Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Fitting Rewards from the Returning King
Scripture: Luke 19:11-27
Code: 42-240

In our study of the Word of God this morning, we return to the nineteenth chapter of Luke's gospel and one of the most familiar and richest of our Lord's parables, Luke chapter 19. We'll be looking at verses 11 through verse 27. And while you're turning to that place in your Bible, just a brief reminder that Jesus' parables were always designed to capture people in the realm of the familiar and then move them to the realm of the unfamiliar. Jesus, desiring to convey spiritual truth which was new, and unfamiliar, chose analogies and illustrations and stories that were familiar from which to begin His teaching. In fact, He drew His stories from every day life, from customs, traditions, social enterprises, from farming, even from history and events that were familiar to the people, both current and past. And it is so in this amazing story.

Jesus builds this story on a historical incident very familiar to the people of Judea and particularly familiar as well to the people of Jericho, that important city in Judea. Let me read the story starting in verse 11.

"And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. He said therefore, 'A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then returned. And he called ten of his slaves and gave them ten minas and said to them, Do business with this until I come back. But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, We do not want this man to reign over us. And it came about that when he returned after receiving the Kingdom, he ordered that these slaves to whom he had given the money be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done. And the first appeared saying, Master, your mina has made ten minas more. And he said to him, Well done, good slave, because you've been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities. And the second came saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas and he said to him also, and you're to be over five cities. And another came saying, Master, behold your mina which I put away in a handkerchief for I was afraid of you because you're an exacting man, you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow. He said to him, By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I'm an exacting man taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Then why did you not put the money in the bank? And having come, I would have collected it with interest. And he said to the bystanders, Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas. And they said to him, Master, he has ten minas already. I tell you that to everyone who has shall more be given but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. But these

enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.'"

A fascinating story that Jesus invents. Just as a footnote, this is very familiar to us because it sounds like the parable in Matthew 25 of the talents. It is a different occasion, a different location, and a different story with a different application even though there are some similarities. This story in Luke 19, Jesus tells on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem, the story in Matthew 25 He tell sin the middle of the passion week up in Jerusalem some days later after this story. There's no value in mixing stories. Since they are stories, they are self-contained and we don't mingle them. So we'll stay with the Luke 19 account, this is the only place where this story is recorded.

Now I said that Jesus starts with something that is familiar. Did you catch the story? A noble man is going away to receive a kingdom. In other words, he is going away to have somebody who is a higher authority than he give him a kingdom. The kingdom is going to be the very country he leaves, so he's going away to get a kingdom and that kingdom is his own country and he will come back and rule over that country. That's basically the story. While he's gone, he gives his servants a certain amount of money and expects that they will do his business while he's gone and earn a respectable profit with their efforts and that's how they can demonstrate their love and respect and concern for him and their own trustworthiness as his servants. When he comes back, he will evaluate what everyone has done.

However, when he goes to receive the kingdom, the citizens of his country don't want him to be their king. And so, they protest. Verse 14 says they hate him, and they do not want him to reign over them, so they send a delegation following him as he goes to a higher monarch to receive the right to be the king over his own country, they send a delegation to the citizens of that country pleading with that superior king not to make him their king. That's the story. So you have essentially the nobleman who becomes the king, who comes back...you have three groups of people...those who did what they were supposed to while he was gone, those who didn't do what they were supposed to while he was gone, and those who hate him. Those who did what they were supposed to were rewarded. Those who did not do what they were supposed to were rejected. Those who hated him were destroyed.

What is compelling about this story is this, you're in it...every single one of you somewhere. There are only three possibilities. You are either a true servant of the nobleman. You are a false servant of the nobleman. Or you are his enemy. There are no other categories. It is again one of those amazing illustrations that Jesus invents that is comprehensive and embraces all of humanity.

Now you said this was familiar stuff to them, in what sense is this familiar? Well kings are familiar, sure. Servants or slaves are familiar, absolutely. Kings having authority, rendering judgment, deciding who to reward and who to punish, that would be familiar. But there's something even more specifically familiar about this because this is exactly what had happened in their own country and in their own experience. Let me give you the background.

