

Authority & Faithfulness

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again for a little to the section we read in Luke chapter 19. We're working through the Gospel of Luke.

Here we have this parable. This is the last parable that we have. It's a final parable in Luke's account of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.

We've been following Jesus going to Jerusalem. We followed him going through Jericho and dealing with the blind beggar and then dealing with the tax gatherer.

But here this is Jesus' final parable as he makes his way to Jerusalem. We're not going to read it. We have just read it.

But I want us tonight to consider just again as we're doing with all these things just by way of overview. And Jesus, we read here, told this parable because he was near to Jerusalem and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

[1 : 07] And Jesus is showing to them that while at one, in one sense, the kingdom is already here because Jesus brought in, he ushered in the kingdom in a very real and in a very special way.

Its full display, its full glory, its full power, its full authority will not be really manifest until his return. And Jesus then goes on to show us what is expected between this time of the kingdom and his return.

And the two, I suppose there are two key themes in this parable. And they're very simply Jesus' authority over all and over judgment and also the faithfulness that Christ expects of us.

These are really the two things that rise out of this. The authority of Christ and his authority right into judgment and the faithfulness that Jesus expects of all of us.

Because at the end of the day, that's what he's looking for, faithfulness. One of the most beautiful words that you can find anywhere, somebody that is faithful. I think that's one of the things that, if we go into the animal world, one of the things that we find so appealing, for instance, about a dog.

[2 : 36] Dogs are known for their faithfulness. And there's something so attractive, so drawing, something that always touches a precious part when we see faithfulness.

And particularly when we see it in people. People who are faithful. People who are loyal. People who stick with you. People who are there through thick and thin. People who are utterly dependable.

It's a wonderful quality. And it's one of the great things that the Bible teaches us about God himself, that he is faithful. Always faithful. Faithful to his word.

Faithful to his people. And God, in turn, expects faithfulness from us. And that's one of the things that we find that this parable is highlighting.

Now, Jesus tells his story very simply about this nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. And it's quite interesting that while Jesus is using this parable to speak about himself, and we've always got to be careful with the parables that we don't try and spiritualize every single aspect of it.

[3 : 46] If we do, we're going to get into all kinds of bother. That's not the way that Jesus, where he didn't expect us to take every sentence and every phrase and every little bit of thing and analyze what does every single thing mean.

It was to teach a particular lesson. And Jesus was basing, as he did on so many things, he based this story upon something that had actually happened.

Because when Herod the Great's son took over, about 4 BC, he had to go to the imperial government in Rome in order that his claim to the throne would be ratified.

So he had actually to leave, make that journey to Rome, to the imperial government there, in order that he would be given, actually, to become the king and to rule and reign.

And so, when Jesus told this story, he knew that the people knew of an example in history, in their own history, roundabout, that would fit this.

[4 : 55] And that's one of the things the Lord was always doing. He was always using everyday things and situations and experiences that people were familiar with. And it's a great gift, a great ability to be able to do that.

So he wasn't using something that they weren't familiar with, but something that had actually happened within their own history. And so this is really what this is based on.

But Jesus is using this to teach a lesson with regard to himself. And that's why we're not to take everything and try and fit it in absolutely, exactly, and spiritualize every step of it.

Anyway, we find here that this nobleman, he goes off and he goes to this far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. And really what Jesus is showing, it's this parallel that is to take place in his own experience as Lord and as King.

That he, through his death and through his resurrection, through his ascension and through all the kingly majesty that he receives.

[6 : 06] We're looking at that this morning, how Jesus received, the Father gave him. And this, we saw that of how, following on into what Philippians, what we read in Philippians about how that he has been given a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Jesus was given this rule and this authority. But one day he's going to return to display that complete authority and rule and government that so often we're not aware of.

Sometimes God's people are very aware of it and sometimes, sadly, we lose sight of it. And so many people don't see it or recognize it, but it's happening, it's ruling, he's ruling, he's governing over all things.

One day he's going to return and there will be a full display of his authority and rule and government. But it's the in-between times between his ascension to glory and his return where we are now, where generation after generation is living out our days.

And this is a place, this is a time that Jesus is focusing upon and really that's where we are. And so he uses the example of this nobleman and he has, of course, all his interests to be taken care of and to be administered.

[7 : 37] And so he calls ten servants and he gives to each one, we see there, ten minus. And a minor, we're told, is a laborer's wage for three months. So that's what was given to each one, ten minus.

