

# What We Do While We're Waiting

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Date: 21 June 2026

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[ 0 : 00 ] And I've got a lesson about disciplining children. Here is a list of what are some typical childhood disciplines, consequences for kids when they are acting up.

! So like, for instance, they can't leave the house. I don't know if you ever did that to your kids. They got in trouble, so they can't leave the house, right? Or you've got to take a nap. Or you have to go to bed early.

I want you to notice something that happens as you age. Because when you get to being grown up, it turns into a list of grown-up dreams.

Like, I don't have to leave the house. I get to take a nap. And I get to go to bed early. Okay. Things change as you do get older.

Listen, it's one thing to take a nap. I don't think the Lord minds if we take a nap. I think that can be a good thing. But it's another thing if we start to get lazy.

[ 1 : 18 ] If we start to get apathetic. Or unmotivated. Maybe another way of looking at it is unconvicted.

Unbelieving. Or even unbelieving. Because whatever it is that we should be doing, we're not really believing in or convinced that it's serious enough that I've got to take action.

So I can instead do whatever I want. I can take a break. I can sleep. I can whatever it is.

I don't have to do it. There's another area of life that we don't like to see being idle. And that has to do with our investments.

When we are investing our money, for instance, we want our money to go to work for us. To earn its interest. Not just sit there and collect really nothing.

[ 2 : 23 ] The same thing is true in discipleship. If I'm going to invest my time and effort into someone's life, it's good to see spiritual growth coming from that investment.

Or if your job or a hobby, whatever it is, you want to see something in return, even if it's just, I finished the job.

I completed the task or I built it or whatever that might be. One of the problems that we have as believers is that we don't think of ourselves as being God's investments.

That God has invested himself into us. And then he has invested us into the currency of life.

And he wants to see a return from his investment. We are his investment. What kind of a return is he going to get from that investment?

[ 3 : 34 ] He wants to see his investment at work. That's what this parable that we're going to be studying today is about. God's investment into us and will we fulfill that investment.

Now, there is some background to this parable that we have to understand. It comes right after a number of stories that kind of depict the kingdom of God as being an upside down kingdom compared to the way that we think about the kingdom of God.

We saw Jesus interacting with children. Let the little children come unto me, he would say. And that's different from, that's upside down from the way that the scribes and the Pharisees taught.

They taught that children were just not important, not necessary. And so Jesus kind of flipped that.

And then the same thing with the rich young ruler who thought, oh, yeah, I've got it.

When he was presented with a list of commandments, he was like, yep, done them all. I am perfect. I've got this squared away. And it's easy to tell that he missed the mark there.

[ 4 : 48 ] He didn't quite get it. And then the story of blind Bartimaeus, who the people said, hey, you're not important. Don't bother Jesus.

You're just a blind beggar on the side of the road. And of course, Jesus heard his cries and Bartimaeus was healed and became a follower of Christ. And then last week, we looked at the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, whose life was so radically transformed.

A life that the rest of Israel would have said, no, that's a thrown away life. That's a worthless life. You have given yourself over to being a traitor of Israel and you're a traitor to God and to your religion.

And Jesus redeemed him. And Zacchaeus' life was radically changed. And that then leads into the story of this parable.

It's there in Jericho. Remember, Jericho is the city of nobility. It's been rebuilt. It's like a tourist or a resort area with flowing fountains and bathhouses and beautiful gardens.

[ 6 : 00 ] And what is the place to be? And it's there in Jericho that Jesus tells this parable. What some people consider in Matthew 25 a parallel account.

It's not quite. It's two different stories told at two different occasions. So one is not a repeat of the other. In Matthew 25, he is actually speaking only to his disciples outside of the city of Jerusalem, looking back at this temple.

And he's just told them some horrific things about the thing about the tribulation and what it will be like before he returns. And here the circumstances are different.

He is not yet to Jerusalem. He is in Jericho and he's telling this story basically in Zacchaeus' house to all that are there, that are gathered there at his house.

And so that's one of the differences there that you see. The other is the background. And it's hard to understand this parable if you don't understand the historical context in which Jesus tells this story.

[ 7 : 10 ] And so I want to give you some of that now so that we can better understand this parable for ourselves. In this time, Rome was large and in charge over that part of the known world.

And there were different regional kings. We wouldn't look at it that way. We might think of regional governors, that sort of thing. But they called them kings. And so who was in charge of Jerusalem and Judea and that part of the world when Jesus was born, for instance, was a man by the name of Herod the Great.

