

When the King Returns, Part 3

Luke 19:20-27

April 30, 2023

Well, you can turn in your Bibles to Luke 19 as we finish up the parable of the minas. Luke 19:11-27. It's really been a joy of mine (I think for many of you as well) to see reflected in the parable the heart of our Lord for his servants, his har, the heart of our Lord for us. We see in the Lord, in this parable, we see his noble character, we see how wise he is, and how patient he is to use the time that he is away from us in the body, in the flesh, is using this time to form that same noble character of his in all of us as we do his will, as we work for his same ends, which is to bring glory to the Father through the Gospel.

He gives each one of us who are true Christians, he gives us the mina of the Gospel, and he wants us to use it, and to invest it, and to sow this good seed of the Gospel, and see that Gospel have its own power, and bear its own fruit, and do all the work. And yet God is pleased to use us, means, to get that Gospel to others. What a joy. And today, as we finish the parable, Jesus

ends the story with, really, on a note of warning. And it is a sober note of warning. It's actually, makes up a, a majority chunk of the parable is this warning about this third servant that we're going to see. It's a caution for any who would claim to be his servants but fail to make use of the mina.

Warnings like we see at the end of this parable (and we see warnings like this throughout Jesus' teaching; in His ministry, often the parables are warnings). The warnings like this are really meant to instill a sense of sobriety in us, to cause us to be sober-minded, to be reflective, to provoke not a morbid introspection, not a, not a "paralysis by analysis" by any means, but more of a healthy self-reflection, so that we would render a good account to him when he returns. So we would be, as a church, as a people, wise to consider very carefully how we are using the mina that he's given, so that we can anticipate the return of the Lord with joy and with confidence and with great hope. That's really what the Lord's parable is meant to do for us.

And so as we get into a, maybe a darker section, a more ominous-sounding section of the parable, keep the big picture in mind.

Don't, if, for those who have, especially those who have sensitive consciences, don't let yourself be buried by the worry and the anxiety that "Maybe I'm the f, unfaithful servant." Take good stock of what you're actually doing with the mina of the Gospel he's given you, and let him bring to mind anywhere, anywhere where you need to change, humble yourself, repent. But for those, really, like the servant we're going to see today, this servant doesn't have a sensitive conscience. He has a hardened conscience. And so if there are any out there who have a hard conscience, an insensitive conscience, who tend to be, feel of yourself, pretty strong, self-confident, self-assured, maybe this parable is to disrupt your peace just a little bit. Let it do its good work, okay?

With that, let's read the parable once again. Luke 19:11, "As they heard these things, he" (Jesus) "proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the Kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, 'A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. And calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, "Engage in business until I come." But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We do not want this man to reign

over us." When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him saying, "Lord, your mina has made ten minas more." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant. Because you've been faithful in very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." The second came, saying, "Lord, your mina has made 5 minas." He said to him, "And you're to be over five cities."

"Then another came, saying, "Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief. For I was afraid of you because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, reap what you did not sow." He said to him, "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? Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest." He said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas." They said to him, "Lord, he has ten minas." "I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me

to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."'"

So we've been through, in the past couple weeks, the first two sections. We've seen the king and his resources in verses 11-14. Highlights the nobility of the king: his character, his concerns, his design. A noble man. A noble king, a good man with a good heart. Wise, kind, generous. That's the king.

And then in verses 15-19, when that king, that nobleman goes off to a far country, having received a kingdom, he comes back with a title, a king. He's got a land, he's got people who come to him and pay tribute. So that's the king and his reward, as he returns to his homeland to reward his faithful servants for their faithful service. And they've been working in a land of complete hostility to the king. Remarkable faithfulness that's only explained by a heart of love and loyalty to their sovereign. They love him.

For today, verses 20-27, the longest section of the parable, we see the king and his reckoning. The king and his reckoning. Jesus is in Jericho, as we've said. He's in the home of

Zacchaeus. He's mere hours' walk from Jerusalem, and here he's surrounded by his twelve apostles. He's surrounded by a throng of dis, of disciples, those who've been traveling along with him (some of them maybe for a long time, ever since his ministry in Galilee; others maybe more recently picked up in Perea or Judea).