And the servants are to use that money well. They are to invest it, they are to work it, they are to put it into the system. They are to be industrious with that money so that when the king returns, that he will gain from that.

He will gain interest, he will gain whatever for himself. Because at the end of the day, it's all his. That's one of the lessons that's being highlighted here is the lordship of Christ over everything. Because when we turn this picture from the nobleman, we turn it over, we see that, of course, Jesus is referring to himself.

And he is lord over everything. Just as the nobleman, the servants belong to the nobleman, the money belong to the nobleman, what was gained at the end of the day belong to the nobleman.

[8 : 51] And Jesus is saying, it's exactly the same with me. Everything that God has given to us ultimately belongs to him.

Everything. It's all God's property. Our home, our families, our gifts, our health, our strength, our energy, our time, our senses, our reason, our memory, our affections, our privileges, everything. Sometimes we forget that, but everything ultimately belongs to the lord. Where did we get what we have? The Bible tells us this, what do you have that you have not received?

And you know, there are times when we stop and we reflect and we realize that whatever we have has ultimately been gifted to us. There are some people who are incredibly gifted in life in various ways.

And you will find people stating that sometimes it might be people who are incredibly artistic, people who are incredibly great with their minds, philosophers with massive intellects, great mathematicians, great athletes, great sports people, great orators, all these things.

[10 : 10] And many people who have been given these things, they will actually say they've been blessed with them. You hear people sometimes talk about it. Maybe they don't fully, some of them

do, some of them don't, that they've been blessed with a gift.

They realize that it wasn't something that they themselves were able to work up in themselves. Yes, they may have developed it, but they realize they were given special gifts.

But even when we're not given special, incredibly powerful gifts, we still all have gifts. And everything that we have, everything, at whatever level, whatever we've been given, is ultimately has been given to us by God.

What do you have that you have not received? And God wants us to look after these things. And God wants us to use these things for his glory. And I often find this one of the most challenging passages of Scripture, where we are being reminded that there's going to come a day when the Lord's going to say, Right, it's time to see where you're at.

What have you done for me with all that I've given you? Because that's why I gave it to you. Everything. Your health, your strength.

[11 : 36] And sometimes the Lord works in reverse. Sometimes he works through people who don't have, obviously, what people may look on as great gifts.

It's often when he takes things away, again, that he works through these very areas. Of being deprived of things or disabilities and things like that.

God still works through these things. It's all of him. He rules over everything. Now, sadly, many people do not accept the ownership of God upon our life.

And as we said recently, looking at what Jesus was talking about, the end times, so many people, like the old song said, It's my life and I'll do what I want. So many people live by that philosophy. It's my life. And I'll do what I want to do. I'm not answerable to anybody. That's wrong. We are.

[12 : 38] We're all answerable to God. And one day, we're going to have to answer to God. We're going to have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And we're going to have to give an account of everything.

All that we have done in the body, whether good or evil. It's not something we can escape. There are many things in life we can try to dodge and try to save, not face up to and run away from.

This is one we cannot. It's an appointment that's going to have to be kept. And so many people say, as we find there in verse 14, but the citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.

And how true. And it's still the same to this very day. So many people do not want Jesus to rule over them. Let me ask you tonight this question.

Is Jesus ruling in your life? Do you want Jesus to rule in your life? Or are you still like these citizens saying, We do not want this man to rule over us.

[13 : 55] Because so many people are like that. The world has never wanted Jesus Christ. No more beautiful, perfect character ever walked the hills and the streets and the towns of this earth than Jesus.

And the world couldn't bear him. Three years of public ministry was as much as they could possibly take. And you would think, here is the only perfect man since the fall.

To walk in this world. And his whole life was a life of ministering to people. Of meeting their needs. Of healing. Of helping. Of restoring.

Of doing good. What did they do? Did they make him king? No, they nailed him to a cross. They couldn't tolerate him. They couldn't bear him. We will not have this man rule over us.

You know, it's really the most extraordinary, illogical thing in the whole wide world. But it proves one thing. The deep-rooted sinful rebellion that is in the heart of man.

[15 : 01] That does not want God. Does not want God's provision for man. Because the moment we recognize the role of Christ, who is a savior, we have to admit that we're sinners.

See, that's a problem. People don't want to admit that they are sinners and that they are in need of a savior. People don't want to admit that they need to be made right with God.