Herod the Great was pretty much what was known as a vassal king. He was a puppet king, if you were. He literally had to travel to Rome and receive from Caesar Augustus his commissioning, his approval, if you will, in order for him to be the puppet king of this territory.

In other words, he was answerable to, he was accountable to the Caesar in Rome so that if he got out of line himself, the Caesar could remove him and give that kingdom, then that territory, that region to someone else.

So now when Herod died, not long after Jesus was born, he wanted to divide up his kingdom. He had a large piece of a region.

[ 8 : 38 ] He wanted to divide up his kingdom into three portions for three of his sons. And so each of his sons then, they were required to travel to Rome, literally to a faraway place to Rome, and to receive an appointment from the Caesar in charge in order to be able to then come back and take control as the king of that territory.

And the son that was appointed over Judea was so terrible and so wicked that the Jews actually sent a delegation to Rome right on his footsteps.

And basically, they wanted to appeal to Caesar themselves and to say, Hey, this guy is terrible. Please don't appoint him as king. We don't want this.

As a matter of fact, we want self-rule. We don't want this foreigner to be over us. We want to be ruled by a Jewish person, not by Herod or his family.

Caesar ignored them. And Herod the Great's will basically was held too. And so he gave that portion of the territory to his son.

[ 9 : 59 ] And when he came back, his first order of business was to have all of those men who traveled to Jerusalem to complain and to say, We don't want him to be the king over our territory.

He had them all killed right in front of him. So they were all slaughtered. Now, as you read this story today, this parable, you're going to see the similarities.

And it's very difficult to imagine that the people hearing this parable right there in Jericho. Herod the Great died in Jericho. He is the one who built Jericho into the beautiful city that it was.

And when he died, he appointed his son. And now they have this as part of their history. And so keep that in mind as we read this story.

And you'll see how that fits in. So Jesus basically tells this parable to continue a theme about his upside-down kingdom. His kingdom that was different than anything anyone was imagining would happen.

[11:10] So we have it here in the text in Luke chapter 19, verse 11. And as they heard these things, okay, he's still in Zacchaeus' home. Zacchaeus has just said, Hey, I'm going to give half of what I have to the poor and all those that I've defrauded.

I'm going to pay them back fourfold. And then Jesus says, as they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem.

There's two because here in this sentence. The first because, the first reason why he's telling the parable is because he's getting ready to go into Jerusalem. Matter of fact, in our text, it's the next thing that's going to happen.

So next Sunday, we're marching into Jerusalem. That great Hosanna event as Jesus marches into Jerusalem. And they're all declaring, Hosanna, Hosanna, save us.

And they're declaring, basically, that Jesus is their king. They're saying he's the one. And so he's near to Jerusalem, and he understands that.

[12:16] And so he's trying to prep not only his disciples, but all those who are gathered there to hear this. And because, here's the second because, they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

See, everyone in that entourage, they were assuming that when Jesus approached Jerusalem, and it's coming because Jesus has been saying all this time, right?

What's he been saying? The kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is at hand. And so that message has been getting louder. The drumbeat louder and louder and louder.

Where's Doug? I told Doug I'm going to call him up here to come. You want to come? Oh, that's a mistake. The kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God is at hand. I don't even know what I'm doing. But that drumbeat is getting louder and louder. And that message, as they're approaching Jerusalem, it's been happening since chapter 9, verse 51, when it says that he set his face toward Jerusalem.

[13:24] Chapter 9, verse 51 is already toward the end of his ministry. You're less than halfway through the Gospel of Luke, and he's already at the end of his ministry. There's only a few months left.

And he is traversing from the north in Galilee to the south in Jerusalem. And he's going up to Jerusalem, up in elevation to Jerusalem. And he's traveling through all these towns in Galilee and then in Samaria.

And then as he approaches Jerusalem, he last thing goes through Jericho, next town on the horizon, Jerusalem. And so this is getting to a fever pitch now.

The crowds are massive. And he's trying to let them down easy, if you will. He's trying to help them to understand that their expectations are not going to be fulfilled.

That this great disappointment they're about to have. Disappointing so much so that they're eventually going to say of Jesus, One day, they're going to be shouting, Hosanna, save us.

[14:36] And then a few days later, they're going to be saying, We have no king but Caesar. Remember that phrase now in the context of what happened to Herod the Great's son.

What he did. Remember that delegation? They're going to be crying, we have no king but Caesar. And so Jesus wants to basically give them a heads up that, Nah, there's going to be a little bit of a wait before the kingdom actually shows up.

