

The Christian's Opportunity

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Preacher: BK Smith

- [0 : 00] You guys hot? Lord bless you if you do not have air conditioning. All right.
- Luke 11, please. No, Luke 19, verse 11. I'm already too delirious from the heat here.
- Just one more reminder. Later, we have a membership meeting tonight, a la Zoom, just to approve the new budget.
- Chris promises it will be short and sweet. And if it isn't, he's going to get ice cream for all. All right.
- So we're going to be looking at Luke 19. If you were with us last year, or last year, last week, we're kind of ramping up the reality of what it is to now to be together, right?
- [1 : 02] The fact of the matter is, it's been a year and a half. I can even look over at the Wilson family. I don't even recognize them anymore, right? Kids are growing up. People we haven't seen.
- We haven't loved. We haven't cared for. We haven't been able to share with. We haven't been able to spend time with. Serve with. To serve, to love, to care for one another.
- So I kind of wanted to dig into some of the scriptures that speak to the need for us to engage. Last week, we just looked at a very simple verse.
- A simple instruction. See that you fulfill the ministry that you have been given. That Jesus Christ, as Christians, as he's redeemed us, has called us to a ministry.
- As we all understand, we've been given different gifts, different talents, different abilities that are meant to build up his church. So Jesus Christ can be glorified.
- [2 : 03] Amen? It's never about us. It is about him. And the strength we find to do that work is found in only one place, and that is in the cross of Jesus Christ.
- So now, as we, Lord willing, open up the doors, my prayer is there's going to be new people affected, new people to get to know.
- And I pray that will lead to more serving, more praying, more encouraging. But I believe, I think, that when we're away from one another, it can dull us.
- So with that in mind, we are going to be looking at one of Jesus Christ's strongest commands to believers in Christ. It is a challenging part of the text.
- It is an incredible parable that Jesus Christ teaches us about life. One of the things about this parable that we're going to be digging into is that we need to understand that it is a parable about what's called the life in between.
- [3 : 15] The life after Christ rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, and when he is coming back, it's the life in between those two events.
- And there is an expectation on those in Jesus Christ, how we are to live in that life, in this life. So please read along with me this parable, beginning in verse 11 of Luke 19.
- As they heard these things. So just previous to this, Jesus was in a discussion with Lazarus. If you remember, Lazarus was the short tax collector who had a lot of questions for Jesus Christ.

And the Pharisees who were sitting back were a little bit bothered that Jesus Christ was spending his time with the tax collectors, the sinners. Why are you spending your time with them and not us?

We are the religious elite. We are the ones who keep the law of Moses. Isn't us the ones that you want to spend time with? So he gives them this parable shortly after this discussion.

[4 : 30] And he says, 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.

He said, therefore, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling 10 of his servants, he gave them 10 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 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.

The first came before him saying, Lord, your minna has made 10 minas more. And he said to him, well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in very little, you shall have authority over 10 cities.

And the second came saying, Lord, your minna has made five minas. And he said to them, and you are to be over five cities. Then another came saying, Lord, here is your minna, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief.

[5 : 54] For I was afraid of you because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow. He being the nobleman 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 minna from him and give it to the one who has the 10 minnas.

And they said to him, Lord, he has 10 minnas. 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. Scholars are pretty much unanimous that this is an incredible, severe passage that came from the words of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 14] It is a parable. And if you do not know, a parable is generally a short story that is somewhat true to life. And Jesus told them for several reasons. One, they were stories that anybody could relate to who were listening at the time.

They understood the overall original concepts that were being preached. However, there was a purpose to these parables. To those who were drawing close to Christ, there came understanding and a greater closeness to Christ began in them.

But for those who were falling away from Christ, greater misunderstanding would happen. There'd be more confusion. Most parables have a single spiritual truth included in them.

But there's several other points of life that we are able to derive from them. One of the most important things that we can do in interpreting a parable is we can go over what do the words mean?

What are the definitions? So, the first one I think that makes a big bearing on this passage is the word nobleman. Verse 12, it said, He said, therefore, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.