Rome ruled that part of the world. The Great Roman Empire went east of the land of Israel into the Middle East deeper and so it covered the land of Israel. Israel was an occupied country under Caesar's power and authority and taxation and occupied by Roman troops securing Roman presence there. The ultimate king then was Caesar. He is the ultimate king of the whole Empire, therefore he is the ultimate king in Israel. But under Roman authority and the Romans were very wise about this, they knew they were extending their kingdom over people who had their own culture and were used to their own ways and their own traditions and their course of action and their own society and their own leaders. And so Rome allowed kings under Caesar, a king of subordinate kings to rule in these various lands which Rome had conquered. Under Roman authority then, Israel like other places could have subordinate kings but Rome had to give them the right to rule. Rome had to affirm them as king. This is exactly how it was in Israel. And the kings that ruled in Israel were neither Romans or Jews, they were Idumaeans and they were of a family called the Herods. The most notable and the first of them called Herod the Great, a name he gave himself, not being a very modest fellow.

It was 40 B.C., according to Josephus, that Herod the Great took his journey to Rome. He wanted to secure for himself the monarchy in Israel. He went there. He negotiated with Marc Antony to grant him the right to rule under Caesar in Israel. He was given that right. And he ruled until he died in 4 B.C. Now upon his death in his will it was prescribed that the kingdom would be divided into three parts and given to his three sons. Each of those sons immediately then took authority and the kingdom was divided in terms of rule. The son who was given Judea, which would include Jerusalem and Jericho, was named Archelaus. People were very familiar with Archelaus because Archelaus had built a palace in Jericho. So he had a presence there. Remember, Jesus now is on the road from Jericho up the seventeen miles to Jerusalem, just having come through Jericho, spending a couple of days there healing the two blind men and saving the eternal soul of Zacchaeus. And so they who were traveling with Him through that area were very familiar, as were all the people of Israel with Archelaus and particularly familiar with him in Judea because that's where he ruled and where he built a palace right there in Jericho. He also was responsible for building some aqueducts to bring water to places where it was needed. So the symbols of his rule remained. He was no longer ruling at this time, actually he stopped ruling I think about after ten years or so from where he began, no more than that.

But when his father died, he took the rule. And wanting, as kings often do, establish his power and his authority and elevate the fear of the people and intimidate them, the first thing he did was at the first Passover after he had ascended to this throne, he slaughtered three thousand Jews. He was not trying to endear himself. Politics was different in those days. He was trying to terrify the people. He slaughtered three thousand of them. The people hated him, despised him and had every right to. He was wicked and murderous.

The time came for him, and it was necessary that he had to go to Rome. He had to go to Rome to receive the official imprimatur of Caesar on his right to rule. He did that. He went to Rome soon after he had ascended to the throne, his two brothers also made the same trip to get their official approval from Rome as well, and came back and ruled. But when Archelaus went, the people detested him so greatly that they sent a delegation, that they sent a group of people as representatives of the populous of Judea trailing him all the way to Rome. And while he was appealing for Caesar to give him the right to be the king, they were appealing to Caesar saying this, "We do not want this man to reign over us." And so, Caesar, the historians tell us, being the politician that he was, trying to find middle ground to make everybody happy as politicians do, said, "Well, Archelaus, you can be king, you just can't have the name. You have to be an ethnarc(?), you can't take the title king until you earn it by the favor of the people.

Well that would never happen, and did never happen. So they tried to prevent him from being king by sending a delegation to Rome to stop Caesar from doing it. They couldn't. He came back. He was king and he did rule. That's the familiar history that everybody knew on which Jesus builds his story about a nobleman who went to a higher king to receive the right to rule his own people. Most of the citizens hated him, didn't want him to be king over them. He came back, he was king and he dealt with the people on the basis of how they had dealt with him. That's the story. Not too hard to figure what it's about, is it? The nobleman who went to the great king to receive a kingdom, came back to reign and to judge all his subjects. And they fall into three categories...the faithful, the false and the foes, and they are judged appropriately.