And that's because of their rejection of him as their king. Verse 12. And he said, therefore, a nobleman, and this nobleman actually represents Jesus himself.

Okay? In this parable, Jesus represents the nobleman. Who went into a far country, in their context, went to Rome. With Jesus, his far country is to return to his father's right hand in heaven.

[15:48] Okay? To receive himself a kingdom and then return. So Jesus is going to be in heaven. And then when he comes back, he's going to set up that kingdom.

So I would ask, are we living in the kingdom? Absolutely not. There are some that would want to say, oh, this is kingdom time. No, it's not.

If this is the kingdom, you have to turn off the news and pretend like everything is wonderful. Okay? Because it's not. And so it's not the kingdom. But this is the parable that he's telling.

And so this nobleman then calls 10 of his servants. And he gave them 10, literally, the Greek word here. This is just a transliteration of the Greek word.

The Greek word is mana. It's just M-N-A. There's no I there, but the translators put a little I in it to make it a little bit more easy for us to understand and pronounce the word.

[16:49] So minas. 10 minas. One mina is about three months, maybe four or five months of salary. Okay? So it's a decent amount of money.

Okay? And he's giving these 10 minas then to 10 of his servants, one each. Each of his 10 servants receives one coin, one mina that's worth about three months of salary.

And he says to them, engage in business until I come. Now, this is an interesting phrase. The old King James says it this way, occupy till I come.

But the idea of engaging in business until I come. The engage in business, or as the King James says, occupy. The Greek word is our English word for pragmatic.

And they've made a verb of it. Now, in English, I don't know if there is a verb form for pragmatic. But it's basically it would be to pragmatize.

[17:57] That doesn't mean anything to us. But it does mean something. Pragmatic just means something very practical. And basically, it's talking about being busy doing business.

Matter of fact, business has the word busy built right into it. So it's taking that investment that each one has received, that mina, that three months worth of salary then, and to go and invest it, to go and do business with it, to go and occupy the business, occupy yourself in doing the business of the kingdom and putting it to work.

God wants to see, to go and do business with it.

Side note here. Side note here, okay? Because this doesn't relate to the ten servants and the instructions that they've been given to take their minas and go invest it.

Okay? This is, but his citizens hated him. And sent a message after him saying, we will not have this man to reign over us.

[19:31] Just like Herod's son had a group of messengers go and protest his appointment as king. Jesus, Jesus, in his parable, this nobleman has a group of citizens who hate him and send along a message after him saying, we will have no king but Caesar.

Jesus basically foretold what was about to happen just days later as he goes into Jerusalem. We will not have this man to reign over us.

Verse 15, when he returned, so he went to the faraway place and he has returned.

And having received the kingdom and he's ready to set up his kingdom and he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him that he might know what they gained by pragmatizing.

Same word there. It's dia pragmatic. What have you gained through dia? Your business. Your investments.

[20:52] What have you done with your pragmatics with this investment that I made in you? And now some observations from the parable here that you have on your notes.

The first is an example of diligence. An example of diligence. That's the first two. It's interesting that he calls out ten servants, but we're only going to hear from three of them.

Okay? So the first one came before him saying, Lord, your mina has made ten minas more. In other words, wow, that's pretty good investment.

You've done pretty well. Well, you know, tenfold is what you've done here. And so he said to him, well done, good servant.

This is what we all want to hear, right, on that day. Well done, good servant. Because you have been faithful in a very little, you have authority over ten cities.

[21:56] That will be in the kingdom. Imagine now what that will be like. Basically to serve side by side with Jesus in the kingdom.

Ruling and reigning and giving authority over territories of land. And sometimes we have this vision of the kingdom or of heaven as being some kind of like ethereal, mysterious, kind of floating around on clouds eating cream cheese.

That's not it. We're going to be very active. And what will that be like in that day? So the second came, saying, Lord, your mina has made five minas.

Very good investment. Returned fivefold. And he said to him, you are to be over five cities. Well done. This is good work.

Now, understand that this is a parable not about what you've been given. We're not all given the same investment. We're not all accountable for the same opportunities and the same ministries and the same responsibilities as everyone else.

[ 23 : 10 ] Each one of us is individual. Whether you've been given ten minas or five minas or whatever it is that you're given. Or each one given one mina here.

That's not what's in view. It's have you been faithful with what you've been given. That's the question. Have I been faithful with the investment that God has made into my life? Have I been faithful? These first two have. Now, the third man is going to come up and give us an example of indifference.

Really, I could have put a number of words in here. Apathy would be one. Laziness could be another. Disinterested.

This next man. This next man. The third servant who comes before him. Is an example of those things.