- [8 : 35] Here we meet, we understand that a nobleman is one of noble birth. One who has been given authority by virtue of his lineage. And he's someone who generally comes from a good and reputable family.
- We understand that he is to go on a distant journey to receive a kingdom. So, that means that there is going to be a passage of time that he is going to, what's going to happen between the time he is there, makes his statement, and then leaves.
- So, we have this timeline. And there is this other very important business that we understand that he is going to be doing. In this passage, the nobleman is Jesus Christ.
- It is Jesus speaking of himself. The far country is where he will be preparing a kingdom for us. The second word that we can take for an understanding here is the word servant.
- Again, we see this from the root word is actually *doulos*, which we derive the word slave from. This is not an employee type of relationship.
- [9 : 48] But I would say it's not like, well, obviously, when we talk about slavery, we think about the slavery that occurred in the United States back in pre-colonial America. That's not the type of slavery they're talking about.
- They're talking about almost a type of indentured servitude. Someone would either sell himself or if he had great debts, but some would just give their lives to serve the master.
- And by doing so, they were given incredible responsibility to act in the name of the master while he was away. So the people that are referenced as servants are not to be seen as employees, but people who have responsibility to Jesus.
- That's us. The minna. A minna was actually a Greek silver coin, and it was valued at about 100 days wages.
- Not enough to buy a house, but perhaps a used car, right? Not an overly significant amount of money, but it's nothing to shake a stick at.
- [10 : 58] So it was about a third of a year's salary, and it had some significant value. Now, the issue in this parable is, what does the minna represent?
- That's the key issue that we need to understand. Sometimes, most people, when they come to this, and I don't want to say most people, because obviously I haven't taken a poll, but a lot of people will assume, and I read this in some of the commentaries, that it is talent or ability.
- Now, I actually don't believe that is what Jesus Christ is talking about here. And the reason is, we all haven't been created with the same amount of talent or ability, have we? People are very different, so there'd be different expectations given to people who had different abilities or talents.
- Is it salvation? Well, we know that isn't true, because salvation is neither given nor taken away. I believe the word minna here represents opportunity.
- I believe it represents opportunity. Everyone in life, between the time of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the return of Jesus, has opportunity.
- [12 : 14] We have opportunity to serve our master. So, every single one of these servants, in this timeline, has the exact same opportunity to use the minute to the best of their abilities.
- Every single person has the same responsibility to use the opportunities in life to serve and work for Christ. Last week, we learned about what it is about our ministry.
- And we learned that with this giving of ministry comes responsibility. So, last week, we talked about using our responsibility. This week, we are talking about opportunity.
- Before I go any more into the central thesis of my sermon, take a look at verse 21. Verse 21, it says, you are a severe man.

A lot of people get hung up on that verse or that word. If you have a New King James Version, it will say that you are an austere man.

[13 : 23] If you have an NIV, it says you are a hard man. The NSB, I believe, has the correct translation when it says, he is an exacting man.

And what it means is, he's not like some mean, old, grumpy man, but he is a responsible man when given responsibility, has the right expectation that the opportunity that he gives will be used.

We also know that he's a nobleman, that he is truthful, that he is honorable. But he's also a detailed man. He understands what his men is represent.

So this morning, I want to look at five truths from this passage that speak to our lives. Five truths that speak from this passage to our lives.

The first truth, and I think is probably the most difficult truth for us to accept, is that your life is not your own. Your life is not your own.

[14 : 37] In fact, the life that you have been given is what is called a stewardship, not a possession. That means you will need to answer for how you live your life.

That's tough to hear for some of us. We are given, especially in our society, an understanding that we are an individual. It's my life.

Stay out of my life, right? You can't tell me what to do with my life. We all want to do what we want, when we want, without any consequence to our life.

In fact, our culture of today is probably the most extreme manifestation of what it means to live for self. We are in the midst of a cultural revolution.

Perhaps not so much in Canada, but if you read what's going on in the States, that's going on right now, and a lot of times when we look at it, in fact, I'm reading this book, and it's probably one of the most effectual books of the last generation on what is truly happening, and I'd encourage anyone to read it.

[15 : 50] It's called The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self by Carl Truman. And it says that the reason why Western society finds itself in such disarray is because of the runaway theme of self-importance.

So it's not a matter of who I choose to be. The issue is, because I am who I am, you have to accept me as I am. That's why you have these ideas.

I don't know if you've been paying much attention in the States, in universities, in colleges, you have safe zones. I have the right to hear ideas or to say no to ideas that might hurt me or that might conflict or hurt my feelings because I am the most important person.

And it happens everywhere. A lot of times, we misdiagnose. When we look at the sexual revolution that is happening today, a lot of people approach it that it's just sexuality gone amok, and that's partly true, but what's going on is it's actually a seek of an identity found outside of Jesus Christ that is based on who they are.

And not only that, the issue isn't my sexuality is my business, is that you have to accept my business because we are all self-important.

[17 : 12] Even if we all come together and don't mesh, doesn't matter. You still have to respect the individual far above the group. Jesus Christ tells us through the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 6.19, he says, Do you not know that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. You see, a saint, one who belongs to Jesus Christ, understands that they are beholden to God, that Jesus Christ, through his shed blood on the cross, is whom we are beholden to.