There're also there around him at this time in Jericho, Jewish pilgrims who have traveled along with him along the road, going, intending to go up to Jerusalem for Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They've joined with the band of disciples, and so they've become excited along the way, they've been, as they've been hearing the significance of this group of disciples and who is in their midst; that it's none other than Jesus, the Christ of God, the Messiah.

So they know that they're near Jerusalem. They suppose the Kingdom of God is gonna appear immediately, that the Romans gonna be overthrown, that the Jews are gonna finally get their due reward. So that in their collective ex, excitement, and this messianic enthusiasm of the disciples (we're gonna see there's a good bit to that to see in the rest of the chapter, as we'll see

as they enter into Jerusalem), but Jesus needs to set expectations. He needs to explain a couple things.

And so he tells a parable for the sake of his true disciples, who, like we have done by His grace, they have discerned that the analogy he's making between the story of the parable and the reality the parable portrays, it has to do with his return, his departure, and his return.

He tells the parable so they will understand that at this time, so they understand there's going to be a gap, there's going to be an interval during which, "I expect you to do my work." That's how we've taken this. That's how many of us have been encouraged and challenged. And that's one of the main reasons he's telling this parable, is for our sake, for true disciples' sake.

True disciples have the heart of the two faithful servants in the parable. They take that single mina of theirs, and they put it to good work. They love their master. That's the heart of a true disciple. They love him. They rejoice to serve him. Anything else in their life is just, sometimes it's a

distracted, but they understand by God's choice and design. They've, "God's given me this lot, and I work in and through it for His glory because I love my Master," even in the presence of hostile countrymen, scoffers like we read about in 2 Peter 3), those who hate our Lord.

We work hard while the Master is away. We're eager to welcome him home. We're eager to report to him, to have that accountability when we'll come before him and report to him on the progress of his minas, that the power of his Gospel to save and to sanctify, we love thinking about that. We love working in the meantime. False disciples, on the other hand, they're also there in the midst. They are mixed in among the true. And so Jesus is telling this parable with them in mind as well.

Many of these current disciples (those who are going to put him on a colt, spread their cloaks in front of him, and shout "Hosanna," welcome him and champion him, and pr, sing praises of God as he enters into Jerusalem), many of them will be abandoning him in the end. One apostle in particular will be the cause of his betrayal and arrest and downfall. These are the false disciples, They're self-deceived, and they are portrayed

in this third servant, and they serve as a cautionary tale for us all.

Three points in our outline today. And if you're taking notes, here's the first point we're gonna see in this false servant. We're going to see, number one, the vile justification, vile justification. His justification for his behavior or his lack of action is vile. It's despicable. It's reprehensible. It's a vile justification, Luke tells us, "Then another came" (Luke, recording Jesus's words), "Another came saying, Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you because you're a severe man. You take what you didn't deposit, you reap what you did not sow." This servant appears before this king. He tells his master what he's done and then why he has done it. And just like the other two, we note that he addresses the returning king as "Lord." He calls him "Lord." Same term, same identification, meaning "I am your servant. You're my Lord. I'm your servant. We have the right relationship." So he's claiming an identity just like the other servants.

Unlike his fellow servants, we notice that this guy has a whole lot more to say. Obviously his conscience is bothering him here. He's feeling the, the tension that's caused by his neglect, especially as he's just heard his fellow servants report the great gains that their minas earned. He knows "I got some 'splaining to do." He's just heard the evidence of their faithfulness. He's just heard how, while he has been self-indulgent, they have been sacrificial, hardworking, doing what the master required.

One had in, had invested the mina diligently. Another had worked very, very hard, building a business, reproducing with it. He's just heard of their faithfulness. But this man's indolence, his neglect, his carelessness, his outright indifference toward the honor that's been given him; he's feeling right now the burning sense of shame. And I've got to imagine, in the presence of a king, with the title of a king, power and authority of a king, he's just got that panicked feeling of being caught.

Remember when you were a teenager, and you just got your license, and you were going just a tad over the speed limit, and you get pulled over by the red and blues, and you roll down that

window, and the heart is pounding and you're nervous. "You know how fast you were going?" "What, me? What? What, me?" He's caught. He's exposed. He's gonna have to give an account. I think that's something that the scoffers fail to realize, is that one day everybody is gonna stand before that king.