Simple and yet comprehensive. Magnificent, stunning in what it comprehends and grasps. We begin with the purpose behind the story in verse 11. "And while they were listening to these things," what things? Go back to verse 10, Jesus was speaking after commenting on the salvation of Zacchaeus, He said this, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost." Folks, that was the thesis of what He was saying, not all of it. I've been asked through the years, "Why did Jesus preach such short sermons and you preach such long sermons?" The answer to the question is, we don't have all of Jesus' sermons recorded, it's my own personal conviction that they were at least three hours long each. What you have is a thesis statement here, not the whole sermon. Believe me, if He's walking seventeen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem with a crowd around Him, He doesn't make one sentence and then remain silent for the hours that go by. This is the thesis of His sermon. He is talking about the fact the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost. And He must have been expanding on the significance of that. To put it simply, He knows what they're thinking. What are they thinking? Well they're nearing Jerusalem and they're thinking that the Kingdom of God is about to appear immediately. They're on track for the reigning Jewish eschatology, the Messiah comes...what does He do? He sets up his earthly kingdom. That's how they thought. That's what they expected. And so because He knows that, He is telling them the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost. Before I come to set up a kingdom, I must do a salvation work. He comes first as Savior, then He comes as King. To split that out a little bit and make simple sense out of it, He

did not come to overthrow Rome and set up an earthly Kingdom. He did not come to right all wrongs socially. He did not come to straighten out all civil inequities. He did not come to make the nation or the world moral. He did not come to establish economic justice. He did not come to institute Jewish triumphalism. He did not come the first time for this. He came to save. He came to do the work of salvation. He came to offer salvation to all who would confess their sinful lostness, to repent and believe in Him and to die on the cross and rise from the dead to provide the sufficient atoning work that would satisfy the justice of God by which He could forgive sinners. His stories were always about this, lost sheep, lost coins, lost sons, a beggar, Lazarus, hated by everybody but loved by God who ends up in heaven, the salvation of the leper, the salvation of a Publican, the salvation of two blind men, the salvation of a despised tax collector named Zacchaeus. It was always stories and stories and stories about salvation and events about evangelism which ended in the salvation of men and women. Everything pointed to His coming to establish an internal Kingdom. Chapter 17 verse 21, "The Kingdom is within you." The first time He came to save, He didn't come the first time to make the world a better place to live in, He didn't come the first time to right all the earthly evils, to fix things to end in justice, to stop abuse, to bring an end to crime, to destroy all wicked institutions, to end poverty, injustice, slavery, corruption. He didn't come to stop that. He came to seek and save the lost.

And as much as the liberals and the new emerging church people would like us to believe that Jesus came to fix the social institutions...they've got it absolutely wrong. And in fact, if He did come to do that, He failed totally. But next time, next time when He does come back, He comes back with the right to rule, He comes back with a rod of iron, He comes back to establish a Kingdom, He comes back to fix everything, including the environment. He will renovate the earth. He will turn the desert into a garden. He will create fountains and waterfalls and rivers and lakes where they do not exist in desert places. He will change the animal kingdom. It will be a glorious paradise in a renewed earth and He will reign with justice, righteousness, peace and joy. That's the next time He comes. He is away now, He is away being coronated and He will come back to reign.

And I just want to mention one thing. When He comes back, He will reign over everyone. The kingdoms of this world, the book of Revelation says, shall become the kingdoms of our Christ. And He shall reign forever and ever. Revelation 19 says He comes back as King of kings and Lord of lords. And Philippians 2 says every knee will bow. But the first time, Jewish expectation was an earthly messianic kingdom and it was so strong, it was so ingrained that no matter what He said, just went by them. It didn't ever stick in their Teflon minds, just slid off. But verse 11 says, "Because He was near Jerusalem, the anticipation was swelling, the enthusiasm was growing."

