is geared for something future. The goal and greater purpose is living life with an eye not on retirement, but on Christ's future Kingdom. This means that what we do today should reflect that reality, including how we leverage our time, money, and possessions for this **FUTURE KINGDOM**, not a present one.
- **Gospel faithfulness is seen as faithful in "small"** - In the scope of eternity, the entrustment of the gospel to us now is the "faithful in small". This is different than the parable of talents in Matthew 25. In this parable everyone is given the same amount of the investment. The gospel is obviously no small thing, nor is insignificant, but it is the *gateway into the Kingdom*. The future reality is living out the realities in the Kingdom, not the gateway. If we cannot be faithful with the gateway, how will we be faithful with the reality it leads to.
- **The yield is up to God, because its all for Him** - The yield of the investment is produced by God because its all going back to Him. This means that the issue at hand for us is one of faithfulness. I just talked to a friend who is a coach at a major college athletic program, and he said in his early years he was slow to overtly talk about his faith and reality of the gospel in his life because of what it might mean to him or his program. Then God convicted him to be bold about the gospel, bold in sharing what he believed, and though it meant some thought his program was "too much about Jesus", that same boldness has transformed his team. Our call is to **faithfulness**. If God chooses to yield 10 or 5, that is for His glory!
- **Rewards in the future is motivating** - Notice that the free and faithful servants are rewarded with **real** responsibility in the kingdom. This is not metaphorical or allegorical, but an opportunity in the future to reign with Christ, serving Him in these capacities. The ultimate reward of heaven is Jesus, but our desire to is serve Him both now and forever. The reward is **NOT ABOUT US**, but how we can continue to make much of Him into eternity. Faithfulness in the meantime positions us to serve Him faithfully forever. Its hard on this side, in our flesh, to separate **reward from selfish indulgence**, but in the future kingdom it will not be so.

The free and faithful servant is categorized by leveraging everything to see a yield in the entrustment of the gospel. They are living for a true and sure future reality, and seek to be faithful now so they can be faithful then. *What keeps us from doing this? Why is this so hard for believers to truly live out? What are we so easily distracted by? What other things are we tempted to invest in?*

How do we leverage the gospel?

- ***We deal with our sin daily*** - Holiness allows us to be pure vessels that God can use (2 Timothy 2:20-21), where sin dulls our senses and clouds our mind, heart, and passion. We cannot be faithful to the entrusted message if we foster hidden sin, habitual sin, or unrepented sin
- ***We engage in the gracious resources God has provided*** - Prayer, studying God's Word, and fellowship are not token, box checking activities that give us a feeling of Spiritual progress. They are essential to our worship, imperative for the ignition of our heart. We worship to know Christ, and out of that knowledge we seek to make Him known. If the gospel does not play out in our life daily, it cannot be fruitful in the investment to others.
- ***We view all relationships through the lens of the gospel*** - We seek to impart the gospel to those in our home/church, those who are like us (work, neighbors), those who are unlike us (strangers, those outside of our normal sphere of influence), and those very unlike us (other nations, other countries). Which of these is more valuable? Which of these is needed? Which of these is the most important? We must begin to see all relationships as opportunities for the gospel, both in justification and sanctification.
- ***We MUST prioritize our time around what matters most*** - Like any investment, a yield does not come out of thin air. We must prioritize our time, saying "NO" to things that distract us from the things that last. God's Word and people are eternal. They should make up the focus of our life. This includes all ages, personalities (both intro and extroverts), and stages of life. When someone says they have no savings at the end of their life for retirement because they "never got around to it", we would call that irresponsible and foolish. The same is true with leveraging the gospel.

Fearful are Rejected for Falsehood

This second group is perhaps the most important to understand. This was a group of **servants**, those who were following Jesus, who at some level and in some ways wanted to be around Jesus. They were given the same entrustment as the other two, but when the King returned, they pulled out a napkin and returned the same mina back. His reasoning was simple enough: **I was afraid**. He feared the King, thinking Him a severe man who took back what He did not sow or deposit. His response in fear was to sit on the *mina*, to hide it, to do nothing with it. Not only that, but he put it in a handkerchief, which is not a secure place.