That the life we now have is the life of Christ, and we are to steward that responsibly. The fact is, we had a life.

We lived that life the way we wanted to. And it was a disaster. Then we gave it to Christ. Let me ask you something.

Have you ever thought of salvation in such a way that you actually give your life to Jesus Christ?

[18 : 37] Too often we hear the vernacular, I accept Jesus into my heart. What does that mean? At the root, it's to mean that you give your life to Christ to do as he wills with it.

That is the song that we sang today. That he has redeemed us. He has given us ultimate value. A responsibility to live in a way that he would have us live.

He's not to be an add-on. He's not to make us rich or problem-free. Salvation was never intended to be a fire insurance from hell, but it was a dedication of our lives and our entire existence, thoughts, motivations to be to the king.

One of the greatest observations I think that I can make is that the reason why so many Christians struggle in life is they think that their life is their own. The fact of the matter is we are responsible to Christ and by virtue of being responsible to Christ, we are responsible to one another.

We think that we can act independently of God and then do as a God-themed thing once a week that everything will be okay. What I'm telling you, what Jesus Christ is telling us, is that in the right here, the right now, we belong to him.

[20 : 07] This is how Jesus sees our life. If you are owned by God, you need to begin thinking as such.

So that is the first truth that we can gather from this passage. The second truth we learn from this parable is even the smallest of gifts must be put to good use.

All too often we hear, you know, I'm really not that gifted. I don't have that many opportunities. I do not have that many abilities. I don't speak to important people. I don't know any rich, wealthy individuals that are going to change the world.

Or we compare. Man, I wish I had that person's boldness. I wish I had that person's understanding and memory of Scripture where I could recite it at a moment's notice to answer anybody's problems.

So we wait and we wait. I'm waiting for the right time.

[21 : 13] I'm waiting to engage. I'm waiting to engage with the right person when I can have that one chance to use my skills big time.

But what's interesting is that if you recall the stories of the Bible, God doesn't call the great to do great things.

He calls the smallest of us to do great things. Remember? Rahab the prostitute. Moses the stutterer. David was the small.

Can you guys name one single apostle who followed Jesus Christ, who had a master's of divinity, who went to school, who was seen as a great leader, a titan of industry?

In fact, they came from the worst part of Israel, Galilee. Those guys are all the compromisers up north. None of them were known for any great action of renown.

[22 : 29] None of them were known to be great orators. None of them were known to be great thinkers. None of them were titans of industry who affected much.

It is my contention that the reason why people experience so little spiritual fulfillment is because they think they need to be great and they have to wait for a 100% perfect situation where they're 100% comfortable.

Sometimes God wants to use us when we feel we've got about 1% energy left and we have about 100% comfortable left. See, 1 Corinthians tells us that God has chosen to weak to make the strong look foolish.

He uses the foolish to make the wise look foolish. You see, the thing that God uses is that He blesses a willing heart.

God uses broken people. The biblical testimony is that God uses broken, busted up, mistake-ridden people to bring Him glory.

[23 : 47] Amen? The reality is we compare ourselves to people that we think are great, but those people who are being put on the pedestal, they know how weak they really are.

They see all their foibles and a lot of them say, I don't want that responsibility. And it's true. Who in their right mind would? But I think there's something through the power of the Holy Spirit and the understanding that our life is not our own is what drives us to do incredible and miraculous things.

So that is the second truth. The third truth is a pretty short point. There's essentially two types of people. Those who do and those who do not.

There are those who make good use out of their opportunities and there are those who don't. In the Christian world, we define them between there are consumer Christians and there are disciple-making Christians.

there really is only those two choices. Often people look at church and say, wow, what does that church offer me?

[25 : 12] That's what the consumer Christian thinks. A discipleship-driven Christian says, look at all these opportunities I have to serve. Look at all these opportunities I have to love.

Look at all these opportunities I get to be a part of God's blessings. You see, the ones who look for the opportunities to serve are the ones who are blessed without understanding.

And I find any time I meet such a person, there is a deep satisfaction in life that no matter what that gift is, whether it be great or small, they are satisfied.

So just to recap, the first truth we need to understand is that our life is not our own. The second truth is that even the smallest gift can produce the greatest of fruit.

In three, there are two types of people, Christians, the consumer or the one who jumps on the opportunity. The last two truths are the doozies.

[26 : 21] This parable reminds us that without a doubt, the King of Kings is going to return and he's going to ask us to give an account. The fourth truth is the King of Kings will return and he will demand from every single one of us who have claimed the name of Jesus to give an account.

