

# Luke 19:11-27

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[ 0 : 00 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Turn with me to Luke 19. Back in Luke this morning after a sweet celebration last week of God's faithfulness to Southwood.

And remember as we turn back to Luke, Jesus has been journeying to Jerusalem for several chapters now. He's getting close.

And the followers of Jesus, they have expectations for what's going to happen when we get to Jerusalem, right? This is significant. Mostly they have misguided expectations.

That Jesus wants to clarify for them so they will know what it will take to follow Him. And so He tells this challenging parable this morning that we're going to read.

[ 0 : 59 ] Let's read it together and then ask for God's help. This is Luke 19 at verse 11. God's holy word. As they heard these things, Jesus proceeded to tell a parable because He was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

He said, therefore, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, engage in business until I come.

But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, we do not want this man to reign over us. And when he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him that he might know what they had gained by doing business.

And 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.

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.

[ 2 : 20 ] For I was afraid of you because you're a severe man. You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow. He said to him, I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant.

You knew that I was a severe man taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank? 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 to him, Lord, he has ten minas. I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given.

But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.

We need to pray and ask for God's help. Father, we do ask that you would teach us from your word. Would you give us hearts to hear?

[ 3 : 22 ] Would you work by your spirit that we might not just know more about you, that we might know you more, know who you are? Show us yourself.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Many of you have asked me over the years how I tricked Christi into marrying me, which is a very fair question to ask, and I'm not 100% sure myself.

She's amazing. I married way up, and you've all noticed. But, you know, I'd heard that marriage was hard, and all the things that people tell you, but I figured that as many of us do, that I'd found

someone so wonderful, you know?

And we loved each other so much that it was actually going to be pretty easy for us. I mean, honestly, that's what I was thinking when we were engaged.

It was really this feeling that it was as though I'd worked so hard up to that point in my life, convincing people to like me, and then convincing her to like me enough to marry me, that now I'd done it, like I'd reached the pinnacle, and it was all downhill from here.

[ 4 : 39 ] Life would just be coasting, right? I expected I'd arrived, only to find out that I'm actually harder to live with than I imagined.

And when two sinners get married, even when they really love each other, it takes hard work and an investment in that relationship.

It's so worth it, but it costs more than I expected. Jesus' disciples and others who are following Him as He heads to Jerusalem have struggled to understand what's going to happen when they get there.

Jesus knows He's headed to be mocked, beaten, killed. He's told them that. And He knows that the eternal kingdom that He's come to establish is still going to be well in the future.

And He wants His followers to be prepared for this delay in their victory parade, so to speak, that they think they're walking into, for them to have right expectations.

[ 5 : 49 ] And so He tells this story. It's a story, the one we just read. It probably didn't remind you of this, but it would have reminded Jesus' followers of another king coming to Jerusalem around this time.

It would have helped them see that you don't just walk into Jerusalem and make yourself king. It's a brief history note, I promise. Archelaus was one of the sons of King Herod.

King Herod, the one who ordered that all the babies be killed when Jesus was born. When Herod split his kingdom among his three sons, he gave Archelaus the part of the kingdom that included Jerusalem, and he gave him the title of king.

But you see, Rome was in charge, not Herod. If you really wanted to be king, you had to go to Rome. So Archelaus journeyed a long way to Rome to receive a kingdom.

That's what this parable is referencing. And the Jews sent a delegation, like is discussed here. Fifty people who journeyed all the way to Rome just to plead, don't let Archelaus be our king.

[ 7 : 07 ] See, Herod and his sons were ruthless. They didn't want them ruling over them. And Archelaus, after journeying to Rome, was sent home with some authority in that area, but without the title of king, which he would never earn.

In fact, ten years after this, another delegation would go from Jerusalem to Rome and actually get Archelaus removed from power altogether.

You don't just walk into Jerusalem and become king overnight. Jesus is reminding his followers of that. It's not all downhill from here.

Jesus is about to embark on a long journey to receive a kingdom and then return. And his followers will need to know how to live in the meantime.

They're going to have to struggle. They have to wait. And as with marriage, they will pay a high cost for pursuing Jesus' kingdom.

[ 8 : 10 ] But it will be worth investing in. That's what Jesus is telling them here. It's the primary point of this parable. Jesus wants his followers to know that although his kingdom is not coming immediately as they envisioned it, it is coming.