[ 24 : 09 ] Saying, here's this another came. Saying, Lord, here is your mina. Which I kept laid away in a handkerchief. Meaning, I didn't really think you were coming back.

I didn't really, you know, I didn't take you seriously. I was unconvinced that this was really something that was urgent.

That I needed to do. For I was afraid of you. Because you are a severe man. Now, is that true?

That's just this man's claim. This parable doesn't say anything about its truthfulness.

Whether it's a true statement or not. And that's not really what's in view. This man is just making an excuse. And if he really believed that. That this nobleman was a severe man.

Who would take what he did not deposit. And reap what he did not sow. He would have behaved differently. If he truly believed that. Because the nobleman now says to him.

[ 25 : 14 ] I will condemn you with your own words. I have a feeling that. On that day. Those who are standing before the Lord. Who never trusted Christ as Savior.

There will be an opportunity for Jesus. The righteous judge in that moment. To condemn those with their own words. 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. Question mark.

If that were true. Why then did you not put my money in the bank? You could have done that least little bit. And earned interest.

At my coming. I might have collected it with interest. However much interest might have been gained. During that time. In the interim. Between when he went away to the far country.

[ 26 : 14 ] And when he returned. But he did not. And he said to those who stood by. Take the mina from him. And give it to the one who has ten minas.

And they said to him. Lord. He's already got ten. I tell you that. Everyone who has. More will be given. For from the one who has not.

But from the one who has not. Even what he has. Will be. Taken. Away. The principle of. If you're not faithful. With what God has given you.

It will be removed. And those who are faithful. Will be rewarded. With even more. Now Matthew 25. Tells us. In that.

Parable. It's a similar parable. To this one. It's the parable of the talents. Matthew 25. It's talents that are given. To each of the servants. Here it's.

[ 27 : 12 ] Minas that are given to the servants. In that parable. This last servant. Who buries. The investment. Is then cast out.

Into those who are. With those who are lost. This man. Basically. Has revealed himself. As being a wicked man. And the evidence was.

What he has done with his life. His life. Was worthless. It didn't produce. Any fruit. Whatsoever. And then finally.

An example of. Out and out. Defiance. And this is. If you've not read this story. Before. This is a startling. Statement here.

Especially when you consider. That Jesus is. In the place of the. The nobleman. The nobleman. Does represent. Jesus. But as for these. Enemies of mine.

[ 28 : 07 ] That separate group. That protested. His appointment. As king. As for these. Enemies of mine. Who did not want me. To reign over them. Bring them here. And slaughter them.

Before me. Which is. Basically. What happens. To those who are lost. They will receive.

The due. Judgment. For their sin. As a. Result of. Of their. Basically. Their rejection. Of Jesus. As.

King. And so. That ought to serve. For us. As a warning. What are. What are you going to do. With Jesus. What is your response.

To Jesus. Jesus. The soon. And coming. King. And so. What I want to do. With our time now. That's the story.

[ 29 : 06 ] What I want to do. With our time now. Is. Is to give you some. Lessons. From this parable. The first. Set of lessons. Have to do with. What we need to know.

And then the second. Set of lessons. Have to do with. What we need to do. So. It starts with. What we need to know. And. First thing. That we need to know.

As a lesson. From this parable. Is. What I do. With what I've been given. Really matters. Absolutely. It. It. It does. Matter. These next.

Sets. Of. Passages. Have to do with. For those of us. Who are followers. Of Christ. You've made the commitment. To trust Jesus Christ. As your. As your Lord. And Savior.

What then. What. What do I do. With my life. And. And Paul writes here. First Corinthians four. This is how one. Should regard. Us. As servants.

[ 30 : 06 ] Of Christ. And stewards. Steward. Is. Is. Basically. The servant. Who was. Given charge. Over the household. Matters. And so.

We are. Given charge. Over the household. Matters. Of the mysteries. Of God. Moreover. It is required. Of stewards. That they be found. Faithful. So this is the requirement.

That God has placed on us. That we don't just live our lives. Idly. Not doing anything. For the Lord. Not investing our lives. In any. Eternal way.

That's. That's a poor investment. From God's perspective. Our lives need to. Produce. A return. Or another way of saying that. Our lives need to produce. Fruit.

Fruit. Will be the evidence. Of those who have trusted. In. In Christ. And then. Second. Second. Corinthians. Chapter five. He makes this statement. For we. We must all appear.

[ 31 : 02 ] Before the judgment seat of Christ. Now. This is a. A passage. Written to Christians. And so. As Christians. We ought to pay attention to this. This is something that.