We will have to answer for all the things that distracted us. We were given a calling, a ministry, a purpose and we will be called to answer what did we do with this?

Did you do it or did you mail it in? Did you just put it on a calendar to remind yourself once a month to do something that Jesus might like?

or did you actually turn your life to be in such a way that I want everything to be about this stewardship that God has given me? How I raise my kids, how I relate to my wife, how I give myself to my employer?

Or did you seek to do the minimum, the least that I can do to just get by? And I don't mean to make fun or light of life.

[27 : 40] Life is hard. We are busy people. We have responsibilities. But perhaps, perhaps we not have been as intentional with our time as we needed to be.

Perhaps we got distracted by some really, really good things. Things that are enjoyable. Things that are wonderful. Paul tells us that we are to live life as a soldier.

To not be thrown off by things of civilian life. Alright.

What does this mean? Well, this morning, I'm going to get into your kitchen a little bit. You thought the weather was hot. I'm going to get hot with you right now.

Maybe there's a few idols that I'm going to kick over. Did you know that we have a youth ministry? We do. The leader who heads it up is Dave Nannery.

[28 : 52] Ryan Devlin helps him. Harriet Ringo helps him. And Jezel Narek helps him. There's not a single couple from this church has volunteered to help our youth ministry.

Until just a couple of months ago, Jezel, praise God, is married. Yay, Jezel. But we have no married, experienced couples from this church that are willing to invest in our youth.

None. Zero. Zilch. We all talk about the mission, evangelism. We'll give in to that early morning church ministry with the kids and teach Sunday school, which is a great and glorious thing.

But when it comes to our youth, when they are in a position where they are being attacked by this culture more than anything else that exists in any other time before we are silent and have no action.

What are our priorities? If we cannot be responsible to the kids that we've been given, even as a church, of course, as parents, why is God going to bless us with anything more?

[30 : 26] Do you not think that there's some of the kids here could really benefit by your wisdom, your care, your love, your support? Ask any of the leaders, these are really good kids.

For you parents, you've raised some great kids. There is some fun, wonderful personalities. They're great to laugh with. They're great to share with.

They're eager to learn. We even have kids that don't even have fathers or certain mothers. They need other adults to speak into their lives. Every single one of us knows this, right?

When we look back at our testimony, those who grew up in the church, most of us point to a time when there was an adult who had a significant impact in our life, whether it be at camp, at youth, or a retreat.

Why wouldn't we want to give that back? What's interesting is that prior to COVID, that the kids were actually more faithful at inviting their non-Christian friends than we are.

[31 : 37] I'd say almost about a third or a quarter were non-Christian unchurched families. And you wouldn't guess if I asked you who you thought was bringing them, you would not be able to guess the kids that were bringing their non-Christian friends to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Listen, I love the fact that people are willing to bake cookies and do certain things and offer money. But what I really want to see is a willingness to come and work with our kids.

Statistics tell us that the kids who make it through their youthful years at a church increases exponentially that they will carry on in the faith if they have some other adult who spent time with them outside of their parents, who cared for them, who knew them.

perhaps some of you are the parents that you need to be here.

I don't know. My question to you or my challenge to you is to pray. Pray that the Lord would put it on your heart that maybe this is the part where you need to be serving.

[33 : 05] Sometimes it's a blessing to kids just to see their parents here being with them discipling other kids. Now, what about those who've already had the kids?

You know, you're over 50. Hey, I'm done, man. They're out of the nest. I would say that our youth ministry needs you more than any other age group. Why? Because you've raised the kids.

Sorry, youth. the youth. You've made the mistakes. You know what works, what doesn't work. Perhaps God has given you some wisdom to share with the likes of those people who are giving their time to youth ministry.

Maybe this is your time to shine. Your youth are done. Now it's time to build into the next generation of youth. my prayer for you is that this would be a huge wake-up call for this church.

That we would start taking the opportunity to do the work in the field that is presented before us right here, right now.

[34 : 26] Is your heart tender to this responsibility? Listen, I get that life this busy career, marriage, your own kids. We're just asking for a couple of hours a week to show up.

The reality is if you are at home waiting for a perfect time to serve God, there is no better time than now. Friends, this may be the clearest call for your entire life.

a quality disciple is one who gives himself over to the work of Christ. Are you willing to do so? Are you willing to pray for it?

The fifth truth that I want to transition to, the account you give to God will be the most significant event of your life. The account you give to God will be the most significant event in your life.