This was it, they were thinking, and they supposed that the Kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. Really a vivid picture. The verb "appear," *anaphaino*, it's only used two times in the New Testament, the other time is Acts 21:3 where it's translated something like "came in view of," or "came in sight of." It's a nautical term. It's a nautical term. It means to show up on the horizon, to appear on the horizon. As sailors would sail in the ocean, look out at the arc in the horizon, they

would be looking for their destination to land to rise and appear on the horizon. That's the imagery. They thought they were nearing the Kingdom, it would appear on the horizon when they got to the top of the hill. And if you know anything about that hill, if you've ever been there, when you go up the road you come to Bethany. And in the first part of Bethany you can't see Jerusalem because the Mount of Olives is in your way and you have to go up to the top of the Mount of Olives and when you turn that crest, the whole golden city of Jerusalem lies at your feet. And they were expecting that they were going to cross that horizon and there would be the unfolding of the glorious messianic hope for Kingdom. That's what they thought, in spite of what He was saying. I'm sure for at least those 17 miles and long before that on the journey from Galilee through Peraea, down through Jericho and up, He had been telling them He had come to seek and save and not to expect the Kingdom, but it just never connected because they were overpowered with expectation and enthusiasm. They were thinking like sailors crossing the sea, that any minute the horizon would be filled for that which they anticipated.

Even the Apostles never seem to get it because after Jesus had risen from the dead, Acts1, they said to Him, "Will You at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" Didn't they hear His stories? Didn't they know the nobleman has to go to a far country? Didn't they listen in Matthew 25 when He told about the bridegroom being away and delaying His coming? They expected it. They expected it immediately. They had a right to expect it. They interpreted Isaiah right, Daniel right, Ezekiel right, Zechariah right. They had reason to expect that kingdom to come. But they missed the part about the cross, Isaiah 53, Psalm 22. They missed the whole meaning of the sacrificial system and the final lamb that would take away sin. They missed Psalm 16 about the resurrection. And so they had this hope and as they approached Jerusalem, Jesus really tries to quell the crowd by telling them He came this time to seek and save. And part of seeking and saving is going to the cross. It's the heart of it.

Well back to our story, verse 12. "He said therefore, a certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a country for himself and then return." This nobleman is in the Greek, *anthropos tis eugenes, anthropos tis eugenes*. *Anthropos,* anthropology, the word for man, *eugenes,* genetics, *geneo*, to be born. It is a high birth man, it is a man of noble birth. Certainly true of Jesus. He was the most noble birth ever, right? His Father was God. So this is a story about one who had a noble birth, literally a man of birth, a man of significant birth who went to a distant country, that's the coming ascension that we talked about on Good Friday. His ascension to heaven about eight weeks from when He told this story. He's going to go to a far country, that implies delay. This is precisely the point He wants them to know. He comes this time to seek and save the lost. Then He's going to go away for a long time, after which He will return. But He's going to go away and here's why, to receive a Kingdom for Himself. They would all understand exactly what that signified because they had experienced that's what Herod had done, that's what his three sons had done, that's what Archelaus had done, that's what was done when you were a king of a nation that was under another king. And so it is that the Lord in His ascension is taken by the Father, seated at His right hand and crowned, is He not? He is now in

the position of His coronation and will return to reign. The Father has given Him His approval by establishing Him as Lord. He's given Him a name which is above every name, that is the name that is the top, He is the pinnacle. He is the premiere one, the *prototokos,*the chief one. He is the King. The Father has given Him that and He will return. And when He returns, everybody will be accountable to Him.

Citizens know it. And the slaves know it. That's what it means to be king. Verse 13 tells us that, in the story, the nobleman called ten of his slaves, gave them ten minas, one each. That's about three months wages, not a huge amount. And said to them, "Do business with this until I come back." Ten...that's kind of a arbitrary figure, kind of a complete figure, represents all his servants, those who professed to serve him. And he had a large crowd following Him. Some were apostles, some were interested, some were declaring themselves followers of His, it was yet to be seen if they were real thing. That's just this group of those who had attached and associated with Him.