Luke has prepared us, actually, to see the servant in the correct light. It's hard to see it in English. Impossible really, but our translation says, it says, "Then another came." "Another." There are two words in Greek that can be translated, "another," but with opposite meanings. There's the word *allos*, which can mean another of the same kind, and then the word, *heteros*, which means another of a different kind.

This is the latter. This is another of a different kind. He's another servant, oh yes, but different than the previous two, of a different nature, of a different manner, of a different heart. First two servants are faithful. This one is "another." He's unfaithful. He's false. So the Lord is already preparing us for this in this account. We see this, this false servant, he's identified right from the front, so we know what we're seeing as we get into his explanations. We see that this false servant

has put on a bold face, hasn't he? He's trying to cover up the evidence of his fraud. He's done nothing, and he knows it. He's earned nothing, and he knows it. He's produced nothing, and so he tries to cover it over with flattery, fakery, and a false accusation.

First, the false servant attempts flattery, flattery. He addresses the returning king with the same title of respect as the other two servants use, calling him Lord. Kyrie. Is that how this servant has treated the nobleman, as his Lord? To call him "Lord" and then refuse to obey him is hypocrisy, high-handed hypocrisy. And to call him "Lord," in spite of the evidence, in spite of his actions, in spite of his heart? Obvious flattery, in an attempt to deceive. Jesus rightly said of people like this in Luke 6:46, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and you do not do what I tell you to do?" Drop the title or change your behavior. So he attempts flattery.

Second, the false servant attempts fakery. Fakery. Can't see it in some of the translations because they left out a word. But the New American Standard and the King James Version rightly provide a translation for the Greek word that's in there, but

it's hid, it's not in the, translated into the ESV. But it's the word *idou, idou*, which means "behold," "behold." So rather than, as our translation says, and as the ESV renders it, "Lord, here is your mina" (and that's not necessarily wrong, it's a translation choice. But that translation doesn't allow us to see the servant's attempted fakery), so more literally, the servant says "Lord, behold your mina." That's what he's saying. He's trying to, actually, rather than cover it over, rather than trying to minimize, he's trying to draw attention to it. "Lord, behold your mina, which I kept away, laid away in a handkerchief." Like, "Pay no attention to all the, the nothing. Look over here at this."

Jesus gives another version of this story in Jerusalem just a few days from now. He tells this during the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:25, and in that version the false servant takes the master's talent (which is a whole lot more money, 60 times the mina); takes the master's talent, and he buries it in the ground (Matthew 25:25). Since a talent is a significantly higher sum of money, as I said, valued at 60 times more than a mina, it makes sense that he buries it in the ground because he wants to prevent thieves from stealing it.

In this version here, as he tells it in this context, the unfaithful servant tells the master (and he's almost using boasting language), "Lord, behold your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief." It's actually the imperfect tense. So he's basically saying, "I was keeping it laid away." Like, "The whole time you were gone, I was making an effort to keep it laid away." He's portraying himself as being active, even though there's no action there. This is like smoke and mirrors, totally. "I've continuously been keeping it laid away, hidden, tucked safely out of sight." Good for you. You've done nothing. You've done nothing.

The word handkerchief here, *Sudarion*, it's a Latin loan-word, *soudarion*, from the verb *sudor*, which means "to sweat." So it's, it would be probably crass to see it as a sweat rag, but that is how you could translate this, as a sweat rag. That's how, that's what he's laid it up in. But there are other sweat rags that aren't just for sweating in, and that's kind-of the sense here. It's more like the silk handkerchief. So it's something nice, something that might be translated as a burial cloth over the face of Jesus. So it's more like that. It's more like something that could be pictured as ornate, something decorative, something soft and silky and smooth.