Is for us. For believers. We must all appear. Before. What is known as. The judgment seat. Seat. You're not going to answer. For your sin. Because Jesus answered it. For you. But what you will be answering for. Is what you did. With your life.

The investment. Of your life. Did you live for him? Did you serve him? Did you take what you've been given. And serve him. With your life.

So that each one of us. May receive what is due. For what he has done in the body. Whether good or evil. Will. This is what this judgment. Is.

[ 32 : 24 ] About. And so it really does matter. We need to take it seriously. Secondly. There will be tears in heaven. You've heard this before.

And there's coming a time. I say this. It's time. Based. We see in Revelation. 21. 4. This is. A passage.

That's familiar to us. What we can look forward to. In heaven. He will wipe away. Every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more. Neither. Shall there be mourning. Nor crying. Nor pain anymore.

For the former things have passed away. This is Revelation 21. This is the end of all things. So the kingdom has already happened.

Jesus has come back. And set up his kingdom. Thousand year reign of Christ on earth. And then there's another great rebellion against God. The great white throne judgment.

[ 33 : 18 ] Where all the lost of every age will be judged. And sentenced accordingly. And then at the end of all things. He will wipe away.

Every tear. You see. When we go to heaven now. There will be tears in heaven now. For missed opportunities. For wasted portions of life.

For the times when God has called us and we ignored him. When God put an opportunity for service right in front of us. And we just let it slip by.

When there was an opportunity to share our faith with someone. And we just were too afraid. Or too focused on our own thing.

And we don't recognize the opportunity right there in front of us. There will be time for tears.

[ 34 : 20 ] This judgment seat is described this way. 1 Corinthians chapter 3. Now if anyone builds on the foundation.

This is the foundation of the apostles and prophets. They laid the foundation for the church. And now we're building on that foundation. Okay. If anyone builds on this foundation with. And then he lists off. Several elements. Six of them. And they're divided into two groups. And I've put a little line there so you can see the division.

And you can just read the ones. And see the difference between them. Based on fire. Which ones survive the flame. Which ones don't survive the flame.

If anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, and precious stones. Those kinds of works, ministries, opportunities taken.

[ 35 : 19 ] Will survive and will receive reward. Wood, hay, and straw or stubble. That does not survive the flame. And there will be no reward for those things.

Each one's work will become manifest. Or made well known. For the day will disclose it. I've said this before. That when you see in the text the phrase the day.

Here it's capitalized by the translators of the English Standard Version. That is to recognize that day. It's the day of his return. The second coming of Christ.

And so that day, that second coming. When we stand before the Lord in judgment. That day will disclose it. We'll make it known. We'll make it evident.

Because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. And so will what I have done for the Lord withstand this test of fire, if you will.

[ 36 : 23 ] Did I serve him with proper motive? In other words, did I do it for my own benefit? Because I wanted to see other people, you know, observe that I was doing it?

Did I want to look good in other people's eyes? Did I do it for gain, for financial gain or that kind of thing? Or social standing? What was my motivation behind it?

Was it something that I felt like I had to do out of compulsion? Or was it something that I got to do? You see the difference, right? It's like the kid when mom calls for dinner.

Do I have to go to dinner or do I get to go to dinner? And it depends on mom's cooking, right? And so do I have to serve?

Was it out of compulsion or because God put this opportunity in front of me and I took it and I went with it and I served happily with proper motive?

[ 37 : 29 ] There we go. He goes on. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. So again, this is a judgment not to determine if someone's lost or saved.

All the people that stand before the judgment seat of Christ are saved people. It's just a judgment to receive reward or not based on this judgment.

And so are you going to enter heaven empty-handed because you didn't do anything to serve the Lord? And then that question then asks the next question is, if my life is fruitless, is it because my life was kind of like the thief on the cross where there wasn't much time after I received Christ the Savior?

Right? Not much you can do when you're hanging on a cross as far as serving the Lord. But am I taking what God has given me and serving him or not?

[ 38 : 41 ] And then the third thing that we need to know is that only a fool messes with or trifles with the king.

In other words, we take it seriously. We don't want to play the game. I think churches are filled with people who know how to play the game of religion.

So they come out of wrong motive. They come because they want to earn their way to heaven.

They come because they're required to by family or whatever it might be.

But listen, that's in a sense you're playing with the king. You're messing with the king. This is from Proverbs 24. My son, fear the Lord and the king. Do not join with those who do otherwise.