Slaves, *doulos*, it doesn't mean a slave in the sense that we think of some beaten and abused slave. It was a word that had broad meaning, it could refer to a very trustworthy employee who is given high responsibility. And that's exactly what it means here. He gave them a significant amount, if not a large sum, a significant amount of money, three months wages and said, "Do business with this." Do business, by the way, *pragmateuomai*, the Greek word for business is *pragma*, that's where we get pragmatic. Do something pragmatic with this. Make some business with this while I'm gone.

What is this about? Well there's several things operating here. First of all, he's saying if you want to be known as a trustworthy servant, if you want to be rewarded as a trustworthy servant, if you have any love for me, any respect for me, any desire to honor me, if you have any commitment to this estate, if you have any commitment to this kingdom to the development of what is ours collectively and you want to enter into the benefits that are going to accrue by your faithfulness, then make something of your opportunity. I mean, it covers every ground. It shows your attitude toward yourself and what you want for your future, toward those around you and toward the one who is a nobleman who gives you the privilege and the responsibility. This is a call to live a life that honors the absent nobleman, that respects him, that shows love to him, that makes the most out of the gifts, privileges, opportunities and responsibilities that they have been given. Very easy to understand. I'm going to come back and I want to see what you have done. It will indicate whether you love me, honor me, respect me, and whether you're trustworthy.

Now there are only three types of people, we said, in this scene but there are only two types of servants. The first ones we meet, the faithful. The second ones we meet, the false. And then even before we meet them, we're going to meet the foes, look at verse 14. "But his citizens hated him." There was no way they could mistake this being built on the historical situation with Archelaus. His citizens hated him, sent a delegation after him saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us." They made appeals to the king who was going to crown this king to not do it, he wasn't their choice.

Please notice, "his citizens hated him." Jesus' words are carefully, carefully chosen. They are his citizens. Listen to this. Everybody belongs in his kingdom. You may reject Christ, you may hate Christ, He owns you. He is sovereign over you. You may be an atheist, you may be a Muslim, you may be a Buddhist, Christ owns you. You live in His country for He made this world, it is His and He made you. By creation, He owns you. Like the story of the prodigal, people say, "Well...well, he has to be a believer, he has to be a believer because he's the son of the father." No, he doesn't become a believer until he repents and comes back. But he is in the father's family by creation. I think this is a message that people don't quite understand. They think that if they reject Christ, then Christ has nothing to do with them. You reject Christ and He has everything to do with you. You accept Christ and He has everything to do with you. You do nothing with Christ and He has everything to do with you. You are in His world. You live in His country over which He is sovereign, over which He has full authority. Every knee bows to Him. Every knee...Philippians 2. You can reject Him, you can ignore Him, but He owns you.

And by the way, nothing in the story indicates that they had any reason to hate the nobleman. This is where the story departs from their history. So they hated him for no reason. They hated him for no reason. This is reminiscent of John 15:25, "They hated Me without a cause," Jesus said. They hated Me for no reason. Their attitude toward Archelaus was reasonable. Their attitude toward Jesus was blasphemous, still is today to hate Him. The Jews of an earlier generation did not want Archelaus to reign over them, he slaughtered them, three thousand of them. The Jews of Jesus' generation didn't want him to reign over them, though on the first day of the church when He sent His Holy Spirit He gave three thousand of them eternal life. They hated Him without a cause. They hated Him without a reason. We do not want this man to reign over us, this man...actually in the Greek...this one is derogatory. We do not want this one, not even worthy of a title or a name, to reign over us.

Well, they didn't succeed in keeping Archelaus off the throne, and they didn't succeed in keeping Jesus off the throne either. He'll be back. He has been coronated. He has been crowned and He will come back and He will come back as King of kings and Lord of lords and all kingdoms will become His Kingdom and He will rule the world and every knee will bow, they will not be ever successful in keeping Him off His glorious throne. So those who hate Jesus Christ, who hate the gospel, reject the gospel, nonetheless, will face Jesus Christ as their King, as their judge and as their executioner.