The response of the King is terrifying. He not only called this servant **wicked**, which is hardly language of a Father to a child, but He made it clear this servant DID NOT TRULY KNOW THE KING (Matthew 7:21-23). He was **afraid instead of having proper fear**. He became a prophet against himself. Instead of believing the King was severe, motivating him to action, he lived practically like the King did not exist. The consequence of this action was the *mina* he had been given was taken away and given to the first servant. *What does this all mean for us?*

- ***Not everyone who knows the gospel is truly saved*** - This servant followed Jesus, heard the message, could even repeat it back, but it was an artificial faith. This servant knew **about** the king, but did not **know Him**, and the difference was one of relationship. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds threw down branches and welcomed Him as King. When He did not live up to their expectations, they left.
- ***Gospel yield can only come out of gospel transformation*** - The minas actually show us that to truly be a steward of the gospel it actually has had to transform us. We cannot offer forgiveness to others unless we have received forgiveness. We cannot call others to repent unless we

ourselves have done so. We cannot offer the goodness, love, and freedom of Jesus Christ until we have tasted of it. We cannot call people to deny self in this life and live for the Return of the King unless we ourselves believe it. The reason we'd be impotent in seeing fruitfulness in gospel work is not about methods, its about metamorphosis, the change in our heart, motivation, purpose, and goals in life.

- **This middle ground is where most live** - This group made up the majority of people surrounding Jesus, and it is the same group today. We have created a middle ground type of following in terms of living for Christ in light of the gospel. Its one of moderation, or balance, of safety. it says that we can have Jesus and keep life the way we want it, accepting Jesus as long as He does not demand too much. It is one that keeps Jesus hidden from the world, that never talks about Him to our friends and co-workers, and views life as purely an 80 years venture, rather than the next 80 billion. This is the group that will stand before Christ and point to accomplishments as reason for Kingdom entrance, and He will utter, "Depart from me, I never knew you".

This group showed that they were woefully short in their view of God and themselves. They refused to surrender to God because they had the wrong view of Him, which lead to improper fear and lack of a true relationship. This is still true today:

What keeps people from surrendering to God?

- **Selfishness**
- **Want to have Jesus and keep their sin**
- **Do not want to give anything up**

What misconceptions do people have of God?

- **A deist view** - He is indifferent and uninvolved
- **A selfish view** - He is there to serve us
- **A low view** - He is wimpy and needs us somehow to fulfill Him
- **A harsh view** - He is whimsical and punitive - insecure so has to show His might against weaker people

What is the difference between being fearful and being afraid?

Being afraid drives us away (like Adam and Eve in Genesis 3), while proper fear draws us in.

What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

Matthew 7:21-23 - *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast our demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

This is the difference between knowing a girl named Erin at some point in the past and knowing her as my wife.

Foes are Reckoned for Rebellion

The last group was the delegation who tried to keep the King from returning. This is the group that wants nothing to do with Jesus, wanted to see Him stay away, and put Him on the cross. This is anyone who opposes Jesus in a high handed way, opposes those who are for Him, coming out of a hatred of Jesus. This obviously departs from the story of Archelaus since Jesus never did anything to elicit this kind of hate. The consequence of this rebellion is severe. Words are not minced. They are slaughtered before Him, judged and condemned for their opposition.

So the question remains:

Who are you in the story? What will the King find when He comes?

The sobering reality is that everyone is somewhere in this story, and everyone has to account to the King one day. Jesus will return, and there will be rejoicing and weeping, some will praise Him by bowing down to their king, while others will be forced to bow down in judgment. We have all been given access to the same message. The question is what we will do with it.

To the free: Are we living in a way that sees the gospel as an entrusted investment? This has been a sobering reality for me this week. Am I living in fear? Am I distracted? Am I busy doing things that don't matter? Am I seeking to serve today so I can serve Him forever?

To the fearful: Are you trying to live in the artificial middle? Has the gospel changed you, or do you simply give lip service to it? God does not want your words, He wants you. He does not want your church attendance, moralism, and pithy service, He wants all of you. Today is the day of salvation if you would yield your life to Him, repent of your sin, and receive forgiveness for the first time. Give your life up now to gain it forever.

Are we as a church "engaging in the business" of gospel stewardship in the meantime? What needs to change? What would be different about us if we did?