For disaster will arise suddenly from them. And those who know the ruin that will come from them both. Who knows that kind of ruin? You don't want to mess with the king.

[ 39 : 51 ] And in this context, you don't want to mess with the Lord. The Lord is not someone who plays your games. If that's how you view your relationship with God is just something I have to maneuver through life and just play the game.

No. Don't mess with the Lord in that way. I want to read to you a passage of scripture that's a difficult passage of scripture.

I mentioned last week about how Paul in his letters to churches and letters to pastors would write often these very long run-on sentences.

Well, this is an example of that. I'm not even showing you the beginning of the sentence. It's so long. But it begins with since. So see if you can follow along with me on this because we have three screens of this much text.

Since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you. As a believer, if you've been afflicted, if people have persecuted you because of your faith, God will repay you.

[ 41 : 02 ] He will repay those who afflicted you, who persecuted you. He's going to bring that upon them. So since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you.

And to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us. When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire.

Inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God. And on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. So who is he talking about here?

He's talking about unsaved people. They don't know the Lord and obey the gospel. The gospel is to place your trust, your faith into Christ alone. And they're refusing to do that.

So these are lost people. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction. This has been kind of a conversation in recent months and last couple of years.

[ 42 : 07 ] The idea that lost people. Here's the false doctrine that's been kind of bandied about in recent days. The idea that if you don't trust Christ as your Savior.

If you're lost. That you won't suffer eternally. That what will happen is you will be burnt up. And you'll be brought to nothing.

And that will be God's judgment over your life. But that's not what the scriptures teach. That is just man's attempt to try to, I don't know, make people feel better.

But it's not the gospel. It's not what the Lord has taught. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

When he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints. And to be marveled at among all who have believed. Because our testimony to you was believed.

[ 43 : 09 ] So these Thessalonian believers, they trusted Christ because of Paul's message. And because of that, God gives this promise. That whoever has afflicted them, God will afflict those people who brought that persecution, that affliction upon them.

And that those who are lost, those who have rejected the gospel of God, God has simply let go. Understand the idea that, oh, God takes joy at sending people to hell.

No, that's a lie. That's not how this works. God simply, those people who reject Christ, he just basically says, okay, hands off.

I'm not going to force you. If you don't want to trust me, that's fine. Your choice. But now you receive the consequences of that. And the consequences of that is eternal punishment.

And what we call hell or what is known as hell. Actually, literally, it's the lake of fire. Hell at the end of Revelation. We talked about that. Hell at the end of Revelation is tossed into the lake of fire and it's eternal.

[ 44 : 20 ] And the flame there never consumes you. And it's a place of utter darkness and loneliness. And everyone who is there has chosen it.

They refused to trust Christ as Savior. And so he lets us, he lets them go. He lets them go.

Now, with knowing all of this, what is it that we need to do? Well, the first thing there, I zipped right past it.

Settle in for a long wait. Because in our parable, the nobleman went away to receive his kingdom, his appointment, right? And then came back and set up the kingdom.

Well, we're in the interim. Jesus has gone. He has been crucified, buried, resurrected. He's ascended to the Father in heaven.

[ 45 : 28 ] And he's at the Father's right hand in heaven. And that's where we're at now. We're waiting. We're waiting for him to return. How long has it been?

It's been a couple thousand years. That's a long wait. And so we wait. And I would encourage you to settle in for a long wait.

Because we don't know when he is returning. And so we wait. And again, the reason for the parable is they thought the kingdom was coming right now.

And Jesus says, no, I've got to tell them this story because they think I'm going to set up the kingdom now and I'm not. It's not going to happen immediately. They're going to reject me first. I'm going to go away. And they weren't told at the time and Jesus didn't tell them. It's going to be at least 2,000 years. But it has been 2,000 years.

[ 46 : 31 ] Now, what's also true, and these are two truths, two halves of the same coin, two sides of the same coin. But here's the other truth. And this is the truth of what is known as the doctrine of the imminency or that his return is imminent, meaning it could happen at any moment.

And this is true for every generation of believers since Jesus ascended into heaven, that every generation of believers would have rightly said, Jesus is coming in our generation. Because we don't know. And so for us, it is true and it is right to say, Jesus is coming and it's going to be soon.

We see that in the scriptures again over and over. And so we must be prepared for both. We may never see in our lifetimes the return of Jesus, the rapture of the church, the tribulation.

We might pass away before that day comes. Or it's possible that in the next five minutes, Jesus is going to split the sky and that's it.

[ 47 : 49 ] And the rapture happens and we're taken out and all of that. We have to be ready for both. And the question is, am I? Are you ready either way?

