May the Lord Jesus be with you.

Revelation 21 makes it clear that everything will be made new. When the fall took place in the Garden of Eden, all of nature was cursed, in addition to mankind coming under slavery to sin. Death became what everything was heading toward: people, animals, plants, even inanimate objects wear away with time. As we look around at our society, both in this country and around the world, we see deterioration.

Here is the good news: That will all come to an end. Things will not continue downhill until we destroy ourselves. History will come to an end and all the curse will be done away with. The Bible tells us that at just the right time, Jesus will return. There will be a brief struggle as His opponents are defeated. He will then set up a just and righteous kingdom here on earth. He will rule strictly, but lovingly. This kingdom will last for a thousand years.

At the end of the thousand years, satan will be set free and lead a rebellion. It will be the shortest battle to ever take place. Then God the Father, who loves to create, will recreate all things. This is where we will spend eternity. We will have perfect bodies that never age, the curse will be gone, sin and evil and death will all be gone.

What we experience now will only last a short time; that is why it is so necessary to persevere. Cling to Christ and He will get you through. All we go through will be worth it.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.*

Revelation 21:1

In Christ’s love

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Luke 19:11-27

Last week we looked in Matthew 25 at the parable of the talents. We saw how God gives each of us abilities that we are to use for His glory and for the benefit of His church. Even though each of us has different abilities, when we use them for God, He is equally pleased with all of us. While all people have God given abilities, only Christians are rewarded for using them; we are the only ones able to use them in ways pleasing to God.

Today we will look into the parable of the minas. Although they sound similar and some of the points are the same, these are different parables and have different information for us. Remember that parables use examples in the physical world to give us ideas about how the spiritual world works.

The background for this parable is that Jesus is traveling toward Jerusalem for what would be the Triumphal Entry. He has just had the encounter with Zaccheus, the little tax collector that climbed a tree to see Jesus, who had demonstrated his change of heart by announcing that he would recompence all those he had defrauded and give generously to the poor. Jesus then comments:

*“Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

Jesus plainly states that He has come to the earth in order to seek out those who are separated from God and save them from that eternal fate. We know that Jesus showed His disciples how to bring the message of salvation to people and just before His ascension, He charged them to go into all the nations making more disciples. He also made the way to be saved by His work on the cross. So, Jesus accomplished both seeking and saving; then, by using believers, He put into place a perpetual means for these to continue until He comes back. This is one of the main points of our parable.

Verse 11 lets us know that the people were listening to the things Jesus was saying to them after His talking with Zaccheus. It also lets us know about the expectation of the crowd of people who were following Jesus. He knew that they were looking for a military Messiah, one who would overthrow the Romans and lead Israel back to being the powerful nation that it had once been. They were heading to the holy city and they expected Jesus to start the revolution from there. They had all completely missed the prophecies regarding the Suffering Servant.

Jesus tells them about a nobleman who was going to a distant country to receive a kingdom and then return. This would have been something they understood. When someone in the Roman empire was going to be given a ruling position over an area, that person had to travel to Rome. At Rome, the Caesar would officially install the person to their position. They would then travel back to the area to begin their reign.

Of course, Jesus is the nobleman. Instead of setting up His kingdom now, He will be going back to heaven to await the proper time established by God the Father. Then He will come back to earth with the authority of a king and establish His kingdom. While Jesus is letting them know that the Kingdom of God was not going to appear immediately, but that He must leave and come back later, we can be sure that none of them understood Him. This parable is for all of us who would come later with understanding given by the Holy Spirit. It tells us what we need to be doing and that Jesus is coming back.

Before leaving, because the nobleman is wise, he sets things in order to keep his household running and bring increase to his kingdom. But as we will see later, he is also testing his slaves. He wants to see which ones are truly capable of handling responsibility. Because He is absent, it will be a great temptation for his slaves to become slack in their work. This is exactly what we have going on now in the church. Jesus isn’t visibly present and our temptation is to be slack in the work of being a disciple. Many decisions are made during our life on earth that effect our eternity and this is one of them. We are being tested to see if we are faithful to our Master’s work.

The nobleman calls ten of his slaves together and gives them each one mina. Unlike the talent, the mina was a unit of money. It would have been about what a day laborer would have made in 100 days. In the parable of the talents, each slave was given money according to their ability; here, each is given the same amount. The talents represented each person’s God given abilities to be used for the church. So, in the case of the minas, what is each and every Christian given in the same amount that is used to build God’s kingdom? Each and every Christian is given the Gospel.

Jesus commissioned all His disciples to spread the Gospel. All of us have the Gospel that we can share with others. When we share the Gospel, more people are brought to Christ and His kingdom is built up. This is what all of us are to be doing while Jesus is away. This is the work we are to be doing while our Master is absent.

Verse 14 seems to be an aside to the story, but it comes back later in the parable and is an important piece of information regarding the return of Christ. There were people in the story who did not want the nobleman to become king. They actively worked against him becoming king. They actually hated him. We are not told why they hated him; it kind of seems odd because it is obvious that he acts with wisdom in what he does.

Here again, we see how this nobleman is Jesus. John 1:11.

*He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.*

The religious leaders opposed Jesus for most of His ministry while He was on earth. They hated Him. Which was odd because He was the fulfillment of all they were supposed to worship and teach. This same crowd of people who were following Him would cry out for His crucifixion just a few days later. All these people wanted nothing to do with having Jesus rule over them.

Well, the nobleman returned. And Jesus will one day return. Also, the nobleman received the kingdom, in spite of the delegation that went after him in protest. Make no mistake, when Jesus comes back, He will be King, regardless of what any person may or may not want.