And so giving yourself passionately and zealously without fear to his kingdom is an eternally wise investment.

It was true for them then. He wanted them to hear it. It's true for us now. He wants us to hear it today. Now, it's not all good news, is it? Jesus also references this delegation against the king.

Verse 14 and then at the end, verse 27. And there is a serious warning not to be ignored that if you work to have the king removed, to refuse his rule and reign, there's swift and serious eternal death awaiting you.

Those are strong words. Strong words for those outwardly and actively opposing King Jesus then and now.

[ 9 : 30 ] There would be many in this camp that they'd encounter when they got to Jerusalem, right? Crying for him to be crucified. And there are many today. But the focus of the parable is on those who would be servants of the king.

There's warning for them as well. We'll see in a minute. But let's notice the faithful servants first. Verse 13. The future king, before he leaves, gives them gifts and tells them to use them well until he returns.

Verse 13. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, one each, and said to them, engage in business until I come. Now, I know you don't deal in minas a lot.

I understand. A mina is a generous gift. It represents about three months' wages in those days. So, if you make \$40,000 a year, that's a \$10,000 gift that you're to use for the king's purposes.

So, keep that number in mind. In verse 16, the report from the first servant is that he's made ten times that. A hundred thousand dollars with the \$10,000.

[10:48] That's really good work, right? Yes? You don't get that kind of return every day. But listen to the king's response. Verse 17. He said to him, Well done, good servant.

Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities. Whoa! In charge of ten cities.

This king is way more generous than we realized, isn't he? I mean, he gave the initial gift anyway. It was his mina that was stewarded.

And when it's steward faithfully, he gives responsibility far beyond what was earned. Oversight of ten cities. Made a hundred thousand bucks.

Why don't you run ten cities? It happens again with the next servant who makes five times what he started with and is given oversight of five cities. Side note, not the primary point of the parable.

[11:50] Did you know we're going to have meaningful work to do in the new heavens and new earth? In Jesus' kingdom. It's not just harps and clouds. It's just exciting to me to realize he didn't give them oversight of ten clouds and five clouds.

But ten cities. Five cities. Work is pre-fall. God created it and created us for it. So we have an eternal kingdom where the king loves and labors alongside his faithful servants.

Listen, Jesus is saying, there's work to be done for the sake of my kingdom while I'm gone. I'm giving you gifts so that you can do it and when I return, faithful servants who've invested those gifts will receive glory beyond imagination.

You need to know that because it's about to be hard. But the story turns, doesn't it? As the third servant arrives.

And I've got to imagine, as Jesus tells it, that this guy's sheepishly walking up to the king now and unfolding his handkerchief. I kept your mina.

[13:08] Verse 20. Another came saying, Lord, here's your mina which I kept laid away in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you because you're a severe man.

You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow. And the king calls him a wicked servant and says, even if it was true that I was like that, you could have at least put the money in the bank to make some interest.

Now I'm taking your mina away. Verse 24. Take the mina from him. Give it to the one who has ten. And they said, Lord, he has ten. I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given.

But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. Listen, this is not economic policy. Don't read that. It's part of the parable where Jesus is explaining that faithfulness in small responsibilities leads to greater responsibilities.

And unfaithfulness in small things leads to less. Jesus is calling his followers to labor for his kingdom while they face a hard season of waiting apart from him.

[14:24] So we need to think about what that means for us. For how we follow Jesus and invest his gifts for his kingdom while we await his return as king.

It's important as we do that for us to understand the mind and the heart of the third servant. Why did he not invest for the king?

What does he say? He says he was fearful of the king. Afraid the king would punish any mistakes he made.

So, what did he do? He played it safe. Verse 21, I was afraid of you because you're a severe man. You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.

Severe. Looking to take what's not his. Trying to hoard things to himself and take advantage of others.

[15:25] Is that what this king is like? Does the handkerchief servant perceive his character correctly in this story? No way. He's not like that at all.

This king is magnanimous in his generosity. He's unmatched in his grace. And handkerchief servant's unfaithful stewardship is a result of not knowing the king's heart. Isn't it? He acts fearfully because he doesn't truly know the kindness and generosity of the king. I'm reading an abridged version of Little Women to Lily right now with three girls. Little Women is a classic in our house. A fan favorite. Early in the book we find out that the March girls have a neighbor named Mr. Lawrence. And Beth in particular being young is afraid of old Mr. Lawrence. but occasionally she slips into his house to play the piano as long as she can avoid seeing him. [16:38] And so Mr. Lawrence notices this and wanting her to know his kindness wanting to have a relationship with her what does he do? What does old Mr. Lawrence do?