And the way that you express your readiness is your investments. What you're doing with your life. God has invested into your life.

What are you doing with it? So that's the second part of this is to take an inventory. Take an inventory of what God has given to you.

Another way of saying this is the old song, count your blessings. Right? Name them one by one.

Take an inventory of what God has given to you in your life.

And to recognize that. And again, sometimes that inventory can get skewed because of our mindset. But look at this reminder from 1 Corinthians chapter 4.

[ 49 : 02 ] What do you have that God hasn't given to you? What do you have? And be, I'll use the word, pragmatic.

That's our word for the day, right? Be pragmatic in terms of how you view this. That was the word in the parable. What do you have that God hasn't given you?

Well, I have my job and I've earned a living and that's me. I earned it. Really? If everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

Who gave you the ability to work? The house that you have. Well, I built that. I paid for it. Who gave you the ability to do all those things?

Who provided you with the food that you eat? The breath that you breathe? The ability for your body to function? Where does that come from?

[ 50 : 11 ] And if it's from God, how is there anything for me to boast about when it comes to my accomplishments? What I've acquired through the years?

What I've built up through the years? That retirement account, it's mine. And I think God would say, excuse me? Who gave you the ability to do that?

Who gave you the smarts to invest wisely? Who provided those opportunities to you? Who gives and who takes away according to his will?

And it is the Lord who has given us everything that we have to enjoy. Every good and perfect gift that we have comes down from the Father of lights.

And so we need to ask, what is it that God has entrusted to me? What has he given me?

[ 51 : 13 ] And it's necessary for us to know that, to have a proper inventory, if you will, of all that he has given to me, including the gifts that he has given me in terms of spiritual gifts, the opportunities that we have in the community that we live in, in the local church that he's placed us to be a part of.

And so thirdly, to check the scoreboard. How you doing? How you doing with your investments?

Another way of saying this is, how am I investing what I've been given to advance the gospel?

How am I investing what I've been given to advance the gospel?

1 Peter 4.10 says it this way, As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another. As good stewards, there's that idea again.

We are God's stewards of all that he's given to us. As good stewards of God's manifold grace or varied grace.

[ 52 : 36 ] Manifold or varied here is the idea of many splendors. It's an array of color. The grace that he's given us in every way.

In order that everything God, in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. And then a passage that we looked at last week, Ephesians 2.10.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. He's called us to do these things. He's called us to invest our lives for his will, his work, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Now I want to end today with two timeless truths that you have there on your notes. And we'll just go through these quickly. And again, it comes from this idea in verse 13.

Calling his ten of his servants, he gave them ten meetings and said to them, Engage in business, pragmatize until I come. And if we're going to take this command seriously, if we're going to be serious about our relationship with the Lord and how he's called us to live, there's a couple things that we have to realize here.

[ 53 : 52 ] First is this, that resisting the lull of indifference. Do I care? Am I motivated? Am I convinced? Do I really believe this? That's related to anticipating the reality of the kingdom.

Do I really believe Jesus is coming back? Do I really believe that I'm going to have to stand before the Lord and give an answer for my life? Do I really believe that all I did to serve him is going to be going through the flame?

Will it withstand judgment? And if all I care about, well, all I care about is getting in. I don't care about getting rewards and all that stuff.

There was an old gospel song that talked about, just give me a little shack in the corner of heaven somewhere. I don't care about all this other stuff. That song betrays a mindset that says, I don't really care about all this, you know, rewards and stuff.

I just want to get in. Another way of saying that is I want fire insurance. That's all I care about. And does that mindset betray a kind of thinking that says, you know what, what I do for the Lord doesn't really matter.

[ 55 : 16 ] Has he invested in me? I don't know. Whatever. Does he expect much of me? I don't know. Am I going to change the way that I live my life?

Nah, not really. And what does that mindset convey to God? And he knows.

He knows. And my question would be, is that true saving faith? Because saving faith produces fruit. There is a changed life that comes on the other side of trusting Christ as my Savior. This is not easy believism where I just say I prayed the prayer so I get in.

I got my fire insurance. I'm all set. And I can go and live however I want. No. That mindset is foreign to the New Testament.

[ 56 : 25 ] It's not how this works. So do I really believe it's real? Secondly, resisting the gravitational pull of procrastination.

Any of you procrastinators? I can fall into this trap myself. But resisting that is related to sensing the urgency of the opportunities at hand.

And I'm going to close with this couple of verses here from Ephesians 5. Verses 15 and 16. I'll show them to you first from the New King James Version because there's an interesting phrase here that I want to look at a couple of different ways.