There is no way you can avoid this. We all have to give an account. How do you feel about this?

[35 : 48] There's three ways to apply these five truths that I've expounded on today.

The first way to apply these truths is to be encouraged. If you are faithful in using these opportunities this sermon will be an encouragement to you.

some of you do indeed look for opportunities to serve. You want to serve all you can and often the problem with you is you're going to hear this sermon and you're going to feel guilty than anybody else that you're not doing enough.

But the truth of the matter is you often are. If you're feeling this way ask a friend but may the Lord bless you for your sensitive spiritual minded heart that you have be encouraged God sees you he sees the work that you do before him and please do not give up doing the work that Jesus Christ has called you and thank him for that burden passion that you have that Jesus Christ has placed on your heart.

So the second application of this these five truths is that this is education for the fruitless. I want to ask you one simple question.

[37 : 21] Who here wants to be the man or woman who presents the handkerchief to Jesus Christ when he comes back?

Does anybody esteem to that? Oh look Jesus look what I got. Look look look look nobody wants to be that guy right?

What an embarrassing picture that is. Nobody's goal in life is to be that person.

That's the person who said I'll do something someday. Sadly in the parable that unfaithfulness cost this servant their reward.

Is this the person who heard well done and good and faithful servant? If you feel that you are that person here's the time to begin the change.

[38 : 31] To ask Christ to deal with whatever barriers you have. Here's the opportunity to begin change through prayer, change through counsel. Maybe to unblind the blinders to see life as you've never seen it before.

The third application that comes from this passage is that it is enlightenment for the foolish. It is enlightenment for the foolish. Check out verse 14.

But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying we do not want this man to reign over us. The fact of the matter is I realize some of you may be offended by me today.

To be truthful, I've been preaching here for three years and I often don't get into your kitchens or not intentionally so anyway. Some of you may be thinking I am out of here.

No one is going to tell me what to do with my life. No one's going to tell me how I'm supposed to live my life. I feel guilty. If anybody makes me feel guilty they're the bad person.

[39 : 44] If you are thinking in these ways you're actually revealing something about yourself. What you're revealing to yourself is maybe you are not as sold out to Jesus as you thought you were.

Perhaps you did not understand that Jesus doesn't ask permission. As the rightful ruler he has every right to give orders because he is the Lord of Lord and King of Kings.

It's why Jesus Christ doesn't approach us and say hey do you mind if you squeeze me into your schedule? Check out verse 26.

I tell you that to everyone who has more will be given but from the one who has not even when 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.

You see those who do not want Jesus to rule over them are the ones who are enemies of Jesus Christ. They are the ones that say hey Jesus you rule over there I rule over here leave me alone.

[41 : 15] One commentator on this passage simply writes this passage has one of the sharpest edges in all of God's word. What it tells us is that while today is the day of opportunity and Christ welcomes all to him who come by faith for their forgiveness there will come a day when that opportunity will be no more and that loving merciful Jesus who we talk to who we love to talk to so much will reveal his wonderful and magnificent holiness and his righteousness and he will say to you you had your chance you had your choice you rejected what I offered you bring them here so that I may slay them.

you know what that would be the perfect and just response for his rulership let me ask you one final question which one are you the faithful the fruitless or the foolish my friends even here at this small church at SBC the very edge of Canada there are plenty of life changing opportunities that surround us which one of you are going to grab hold of this and present to the nobleman who is coming back and will then demand an answer father I listen to your words and I took the opportunity to do all that

I could do let's pray dear lord holy and heavenly father there are some passages of scripture that are hard they are tough and as one commentator said they are sharp father I pray that you would use this to tune not only my heart but every single heart that is here today and is watching that we would come to understand that our lives are not our own and once we can grasp that simple central truth everything changes our excuses aren't worth anything our lack of education our lack of experience even our sinful lives that we've lived make no difference there still is an opportunity and

God we thank you that you use broken busted up discouraged Christians to bring glory and honor to you father the reason we serve you is not to augment self but we diminish ourselves by lifting up the name of Jesus Christ father I am praying for a revival in this church father I'm praying I'm praying at least two couples will answer the call to join our youth ministry to be a part of shaping these youth at such an incredible vulnerable exciting time of their lives and father those that do respond I pray that you will shower them with the blessings that they so rightfully deserve open our eyes we thank you holy and heavenly father for all you do for us for those of us who are sitting on the sidelines maybe it's time to jump in we've had a year and a half of silence now it's time to really get loud may your name be honored in all of

Squamish and beyond because of the choices that the saints gathered here at Squamish Baptist Church are beginning to make in your most holy and heavenly name amen