Because naturally, our own self-righteousness believes that we're good enough. But you see, the moment we admit we need a savior, we're admitting our sin.

And my friend, please admit your sin. It's one of the things that we have to do. We're all sinners in here. That's the one fact that draws us in a sense all together.

Every single person in here tonight is a sinner. What is important is that you become a sinner who has been saved by grace. Saved by the Lord.

[16:04] So remember this great fact. That if we push God away. Do you know the worst, I would say, as severe a judgment as people can have.

Is to say to the Lord, look, we don't want you. Do you know what will happen? The Lord will say, all right. I'll give you what you want. He does that with nations.

And he does it with people. You know, it's that fearful thing. If a nation turns their back upon the Lord and says, We do not want the Lord to rule in our land.

And the Lord says, all right. On you go. Go yourself. You know, I think that's one of the most awful judgments.

Is to be left to ourselves. Defenseless. Reeling from crisis to crisis. Where leaders never look to the Lord. They look to their own wisdom.

[17:09] Their own intuition. Their own devices. And God is not in the picture. God is not in their thoughts. It's a fearful thing. To be handed over.

By God. To be handed over to oneself. Let us pray. And I believe that the Lord has handed us over. To a large extent.

As a nation. Because nationally. Because nationally. There is a turning away from the Lord. More and more and more. And we can see the impact.

We can see the result. We don't need to. We don't need to have the greatest minds. To be able to see. That things are moving in a downward spiral. And there's a sense of insecurity.

There's. You just look at. Look at our land. Look at all the problems. All the difficulties. And there's no answer. So many people. They have their think tanks.

[18:10] And they say. Well if we deal with this. And deal with that. It's not going anywhere. Of course. Don't get me wrong. There's many great and wonderful things happening. But until we get right with God.

We won't get right properly. Remember the Bible says. Righteousness. Exalts a nation. But sin is a reproach. To any people. And it's a lesson.

That we need to learn. Nationally. And we need to learn it. Individually as well. And so it's an awful thing. To try and just go it alone.

However we see. That one day the king returned. And the day of reckoning came. And so the servants are called. One by one. To give an account of what they've done.

And only three are called. I suppose this is to make the story more compact. And the first servant is called. And this one who was the one miner. He has made ten from it.

[19:08] And this man is praised for his industry. For his endeavor. And above all for his faithfulness. That's what we're told. Well done. Good servant. That's somebody who has been serving.

Working away. Industrious. Doing what he should be doing. And he's told. Well done. Good servant. And see what happens. This person is given promotion.

Given responsibility. Given honor. And given authority. Because he has been faithful. In a little. The Lord has given him a great reward.

And my friend. At the end of the day. There is going to be the most extraordinary reward. Reward given. To God's faithful people. We have no idea or understanding.

Of really what. What it's going to be like. It's going to be someday. Because there are many things. That God's people are doing. And they have no awareness. We've said this often before.

[20:04] They're not aware of what they're doing. But the Lord is taking note of every single thing. And that is. Remember that. At that time. When the Lord is saying. You know. You saw.

I saw you feeding. And clothing. And doing this. And that. In my name. And they're going to say. When did we do. Do any of these things. And Jesus is going to say. To them. As much as you did it.

To one or for. One of the least of my brethren. You did it unto me. The Lord tells us. That even the giving of a cup of water. In his name. It. Even that. Won't lose its reward. Lord's taking note.

Of everything. It's extraordinary. And this is all going to be. Brought out. Everything that is done by faith. Done for him.

Not to self. But done. In and for the name of the Lord. It's going to. Bring its own reward. Again. The second person. Again. We see his. Trustworthiness. And.

[21:01] Although he receives praise. It's not as elaborate as the first. And he gets ruling over. Five cities. But then there's a. A third servant brought. And he.

Did absolutely. Nothing. With what the. King. Gave him. This servant. Had absolutely. No sense of loyalty. To his master. Though he was associated.

With the king. He had no love to him. He had no loyalty for him. He did nothing. All he did was. He took what was given to him. And he buried it away. You see.

There was no. Meaningful. Relationship. With the master. That was the key. This man. It is very obvious. He didn't know the master. Because his view of the master.

Was way off. Way off the mark. He thought he was a severe taskmaster. But it's very interesting. That the. The. The king.

[21 : 58] Judges. This passion. According to his word. Because. You see what. What this servant is saying. He said. I knew you were a severe man. And that's why I didn't do anything.