It's as Alfred Plummer has said, "He's not owning a fault. He's professing a virtue here. He's saying, 'I've not lost or spent any of it.'" He's trying to portray himself as being so careful, as treating the mina with such delicateness, even to, to the point of keeping the dust off of it, so that can retain its shine. "Master, here it is, safe and sound. Check it out, Lord. You've entrusted the mina to me, and I've done exactly what you wanted. I've kept it for you." Is that what, what the nobleman wanted? Back in verse 13, we just read it. "Here's a mina for you. Now, go engage in business." Not "Go and hide it. Keep it dust free." "Go and use it. Get it dirty. Tarnish it. Make it work. Continue doing that until I come."

The mina is seed money. It's capital invested by entrusting it into the hands of this servant, one he deemed trustworthy. So it's less about the money for this master; it's more about the people. It's ab, about people with dependable character, those whom he can give his money to and guarantee that that money is going to earn in their hands because they're trustworthy, or they're faithful. He's gonna make, those servants are the kind that are going to make his mina earn and gain and multiply. It's

always the point, that he's looking for the character of that person.

This attempt at hoodwinking the master, as, as he tells the parable, as Jesus tells this, is not gonna be lost on the crowd. They know exactly what's going on here. It's actually quite a humorous picture. This is, it's a laughable attempt by the servant in saying, "Pay no attention to my neglect, pay no attention to my nothing. Look over here at exactly what you gave me, which is shiny." As if the master would fall for this? No, "Behold your mina safe and sound; dust free, as dust free, and as shiny, oh Lord, as the day on which you gave it to me."

Well, as this Eddie Haskell-like figure tries to cover over his failure here, with this hubris and this trickery, we can see the master's not buying it at all. Nobody is in, nobody in the crowd's buying it. We're not buying it. We see exactly what this guy's doing. "Oh, you look wonderful today, Mrs. Cleaver." Meanwhile, he's taking Wally out back and smoking cigarettes, right?

We see in Proverbs 20, verse 8, "A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes." You can imagine right about now, that's exactly what's going on. As the deadpan gaze of the Master is boring a hole into his soul, exposing his heart, laying open for everyone to see in that courtroom, exactly what this man's made of. The servant's conscience here is pricked. And so what does he do? Drop on his knees, bow, confess his sin? No, he can't leave it there. He doubles down, and he sees the need now to do some tap dancing. "Hit it, Ginger, on the piano." Boom. And he starts tap dancing. He's got to justify his neglect. He's got to explain, somehow, his failure. We would call this "defending himself."

He's attempted flattery and fakery. And now, third, the false servant attempts a false accusation. This is how he doubles down, with false accusation, by slandering his master's character. You believe it? He responds here to the quizzical look in his master's eyes, that's bringing conviction to his conscience. And the unfaithful servant says in verse 21, "I hid your manna. And here's the reason why. Because I was afraid of you." Really?

"I was afraid of you. Look, I'm the victim here. I'm the victim." Why? What reason in the master is there to be afraid? "I was afraid of you because," huh, here's the evidence: "You are a severe man. You take what you didn't deposit. You reap what you did not sow." He accuses him of being a severe man. The word is *austeros*. Austere. He's an austere man. "You're, you're a demanding man. You are a taskmaster. You're an overlord. You're always so stern, so exacting. I can do eh, never do anything right around you. You're unreasonable. You're critical. Impossible to please."

You know what he's saying? He's saying, "It's your fault. It's your fault that I was paralyzed into inaction. I just couldn't act. I was so scared of you." And he backs up that slander with more slander. "You take what you didn't deposit, You reap what you didn't sow." Yuh, not hard to see what he's saying there. He's calling his master a thief. Those who withdraw what they didn't deposit, what do we call them? Bank robbers. Sic the FBI on them. Those who reap what they didn't sow, those are either tyrants or plunderers from a foreign land (those who invade and raid and steal all the crops to feed their army), or a tyrant.

This servant's hubris, trying to double down in the middle of his shame, knows no bounds. And all this leads him to, really, an outright contradiction. Who's he trying to kid here? "You take what you didn't deposit. You reap what you didn't sow?" Wait a minute. But in verse 20, he just acknowledged, "Lord, here is your mina." He's totally contradicted himself. "The one that you deposited with me, the one that you gave me to sow. Here's your mina back." So it, he totally acknowledges, "Oh, this master did deposit something."