See then that you walk circumspectly or carefully, as we're going to see in a moment. Walk carefully or circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.

Don't be a fool in this. Redeeming the time. Redeeming the time. And the word for redeeming here is actually a financial term. Redeem is a financial term.

[ 57 : 33 ] When it says that the Lord has redeemed us, we think of that as a spiritual word. But it's not really a financial word. It means that he bought us. It's a financial transaction.

He redeemed. Just like when you take your cash to the store, which you can hardly do anymore, and you give them that certificate. That dollar bill is actually a certificate that says you're good for it. Actually, the government's good for that amount of money. And it's redeeming. You're redeeming that certificate for whatever goods and services that you're buying with it. And that's what it is that when you put your faith, your trust in Christ, he redeems you.

He buys you, as it were, out of the slave market, the slavery to sin. And he purchases you and he sets you free from that.

Well, that same word is used here. Redeeming the time or buying up, purchasing the time. Another way of saying it here.

[ 58 : 40 ] Making the most. This is back to the NIV now. Be very careful then how you live, not as wise, but as wise. Making the most of every opportunity.

So instead of redeeming the time, it's making the most. And then it's a different word. Instead of time, it's opportunity. Now, what's interesting is that in Greek, there are two words that are often translated as the word time.

One is kairos, which is our word here. And then the other is chronos. You can kind of imagine chronos, an English word that we get from that.

Besides, if you're like a Marvel fan, there's a bad guy, I think, that's named chronos or something. Anyway, chronos is time, chronology. It's literally hours and seconds and minutes time.

Whereas kairos is about what you get with time. And that is opportunities. The opportunities that God has given you. And that's the word that's used here. So it's redeeming the opportunities.

[ 59 : 48 ] Buying the opportunities up that God has given you. Buying up, making the most of those opportunities that he's placed in front of you. Doing that because the days are evil.

The days are fading fast. That's what the word evil here in this context means. It doesn't mean that when you turn on the news or your phone and you see how evil things are, that's where our mind normally goes.

But in this context, the word is talking about how the days themselves are fading fast. That's kind of the way of understanding that. They're passing away. You're going to lose all those opportunities if you just let it go by.

If you just procrastinate. If you keep putting it off. If because of your interests are in building my kingdom first. After all, that's what I've got to do.

I'm a young person, so I've got to invest. I've got to get minds first. And then when I've finally got myself where I want to be in life, then I'll think of God.

[ 60 : 53 ] No. It's... It's... He gets it now. It's making the most of His kingdom.

Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness. And all these things will be added unto you. We see it from older folks too. Retired folks are like, well, I've already done all of that.

I don't need to do anymore. I can just sit back and relax now. No. Redeem the time. Redeem the opportunities that you have in retirement to serve Him.

You don't even have a 9 to 5 job or 7 to 3 job or whatever it is anymore. So now you have even more opportunities to serve Him.

And yet, in an American view of retirement is, well, I've done my duty. I'm just going to sit and relax and observe and watch and soak it in.

[ 61 : 52 ] No, sir. There's no such thing as retirement from serving the Lord. You do that all throughout your life.

In your younger days, in your middle years, in your end years, we serve the Lord at all times, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil.

What are you doing for Him? When the Lord returns? Or on that day when you stand before Him and you have to give an answer for your life?

What will He find? That you redeemed the time? That you made the most of the opportunities God gave you?

Or did you let them slip by? Because you were unconvinced? Because you weren't motivated? Because you had your self-interests in mind?

[ 62 : 54 ] What is it? How will you answer Him? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for your word.

And even with a difficult message like this, Lord, we give you thanks. Because a message like this ought to be sobering for us.

Lord, help us to see that this life is fleeting.

And only what's done for you will last. So help us build into our families. Help us build into our communities.

Into our church. Help us impact the lives of those who need to hear the gospel message, Lord. Help us to build into the lives of those who are coming alongside and beginning to grow in their faith.

[ 64 : 06 ] Help us to serve that purpose, that goal. May that be our mindset, Lord, to take what you've given us, all that you have given us, and to use it for your glory and your honor.

Let us not be complacent. Let us not be indifferent. Let us take the moments that we are given and look for the opportunities that you present us to serve you and your interests.

Lord, thank you for what you're doing in our lives, Lord. Helping us to grow.

Helping us to mature. Helping us, Lord, to walk with you. Lord, may that be our prayer. May that be our focus.

We ask it now. In Jesus' name. Amen.