The story continues in verse 15. "And it came about that when He returned," we now move in the story to the Second Coming of Christ when He comes back to establish His Kingdom. After receiving the Kingdom, He comes back and we know the glory of that picture in Revelation 19, He ascends from heaven and a white horse with all the saints and angels coming out of heaven, He comes to earth and establishes His glorious Kingdom here, all that the prophets said, all that Jesus promised, all that the Apostles wrote and all that Revelation describes will take place. At that point there's going to be a glorious reward. This doesn't look at the chronology of that or the specific event, but the

general reality, he orders that these slaves to whom he had given the money, those who professed to serve him, those who were given responsibility he called to Himself in order that he might know what business they had done. This is accounting time. The first appeared, I love this, "Master," so respectful, "your mina has made ten minas more." You know what I love about that? It's so humble. He doesn't say, "Want to see what I did? Take a look at this balance sheet." He doesn't say that. He says, "Your mina made ten more." Now there's just some meekness there, isn't there? "Master, your mina did this." Which gives us a little idea that the economy was pretty good at this time cause Jesus couldn't concoct something that was completely out of touch with reality. They had a healthy economy in those days. Your mina did this, I just put it to work and did this and you created the environment, the business environment. You created the agricultural environment, whatever it is. You created the situation, you created the trust so that your mina did this. It was your power, your influence, I just took it to the right place. I love that.

"And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave. Because you've been faithful in a very little thing, just three months wages at a denarius a day, a common wage, be in authority over ten cities.'" Wow! Go from three months wages to ruling ten cities. He's saying take this province for your own. Take this state for your own. Take these ten cities in this region, you're now the vice-regent under me. I think that's millennial. I think that this is actually very possibly what faithful believers will do when we enter into the Kingdom with the Lord. We will under His rule across this earth rule for Him and have authority over multiple actual cities...to say nothing of that extending into responsibility in eternal heaven. "Well done, good slave. You took what I gave you which in itself has the power to grow and multiply." This is about living your Christian life as a trust, taking the truth, the power of the Spirit, spiritual opportunity, spiritual gifts, spiritual privileges, everything the Lord puts in your life and maximizing it for His honor and His glory.

The second came along in verse 18, same kind of humility. "Your mina, master, has made five minas." Not everybody has the same opportunity, right? Not everybody has the same size church, same size ministry, same size influence. Not everybody has the same gifts. It's beautiful, really, to see it this way. "But your mina in my hands did this." And he said to him, "You're over five cities." I mean, this is just expanse, this is just over the top generosity, wouldn't you say? I mean, you're faithful with three month wages and you get to rule over ten cities, or five cities. Well would you say that this man is gracious with that, not come across generous?

And so we meet the faithful? They were the real believers. They loved their master. They honored him. They were honored to serve him. They felt it a privilege. They gave him all the credit for everything that happened. It was your mina that did it all. You created the environment in which this would happen. They showed trustworthiness. They showed affection. They showed love. They showed respect. They showed honor. And they showed a commitment to do what was right. And they received a well done, good, faithful slave, and they were rewarded in millennial responsibility. And by the way, 1 Corinthians 6 says, "We will rule...verses 2 and 3...in the Kingdom." We will rule and we'll

even rule over angels. And the Apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel. And so the faithful are clearly indicated here. In the future some day when Jesus comes, there will be a reward time for the faithful. Paul calls it the Bema Judgment where we will receive our rewards for the gold, silver, precious stones of our serve and all the dross will be burned away. First Corinthians 3; 1 Corinthians 4; 2 Corinthians 5; Galatians 6, even 2 Peter 1...Peter calls this the abundant entrance into the Kingdom when we receive all of our rewards. There's coming a glorious future reward for the faithful, when the Lord will pour out lavishly on us more than we can ever imagine. That's why it says eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for them that love Him. These servants loved him, these two.