I don't think he's being insincere here. I think he's being sincere. But obviously we can see that in his sin, his pride, in his laziness, in his utter disregard of his master, all these charges are coming, flooding in by his conscience. Which, in the presence of the master, and with that gaze fixed on him, is starting to bring charge after charge and accusation after accusation, from his conscience to his heart.

And instead of repenting, instead of saying, "You are right, you are just," what does he say? "You're unjust. You're the problem." He doubles down in his sin. He chooses to ignore the

shame, ignore the conviction, and it results in more blindness for him. Faulty reasoning, total contradiction here.

You know what it shows about the servant? It shows that, no matter what the title was on his name tag, no matter whose name was on his company van, no matter who or what he claimed to be, in spite of the fact that he's been living in the noble's household, eating the nobleman's food, consuming all of his stuff, making use of the privileges of the household, representing the nobleman, this man does not know his master.

His master is a complete stranger to him. He calls him "Lord," but refuses to do his will. He says he's afraid of him, but fear doesn't keep him from accusing him straight to his face. He pretends to know him, to know what kind of man, what kind of man he really is. "Come on in for a secret. I'll tell you what he's really like." The only proof he provides is his slander.

It's like so many voices we hear today, isn't it? Out there playing the victim, feigning an interest in justice, claiming to be oh so afraid of the oppressive power. Calling it "toxic this" and "toxic that." All feigning an interest in justice,

pretending justice is on their side, that they represent a righteous cause. Meanwhile, what's in their hearts is evil, sin, a guilty conscience that they want to suppress.

Let's look a little closer, past the incendiary accusation. Actually examine the facts, and what you see is more than just a vile attempt at self-justification. What we see is that "The one who condemns the righteous" (Proverbs 17:15), "The one who condemns the righteous is an abomination to the Lord." He is condemning a righteous master who is not only innocent, he is a righteous master, a kind master, a wise master, a good and faithful and noble man. The one who condemns such a one as that, he's an abomination to the Lord. One that the Lord hates.

King has heard enough, which brings us to point 2: The just condemnation Point 2: The just condemnation. After a, a vile self-justification like we just heard, that's all that remains, is a just condemnation. We read from Proverbs 20 earlier. Here it says in verse 26 (Proverbs chapter 20), "A wise king winnows the wicked, and he drives the wheel over them." That's the threshing sledge, the threshing wheel over the top of them.

Ground out all the chaff, and all that's worthless, and all that is a nothingness, like flattery, and fakery, and attempt to counter-accuse.

Drive that all away. "Winnows the wicked. He drives the wheel over them." Why? To get to the true nugget. What is the true nugget here? Rottenness, vileness, wickedness, evil. This is what the king does in verse 22. He cuts through the flattery, he sees through the fakery. He drives a threshing sledge over the top of this false accusation, and he winnows the servant's words to expose this rotten kernel beneath, and reveal the bold-faced lie.

Verse 22, "He said to him, 'I'll condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant.'" "You want my evidence? My evidence is your words. And now here's my judgment on you: You are wicked. That's what you are." The word wicked, *poneros*, is, refers to a moral evil, badness. Describes someone with a bad character, evil intent, wicked designs, wicked motives. He's false to the core. He's of his father, the devil. That's what this is. The servant's character is exactly the opposite of who

this king is in his nobility. They are at polar opposites, polar extremes.

And so the king, notice, he refuses to defend his character to the wicked servant. He refuses to explain himself, to make any response to any false charges. He seh, "No, no, no. Wait a minute. I, I don't. I don't sow. Come on, yuh suh, you're overstating it. I don't reap where I didn't sow. I don't, I don't take up where I didn't deposit. Come on, you're wrong about me. Let me win you over. Let me defend myself to you. Because you've clearly misunderstand all my intentions. Oh, you thought I was giving you a, a mean look? Oh, no, no. I was looking at something else. I didn't mean to offend you. Oh, my tone was wrong. I'm so sorry." You see, there's none of that here.

