

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, anticipation was thick. The crowds around Him were certain that the Kingdom of God would soon appear in a powerful, earthly manifestation. Much like today, people were looking for the coming of the Messiah. Some were expectant, while others were skeptical, dismissing the idea as far-fetched. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, chose this moment to tell a parable to correct their misunderstandings and prepare them for the true nature of His coming.

Jesus begins by introducing a nobleman who goes to a distant country to receive a kingdom and then return. But while the nobleman is gone, his business must still continue. So, he called ten of his servants and gave each of them a mina—a unit of currency equivalent to about three months' wages. He instructed them, "Engage in business until I come" (Luke 19:13).

But outside the nobleman's household, citizens opposed him. They did not want him to rule over them. In fact, Jesus tells us they hated him. They sent a delegation ahead of him, saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14).

This wasn't just a random story. It was one that resonated deeply with His audience. It mirrored a recent political event involving Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great.

When Herod the Great died, his kingdom was divided among his sons, but the title of "king" could not be passed on without Roman approval. Archelaus, who inherited a large portion of his father's kingdom, desired the title of king. So, he traveled to Rome with an entourage to ask Caesar for the title. But Archelaus faced opposition—not only from some of his family but also from a delegation of Jews and Samaritans who traveled to Rome to protest against him. Despite his efforts, Caesar only granted him the title of "ethnarch," with the promise that he could be made king if he proved worthy. Archelaus never did.

But in Jesus's story, he adds a twist. The nobleman actually did receive the title he sought.

When the nobleman returned, now as a king, he calls his servants to account for how they have used the resources he entrusted to them. The first servant reports that his mina has earned ten more, and the second reports a return of five. The king praises their faithfulness, rewarding them with authority over cities—ten cities for the first servant and five for the second.

Before moving forward in the story, take note of the king's commendation: "Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17). Normally people are rewarded only for their results. A sales person is not rewarded for trying. A factory worker is not rewarded for

effort. But this nobleman is remarkably fair. These servants were productive, though the actual credit is given to the power of the mina. But the commendation was for their faithfulness.

However, the third servant had taken a different approach. He returned the mina in a handkerchief without any increase. Why was there no increase? Well it was obviously the master's fault. "I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man," the servant explains, "You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow" (Luke 19:25).

The servant's words were an excuse but not a reason. There is often a difference. What was the real cause of the servant's actions. We can only guess. Maybe it was selfishness, maybe procrastination, or maybe just laziness. But ultimately, the root problem was that the servant prioritized his own comfort over his master's business. The master's response exposes the servant's excuse as just that—an excuse. If the servant had truly feared the master, he would have at least put the money in the bank to earn interest. And as a result of his inaction, the servant lost even the little he had.

One might be tempted to close out the story here. But there is a whole other caste of people. Did you forget about them? The master turns his attention to those who had hated him, "But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me" (Luke 19:27).

This reaction may seem course to us today. But to those living in Jesus's day, it is what they would have expected. There was only one result when a rebellion falls.

What can we learn from this parable?

1. God Wants Citizens to Be Servants: Just as people doubted and opposed Archelaus, there are skeptics today who doubt Christ's return or reject His authority. Unlike Archelaus, who sought a title he could not secure, Jesus already held the title of King of Kings. His authority was not up for debate; it was an affirmation of what was already true. Nobody is a "sovereign citizen" in God's creation. Acknowledgement of this fact does nothing to change it. Just as it is absurd for someone to claim they are not subject to the laws of the land while living in that land, it is equally absurd to live in God's world while rejecting His authority.

But God desires more than passive citizenship; He wants active service.

2. God Wants Servants to Be Faithful: The nobleman does not reward the servants based on the effectiveness, but rather their faithfulness. In fact, all parties involved in the story seem to recognize that the mina actually did its own work.

Part 12: Your Performance Review

So, while the mina gets the credit, the servant gets the reward. Aren't you glad that God does not reward us on production or pay us on commission! Faithfulness is the measure of a true servant. It's important to note that unlike the Parable of the Talents, where servants were given different amounts according to their abilities, in this parable, each servant received the same amount based on the generosity of the nobleman. What is the one thing that we have all been given in equal portion? Answer, the Gospel! It is the currency of heaven and our most valuable resource. Our use of it should reflect these facts.

3. The refusal of citizens to become servants, and the reluctance of servants to become faithful, brings consequences. The decisions we make during this "in-between" time—between Christ's first and second coming—will have eternal consequences. Those who have been faithful with the Gospel will be rewarded. And sadly, those who have rejected Christ's authority will face judgment.

The parable of the ten minas is not just a story about stewardship; it is a call to faithfulness in the waiting. Jesus went into a far country to be confirmed as King. While He is gone, we, His citizens, must decide whether we will be faithful servants or rebellious subjects. And when He returns, the consequences of those decisions will be eternal.

May we hear those precious words when He returns: "Well done, good servant!" (Luke 19:17)



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