Then we go from the faithful to the false. Verse 20, "And another came..." Another? I just have to say a word about that. The Greek word *allos heteros*. *Hetera genos(??)*means different, heterodox, something not orthodox, different. Here comes a different kind of person. Here comes a different kind of slave. We don't need to know about the other seven because here are the two categories. And what does he say? "Master, behold your mina which I kept put away in a handkerchief. I haven't lost it." According to the rabbis, this is a very careless guy. You don't put something of value in a handkerchief. You bury it. He's careless. He's not only careless, he's useless and he's both careless and useless because he's thoughtless. He just really can't be bothered. Easy thing to do is stick it in a handkerchief, go on with his life. I can tell you just from that that he had no desire to honor the nobleman. He had no desire to exalt the nobleman. He had no desire to prove himself trustworthy to the nobleman. He didn't care what he thought about him. He had no desire to please him. And that comes out in the conversation in the next verse. This is what he says, listen to this, "Why did I put it in a handkerchief? Oh,...this is what he comes up with... Well I was afraid of you because you're an exacting man, you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow." Here's a person driven not by love but by fear, he says...I was afraid of you, I...I don't know, you're such a hard person. He says, by the way, exacting man is the Greek word*austeros*from which we get austere. Does that communicate? Austere means severe, harsh, strict, ungracious, unfair, hard-nosed...somebody might say cut-throat. You're just a tough guy so knowing how hard you are, austere, strict, harsh, ungracious, I just put it in a handkerchief because I don't really like you anyway. Why? You're a thief. That's what he says. "You take up what you didn't lay down." What's that? Stealing. "You reap what you didn't sow. You take the crop, you steal the crop and you didn't work to plant the crop, you're a thief." Wow. You've got all these people running around doing your dirty work and you take all the credit.

Now here's maybe a typical legalist, typical legalistic Jew who is constantly told to obey, obey, obey and give God all the glory. But more than anything, this is just...this is just a story that Jesus has this guy invent to explain the stupidity of what he did. Well it's your fault because you're so hard-nosed, I was afraid that if I did anything with it and lost it, I'd be in terrible trouble knowing how hard you are, how unjust you are, how unfair you are, what a thief you are. This man has no love for the nobleman. He has no affection for the nobleman. He has no interest in his cause. He has no interest in his honor

or respect. He doesn't care what he thinks of him either. He's not trying to prove anything. He basically has no relationship with the nobleman and frankly doesn't care. But he's been putting on a show. He's been putting on a show. Maybe he liked the association. Maybe he thought it was a way to get rich. Maybe he thought...maybe he's Judas, huh? Thinking that if I hang around this guy, maybe I'll get rich. And one day realizing that it's not going the way he wants so he sells Jesus. He never wanted a relationship with Him in the first place. This is the false follower. He takes no responsibility for what he's done, he blames the nobleman, now the king. No true believer would act like this. This isn't a true believer. I read some commentators who said, "We're not too sure about this guy whether he's a believer or not." I'm sure. What do you need? No true believer calls the Lord a liar and a thief and an exploiter. No true believer indicts the Lord. No true believer declares his lack of love, lack of trust and lack of interest in the things that the Lord is concerned with. No true believer accuses the Lord of lacking justice and fairness and using people for illegitimate selfish gain. He has an unfaithful heart. He has no love for the king, he has no interest in the king, he has no desire to honor the king at all. And the king knows it.

So he says to him, verse 22, "By your own words I'll judge you, you worthless slave." And the Lord doesn't call any of his beloved children a worthless slave either. "Did...did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I didn't lay down and reaping what I didn't sow? Did you really know that?" Verse 23, "Then why did you not put the money in the bank and having come I would have collected it with interest?" If you really feared me, even if you really feared me you would have at least gone down...bank is the word for table...lender's table, where you gave the lender money and he lent the money to somebody else who paid him interest and shared some of the interest with you. That's how the bank works. You put your money in a bank, you get interest, he loans the money and keeps the bigger part of the interest. That's how it works. Jesus is affirming the legitimacy of banking. But he says, "Look, if you really even had the minimum concern about me, if you even feared me at all, if that was legitimate, you would have done that then you would have gotten some interest which would have mitigated what you think is my injustice and unfairness to some degree." And he is simply questioning the legitimacy of that lame excuse. The truth of the matter is, indifference drove the man. He didn't care. He didn't care about the nobleman, the king. He didn't care whether the king thought he was trustworthy or not. In his heart when it was all really exposed, he had no interest at all. He did what he did because he didn't care. The easiest thing to do was stick it in a handkerchief and go on with his life. Oh he had been a servant of the nobleman when it pleased him, when it seemed to serve him, when it seemed to be the path of prophet ability and self-aggrandizement, when it did what he wanted to do, when it accomplished what he wanted it to accomplish, he was hanging around the other servants and maybe he was gaining whatever favor would come from them by his pretense and hypocrisy, but when it all came down, he was basically driven by absolute indifference, the utter absence of any kind of relationship at all. And I will tell you truthfully in the end, churches are filled with people like this feign that they are servants of the King who is coming but when the truth is known, they do nothing with the spiritual opportunities, privileges that are available to them, they have no love for Him, they have no desire to honor Him, to respect Him, to trust Him or to be counted in His