Proverbs 26:2, "Like a fluttering bird or a flying swallow, so a curse without cause does not come to rest." King takes a very wise approach here to this false accusation, to this slander. He just simply ignores it. We've seen some, from some quarters of the Internet, different dark places where they're all exposing all kinds of "bad things" in good leaders. We've seen some mud

slung over at Grace Community Church and my former pastor, John MacArthur, to try to make him look evil and wicked, and as if he's done all kinds of evil and covered it over, and hurt women, and done unjust things.

And you know what Grace Community Church has chosen to do against all these slanderous false accusations? Say nothing. They refused to go back to old counseling cases at these people's demands and unpack what should be kept discreet and covered over in love. They have done the righteous thing and the wise thing by refusing to answer the charges of the likes of Julie Roys. It's wicked, what people out there online are doing to faithful men.

That's what this king does. He simply ignores the charge. Instead, the king acts kingly here. He acts nobly, he acts according to noble character, he does what justice requires, and he recompenses wickedness wherever he finds it. And notice he's, especially when he finds it in his own household, that there's evil in his own household among his closest servants. So let's start there. Let's start where it's closest to me, and work its way out.

Good principle for you. When you see injustice in the world, maybe start with your own heart, start with the members of your own household, work your way out there, outward from there. Let your outrage be over your own sin first before you start charging others, rather than stoop to this man's false accusations, and go back and forth with a man of evil character. The king is not gonna dignify the man's slander by trying to answer it.

Instead he, he just backs his own charge against the servant. He goes immediately to the evidence. He says to him, "I'll condemn you with" (evidence) "your own words, you wicked servant. Let's take your words here. You knew that I was a severe man, really? Taking what I did not deposit, reaping what I did not sow? Really? You know that?" Don't hear that as an admission on the king's part. He's in, not admitting that as fault, that as true. He's not saying the guy's charge has any merit at all. He's just repeating the servant's words back to him. He's saying them out loud so that they reverberate and echo throughout the, the palace courtroom. This is, his words are Exhibit A in making his case. And you know what? He's not gonna need an Exhibit B.

In fact, the translators of the Greek New Testament, they kind-of insert a question mark after verse 22. Reads something like this: "You knew, did you, that I was a severe man? Hmm. You knew that?" (Question mark). Pluperfect here. So he's taking note of the fact the wicked s, servant's judgment against his master is a resolved judgment. It's a fixed opinion. "A severe man, eh? After all that I've given you, that's the conclusion, the settled conclusion you've come to about me. That's what you've come to know about me. That's how you've come to view my character? Huh." The servant's words have become the rope for the hangman's noose, and the king is gonna start drawing it tight around his neck. "Why then, did you not put my money in the bank?" Just open a savings account. Get one of those CD's. "And at my coming I might have collected it with interest."

I mean, if the servant is so afraid of such an "austere man," such a "severe master," why did he do nothing, even the minimal amount of effort? If you can't produce, put the money in the bank. Let somebody else make money with my, m, my, mina. So his inattention, his lack of effort, his utter disregard for doing the master's will, and failing to follow his clear instructions

before he left, what he has failed to do really betrays the lie in charging the master with wrong.

The master hasn't taken where he hasn't deposited. He deposited the money with him. Proves the evil of this man's character. It reveals an obvious fact, that he has no love at all for this king. Therefore, he has no place in the king's household. He has no part in doing the king's will. No stake in the king's name. No matter what his words are, no matter how he thinks of himself, no matter what pretense he makes, no what, no matter what his arguments are, his excuses, his defenses in his behalf, this man is a false servant. He's a total hypocrite. He's a liar, and he's a fraud.

The enemies of verse 14, at least they're honest about their animosity toward the nobleman. They declare their hatred publicly. "We do not want this man to reign over us." I'm not saying it's good. I'm not saying it's right. I'm just saying it's honest. At least they haven't covered over their hatred with hypocrisy. This man, by pretending loyalty, addressing him as "Lord," his hatred is disguised as friendship. And get this: He is poised and ready to betray the Son of Man with a kiss.

It's rather ironic here, isn't it, that the wicked servant has done to the master exactly what he accused the master of doing. To me, eh, eh, as I've been in leadership and seen all of these kinds of people throughout my ministry, they show up all the time. That is a clear and obvious sign of a guilty conscience, when the guilty accuses the innocent of his own crime or his own sin.