If you've read the book you know he buys or gets a piano and it shows up in the March house as a gift for Beth. shows up out of nowhere an extravagant gift to be sure a piano that shows up in her house and she sees it and Beth is overjoyed and what does she do immediately? She sees the gift and she runs next door all the way into his office and throws herself into Mr. Lawrence's arms. They become fast friends. Through his thoughtful gift he shows himself to be kind and loving and generous and fearful Beth becomes joyful and confident in their friendship. Maybe you're not a fan of little women I understand that but you know this classic character from one story or another who when his true heart is known changes the way that people act toward him. [17:49] I want you to think of one this morning that you know and that you love. Think of a character in a movie or a book you've read. Maybe it's Shovel Guy Marley in Home Alone. You know him.

Kevin fears he's a serial killer but he ends up rescuing Kevin in the end doesn't he? And they sit warmly on a pew in the church as new friends. Maybe it's Mr. Myrtle in The Sandlot. James Earl Jones playing an older man with a dog called The Beast whose backyard is the most dangerous place in the whole neighborhood nobody ever comes out alive. Until they meet Mr. Myrtle and he gives them an autographed baseball that cements their new friendship and what a great guy he turns out to be. Maybe it's the mysterious Boo Radley in To Kill a Mockingbird whom Scout and Jim make up fearful stories about because they don't really know the truth until he rescues them and they realize how generous and thoughtful of others Boo actually is.

I want you to think about that guy whichever one you know and like. And now think about how you think about God. Is he a bit of a distant unknown unpredictable character to you? [19:21] A monster you worry may be out to get you actually if you're honest? Is he a miserly old man only doling out blessings on rare occasions when he's forced to by exceptional behavior?

And ask yourself honestly what difference would it make in your life if you if you met him and experienced him to be deeply kind and magnanimously generous? A father you could trust and love beyond anyone else you've ever known? See I'm often like the handkerchief servant. I am risk averse.

I'm a play it safe kind of guy. It seems like the right thing. Putting the mina in the handkerchief makes total sense to me because at least nothing bad can happen. For me it's actually a form of self-protection.

I'm like the servant. I don't want anything painful or embarrassing to happen to me. I'm afraid of being a failure of disappointing myself or someone else or God.

[20:43] God, I don't like that feeling disappointing someone. I try to protect myself from it. When I do that, what kingdom am I actually serving?

Mine, right? I'm protecting me. Do you see that? Do you see how that could be true in my heart? I do it in a lot of different ways by avoiding hard spiritual conversations with my wife or with a neighbor.

Just keep things peaceful and comfortable and not risk a hard night or an awkward relationship. I do it by never giving away enough money that I would feel insecure or like I really needed something. I do it by praying only for things that seem reasonable, they might actually happen so I won't be let down if they don't. I do these things in others not usually for me because I think God will smite me if I mess up, although some of you struggle more with that particular fear, but because I often imagine

God as miserly.

He's only doling out His grace on rare occasions. And so most of the time I'm on my own and just get what I can for myself, right? Get what I can of people's praise or financial stability, of personal comfort, whatever it happens to be.

[ 22 : 13 ] I don't know Him deeply enough. I think I gotta look out for myself. When I fail to embrace God as a generous Father who delights to give good gifts to His children, as He says He is, as He's shown Himself to be, I take my mina and whatever else I can gather for myself and I wrap it in the handkerchief.

life, it's safe there. There's a huge difference, isn't there, between being passionately kingdom oriented and fearfully self-protective.

It's a difference that centers around truly knowing and trusting my kind Father. We say He's like that, but do we live like it's really true? Have we really met Him personally in a transformative way? Will you think about that with me for a couple minutes? The difference between being passionately kingdom oriented and fearfully self-protective. Maybe we should talk about it in the connect communities and small groups.

Maybe that's where we really need to wrestle with it, but how do you often live? Investing all for King Jesus? or looking out for yourself and hedging your bets on God?