I just hid it away. And I did nothing. Because you're a severe man. And the king says. Well I'm going to judge you. According to your words. If you thought I was a severe man.

And you were frightened of me. The logical thing was. To have taken that money. Even if you weren't going to do anything. Rather than hiding it away. You should have put it in the bank. So that when I returned.

I would have gained interest on it. You would have done something with it. So I'm actually going to judge you. On your own words. And you know. In the judgment. That's exactly what will happen.

The Lord tells us. We will be judged by your words. And it's quite an extraordinary thing. You see. What's taking place here.

[22 : 55] And what this man had. Was taken from him. And the Lord really is showing us here. The mathematical warning. That is here.

Because. When you have nothing. And you take nothing away. It leaves nothing. Nothing from nothing leaves nothing. And that's what happened to this man. The Lord gave him.

And he did absolutely nothing with it. And at the end of the day. What he had. Was taken from him. That is one of the.

The most frank. Lessons. That the word gives us. And Jesus. Remember. This is his last parable. His last story. And it's all to do with his death.

And his return. And he's wanting us to listen to it. And to hear it. And he's saying. Look. This is real. This is how it's going to be. Take heed to these things.

[24 : 00] The one who has. Will get more. The one who has nothing. Even what he has. Will be taken away. That's what happened. My friend. See how important it is.

To. Seek. This. King. You tonight. All of us tonight. Have a choice. Of what we do. With this king. We either accept his rule.

Or we reject it. Right now. Jesus. Is speaking to us all. To you. And to me. If you're a Christian. Tonight.

If you're somebody. Who has come to trust. The Lord. As your own savior. And you know. In your own heart. Of hearts. Whether that is true. Or not. You. Will be saying.

In your heart. Lord. I. Have accepted you. And I want you. As a king. Of my life. I want you.

[24 : 59] To rule. And to reign. And I want. Lord. To be used. For you. In this world. That's what you're saying. Now. Of course. All God's people. And that's.

Through of every person. In here tonight. You'll also have to admit. That you've often failed. That there are times. That you've. Lived to yourself. Times that you've.

Disobeyed the Lord. Times that you've. Forgotten what you're about. But when that happens. What do you do? You go back to the Lord. And you say. Lord. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

This is a sign. Of this sonship. This is a sign. Of. Being subject. To the king. Is that. When you fail him. You go back to him. And you. You. With heartfelt sorrow.

You're saying. Lord. Forgive me. I'm sorry. But you know. If you don't want the king. You push him away. Sometimes you might be saying. And I'm.

[25 : 52] And I believe. I believe. If there's anybody. Any person in here tonight. Who still does not have. King Jesus. As king of their heart. And life. I don't believe. That anybody in here.

Is saying. I never want you. As king of my life. I don't believe that. For one moment. But I believe. It is all too possible. For people to say. Yes Lord.

I would like you. One day to rule in my life. But not just now. At a. At a period. Later on. Right now. Lord. It would muck up.

My plans. No my friend. It wouldn't. You think it would. But it wouldn't. The greatest thing.

You can do. Is to take. King Jesus. And you will discover. That your plans. Are actually. Enhanced. Life. Will take on.

[26 : 46] A direction. A purpose. And a meaning. That it has never. Taken on before. Get right with God. And life. Gets right. And if we have Jesus.

As our Lord. And our Savior. Let us. Seek then. At the beginning. Of another year. To live for him. To work for him. To serve him.

Wherever. Whenever. We can. And that we may seek. To be faithful. To him. Let us pray. Oh Lord. Our God. We pray. To help us. To put our trust in thee. Forgive us. For how slow. We often are. Lord. Whatever hindrances.

Might be. Blocking people. Coming to the king. Tonight. Lord. Overcome. These. May they. Be overcome. In their heart. So often.

[27 : 42] And even as we look. Back in our lives. We feared. That by. Giving our life. To the Lord. That somehow. Our life. Could no longer. Be lived.

The way we wanted to. Lord. Give us. A trust. Just to. To throw in our lot. And to realize. That. We are still individuals. And that we will live our life.

According. To our own individuality. And personality. And yet. At the same time. Being molded. And shaped. By the Lord. Give us then.

That simple trust. And simple faith. To put our life. In the hand of the Lord. Bless us. We pray. And watch over us all. And take everybody home safely.

Because the conditions are. So treacherous underfoot. Watch us. We pray. In Jesus name. We ask all. Amen.