The new king’s first order of business was to set his kingdom in order. Kingdom’s have many divisions of area and cities. The king can’t be everywhere at once, so he must delegate authority to others. We can get the idea from our own country: Basically, we have a president over the country, but each state has a governor, and each town has a mayor. This king will reign over the kingdom, but he will have others run smaller parts of the kingdom.

This is where the king had set up his test. He calls in each of his slaves to see how they did with the money they were entrusted with. Jesus didn’t have to go through what all ten of the slaves did; we get the idea from the three He tells us about.

The king determines the amount of new responsibility each slave will be given by what they did with the money he left them. The first two slaves each gained, but they gained different amounts. This would indicate that they had worked for their master while unsupervised and therefore able to be trusted with more, but to different degrees. In the parable of the talents, each slave was given different amounts of money, but the reward given for faithfulness was the same. In this case, the amounts given were the same, but the rewards given for faithfulness were different. Those who worked harder with the minas were given more cities in the kingdom to be in charge of.

Putting these two parables together, we can see that we will have work and responsibility in the Kingdom of God. If we faithfully use our abilities for the church, we will be given greater work to do in the kingdom and live in the joy of Christ. If we are faithful in spreading the Gospel, we will be given more authority in the kingdom. When Jesus sets up His kingdom here on earth, He will have some of His people governing cities and nations. Our lives and faithfulness on earth will determine who does what.

These are very basic ideas. The Bible tells us these things will take place, but we don’t know exactly how. We don’t need to know. The important thing is to be faithful with our talents and the Gospel. That way, our King will be pleased with us. We will live forever with Him and He will have important work for us to do; and the work will be pleasant.

Now we come to the slave who wrapped his mina up in a handkerchief. As expected, this didn’t go over very well. The new king came back and this slave had done nothing to advance the kingdom. We hear a familiar excuse, that the king was an exacting man. We hear the obvious reply. If the slave was really afraid, the last thing he should have done was to keep the money to himself. It was an excuse for not working; it was an excuse for loafing while he was unsupervised.

Here is the same comment about putting the money in the bank so it would have at least drawn interest. If there is some reason that we don’t share the Gospel with others; be it lack of time, opportunity, or just plain scared to do it; at least give money in support of those who will share the Gospel. In so doing, you will get some of the credit for the people they bring into the kingdom.

There is a difference in the fate of this slave and the slave who buried his talent. The slave who buried his talent had his talent taken away and was cast into the outer darkness where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth: in other words, hell. That slave was not a Christian; therefore, he didn’t use his God given talents for the church. In this parable, the worthless slave receives a tongue lashing and his talent is taken away from him; but he is not cast into the outer darkness.

This slave is a Christian; but he is a Christian who doesn’t do the work of the great commission; he doesn’t go into all the world and make disciples for Jesus. He has the Gospel, but he keeps it to himself. Because he has truly accepted Christ, he doesn’t lose his salvation. But he doesn’t get any reward either.

Paul talks about this principle in 1 Corinthians 3. He describes building a structure, which is what we accomplish for the Kingdom of God during our lifetimes. The structure, our Christian life, is built on the foundation of Jesus Christ. No other foundation will hold. If we build on any other foundation, we will not receive eternal life. If we build on Christ, our salvation is assured.

Paul goes on to describe the different building materials that can be used. Again, the physical demonstrates the spiritual. We can build with gold, silver, or precious stones. These are the good works we do that build the church and the kingdom. These are the works done for the glory of God; with the right intentions and with a clean heart. The other building materials Paul mentions are hay, wood, and straw. These are things we might do that helps the church or the kingdom, but are done for the wrong reasons. We might do them for recognition or to gain some leadership position. Our intentions are not pure and our hearts are not focused on God.

Paul tells us that our structure will be tested with fire. Gold, silver, and precious stones will withstand the fire and will remain; hay, wood, and straw will not. They will be burned up. Our pure works will remain and we will be rewarded; those done with impure motives will bring us no reward. But Paul tells us in verse 15, “*If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire*.” Picture a man escaping from his burning house with nothing but the clothes he is wearing.

This is the slave who hid his mina. He will enter heaven because his foundation was on Jesus Christ, but he will receive no reward. Let us not be this slave. Jesus expects us to work with pure motives; He wants to reward us in His kingdom.

Once more, we see the spiritual principle of those who use their gifts receiving more, while those who do not use them lose them. We all have abilities; we all have the Gospel; let’s be sure we use them for the glory of Christ.

In the final verse, there is a return to verse 14, which just appeared to be an aside. But it has an important message that we should not pass over. The new king called for all those who opposed him to be brought before him and slain in his presence. This is a warning to any who would choose to oppose Jesus. When Jesus comes back to set up His kingdom, any who have opposed Him will be slain. In Revelation 19 there is an account of the return of Christ. It is clear that many will gather to make war against Him. The beast and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire. Verse 21 describes the fate of the rest of the people gathered.

*And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

Worse still comes the judgement where all those who have refused Jesus throughout time will be cast into that lake of fire.

In this parable, Jesus gives an outline of what happens from the point in time He is talking to His return. Be sure your foundation is Jesus Christ. Then, endeavor to strengthen the church and build His kingdom, in gratitude for what He has done for you.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, because of You the precious Gospel exists; and You have left it in the hands of we who are Your humble slaves. It seems strange to leave something so wonderous in the hands of poor sinners, who deserve nothing good. But in Your wisdom, You have chosen this way to shame satan and demons, and all who follow them.

Because we are weak, we ask for Your strength to do the work You have for us. May that Gospel well up in our hearts when we have opportunity to share it. At least, Lord, show us where we can support other faithful evangelists, so that we can gain You interest.

We also ask for the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts and renew our minds. Dispose of any ulterior motives that we may have. We hope to work for You simply to bring You glory, through the strengthening of the church and the building of Your Kingdom.

Lord we praise You in Jesus’ name

Amen