[ 23 : 37 ] Minas represent more than money, but why don't we start there? We just saw from Zacchaeus in the previous story a proof of relationship with the King is generosity, right?

Do you love to see your money used as a kingdom resource? To blow holes in the gates of hell with your finances? Or do you hesitate because you don't want to stretch too far?

It might hurt. You might regret it. We have the privilege of being a part of a church where we invest in the kingdom all the time. Impacting the young people of this community, the poor and the hurting in this city, the unreached people groups in India and many other places.

So let me ask it this way. When you see a late year budget deficit at your church, what goes through your mind? Do you think that's someone else's problem?

Do you think, I suppose I have a little extra to share? Or do you think, what a great opportunity for me to experience my generous father in deeper ways as he cares for me and my family.

[ 24 : 54 ] family, I'll know him. And Jesus says he's worth it to risk that. God says in Malachi 3, we can give generously and actually as we do, get to know him more.

He actually tells us, test him. See him open the windows of heaven and pour down so much we'll be overwhelmed. That's what he's like, isn't it?

Let me give you a little bit to be faithful with and then watch me overwhelm you with my generosity. Have you experienced him like that or just heard about it?

Anyone else ready to get to know your king in that way? See, it's not about meeting the budget, it's about meeting him, isn't it? How else could we be passionately kingdom oriented with what God has entrusted to us?

We've talked about our time. What's one thing you'd stop doing on a regular basis to be more kingdom oriented and reinvest that time for the king? How about the good news of Jesus that he's given to us?

[ 25 : 58 ] Who are you just keeping the peace with, avoiding that perhaps hard conversation that could be risky, but could be eternally a fruitful one, especially if your heavenly father is as good and gracious as he says he is?

How about your prayers? Do you pray like you're talking to the king standing at the windows of heaven, ready to pour down the blessings of his kingdom? What's one big thing you would pray for if you really believed God was a generous father delighting to open the windows of heaven and advance his kingdom in your life?

We sometimes forget, don't we, who he is? We sometimes forget we're awaiting the return of the true king. When we're not all in with Jesus, maybe some for Jesus or occasionally when convenient for Jesus, but I also need to get what I can for myself and protect what I have because I don't know how life's going to go and whether Jesus will really come through.

Jesus is saying, if you think about me like that, you don't know my heart. You may not be outwardly protesting my kingship, but your life is evidencing you don't deeply know the king.

Listen, his invitation here is for you to know him not merely theoretically or what you've heard someone else say he's like from a distance, but personally, up close, experientially, like the faithful

servants who experience his generosity and grace firsthand.

[ 27 : 34 ] This table, as clearly as anything else, reminds us what he's like, doesn't it? So overwhelmingly generous and gracious.

That's what he's like. Do you feel sometimes that God might smite you in your sin? If you do, your instincts are good. He's holy.

He's just. He punishes sin. And if you don't have Jesus, if you don't trust Jesus to pay the penalty for your sin, don't come to this table and pretend to be in relationship with God on your own merits, he warns against that and says someone's got to pay for that sin.

But if you do trust Jesus to be your king, if you trust him to pay for your sin, then how does God respond to your sin?

He does smite your sin. on the cross. Fully. And finally. Forever.

[ 28 : 44 ] And so that he can be magnanimously generous to you, his child. That's what he does. Because he loves you.

And he wants you to know that. And so he comes this morning and sets this table and shows you himself again so that you can look on this gift. His generous gift to you so that you would see it and run into his arms again this morning.

And know him to be kind and loving and generous for you. Jesus, the night he was betrayed, wanted his followers to know that. He took the bread and he broke it.

He gave it to them as I'm ministering in his name, give this bread to you. And he said, take and eat. This is my body. I give it for you.

So do this in remembrance of me. And he took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood which I'm going to shed for the forgiveness of your sins so yours won't have to be.

[ 29 : 49 ] Take it and drink it. Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death as your only hope until he comes. Let's pray and we'll celebrate together.

Jesus, what an amazing gift. Would you use it this morning to help us know the giver of it in a new and deeper way?

Would we taste it and know that you're good? Would we know you delight to give us good gifts?

Would we experience your love and would it warm our hearts to live for your kingdom?

In Jesus' name, amen. For more information, visit us online at [southwood.org](http://southwood.org). and in [JesusConcired.org](http://JesusConcired.org) All right.

Thank you.