eyes as trustworthy. They deal with Him with indifference, only superficially associated so that they gain whatever it is they're after. If you really thought of me the way you said you thought of me, you would have at least put your money in the bank...done the minimum.

Then he said to the bystanders in verse 24, who might be the other seven still standing there waiting for their accounting, "Take the mina way from him, give it to the one who has the ten minas." And they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas already." Jesus...didn't you know that? Sure he knew that. You see, why is it that grace is always outrageous? Why is it that we always want to put a cap? Why is it so characteristic of human nature that you just can't rejoice when somebody gets way more than they should? This is so human. "Master, he has ten minas already." Well you've got to have a principle in your mind, folks. "I tell you, to everyone who has shall be more given." Do you get it? No matter how much you have, you're going to get more, that's how grace operates. It never stops, it never ceases, it's lavish, it is undying, it is unending, it is undiminished. Don't you understand this is about grace? I gave you the mina in the beginning. I gave you the environment in which the mina multiplied. And now I've given you the ten cities on top of the ten minas and I'm not done, I'm giving you more...that's how grace operates. You didn't deserve the first thing I gave you. But that's how grace operates. But on the other hand, the middle of verse 26, "From the one who doesn't have, even what he does have shall be taken away." He's stripped of every pretense of everything that was potentially his, like the older brother who had it all in his grasp in the father's house and lost it all. The worthless slave is stripped.

What is taken away? Opportunity, privilege, position, stripped of everything, he becomes an eternal waste, worthless. So here we meet the people who confess Christ, connect to the church, surrounded by the privileges and truth of the gospel, make a profession, serve for their own purposes and their own ends, but in the end have no relationship with the Lord, no love, no desire to honor Him. They don't care about the honor of the King. They don't love Him. They don't even like Him. They think He's harsh and demanding and unjust and unfair and they will be like the oil-less virgins, shut out of the Kingdom forever.

And finally our Lord deals with His foes. Verse 27, "These enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence." Slay? Strong, strong word, *katasphazo*, cut them down, slay them completely.

So I say, herein the story. You're either among the faithful, the false or the foes. But in any case, the Lord owns you, the King owns you because He's King of the world. He's King of all humanity. He's King of every soul and every knee bows sooner or later. You don't want Him to reign over you? He reigns anyway. But if you confess Him as Lord and King, you become among the faithful those who are rewarded and lavished with spiritual graces and privileges forever. If you're hiding among the false, the day will come when you will be unmasked and all your phony excuses will be unveiled and discounted and you will be eternal waste, sent off to perish with the enemies of Christ.

There it is in one story...rewards for the faithful, rejection for the false, retribution for the foes. Where are you? What group is your group? All under the sovereignty of the King.

Father, we thank You for the way in which You have portrayed spiritual truth. It's so obvious that this book is divine. The insights are just staggering and stunning. O God, how I pray that every one of us here will be sure right now which group we're in and take the steps necessary if we are among the false or the foes to run to Christ.

Father, we thank You for Your grace and Your lavish generosity to us. We give You honor with joy, we receive these gifts knowing we don't deserve them. Work Your work in every heart, Lord. May we take what we've heard today and spread it faithfully to those who need to hear, in Christ's name. Amen.

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