This wicked servant's indolence resulted in the master's loss. By receiving the mina and being charged to engage in business, this servant has a fiduciary responsibility toward his master. He is bound by law, by common propriety, by good faith, by noble character, just by common sense, he is bound to be loyal to his master, to be diligent, to work diligently, act in good faith, work in the best interest of his master. He's supposed to act in the best prudence possible, apply the highest degree of care and caution and skill.

But by his own testimony, he intentionally put the mina away, wrapped it up in a handkerchief. He's been careless. He's been indifferent. He showed disregard for the master, disrespect, a

total lack of love for the master. And folks, that is what false discipleship looks like. No love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Failing to work with the mina that he is given to you.

So, failing to execute on his fiduciary responsibility, instead of falling on his face, confessing his sin, he accuses the master of theft. That's essentially, though, what he's done. He robbed the master of any interest that the money might have earned, by tucking it away and just letting it sit there. He's cost the master money.

Now he doesn't see it that way, of course. We can safely assume that he wouldn't care; that if he did see it that way, he didn't care. He's playing the victim here, and by playing the victim, he distorts the truth. He condemns the master and he justifies himself. He's trying to turn his failure into a virtue, turn the master's benevolence into an accusation of evil. He's trying to flip the script and subvert reality, and get everybody else to believe a false narrative that he has invented. And it is evil. His condemnation is entirely just.

It's exactly what Judas Iscariot will do within the next week, exactly what he will do. Which, it's hard for me to see that Jesus is not telling this in some way to provoke Judas Iscariot's conscience here. But this is what explains the betrayal of Judas, the way he can justify in his own mind, in his own heart, handing over the sinless Son of God to the Sanhedrin for execution. I mean, how can the guy get it in his heart, in his head, to do such a thing?

It's because Judas thought little of the mina that the Lord gave him. He thought very little of it. He had the honor of being numbered with the Twelve. Oh, but that didn't mean royal purple robes, walking through the earth and having everybody fall down and praise your name and say, "Oh Rabbi, Rabbi Judas." No, they walked dusty roads, and the Son of Man had no place to lay his head. And Judas, he didn't like that kinda living. His skin was for a maybe a more delicate, uh, form of life, like a palace, cushions, soft clothing. He didn't count the honor of preaching the Kingdom to be enough.

And this, I mean, if I could have any gift, any of the supernatural apostolic gifts that the Holy Spirit gave out

during the transitionary time, you know what I'd love to have is the gift of healing. To just go to people in suffering and completely alleviate it with a touch; eradicate disease, and all that, sorrows, and parents grieving over children. I'd love to do that.

And you know what Judas had? That! To validate the message of the Kingdom, he had miracles of power. You think that's a little thing he did? He despised the gift that he'd been given. He despised the Lord who gave it to him. He counted the Lord's mina to be a small thing, and refused to do his very best with what he had received in a heart of gratitude. Why? Because he counted the mina he received as a little thing, of little significance in the world, of little value.

Beloved, don't let that be you. Judas was numbered among the Twelve, traveled for three years with them. He was so fastidious about the funds that all the disciples entrusted him with the money bag, not knowing that he kept dipping into it to take for himself. That only came, was revealed later.

Let this parable be a warning to you, my friend. If you name the name of Christ and yet look for some signs of falseness in you. Do you hold yourself aloof from people? D'you stay on the fringes of the church? When's the last time you invited somebody into your home and treated them to hospitality, expecting nothing in return? Do you refuse to love people? Do you refuse to love worldly people, people who are out there who are s, lost, need salvation? Do you few, refuse to love Christ's people?

Do you find reasons to accuse them, and charge them, and cri, gripe and complain about them? Are you easily offended? Do you have thin, paper-thin skin? Watch out, watch out. When's the last time you shared the Gospel? When's the last time you took that mina out, let it fly? Put that quarter in and said "I'm, I'm playing the whole Gospel now." When's the last time you used the mina of your gifts and talents, investing them in other people? Use the mina of your time. Steward your time well, for the sake of the Kingdom.

If you look at all those different examples I've given, and say, "Man, you know, I mean, you know, honestly, before the Lord. If

he's to be standing here, and I'm..." This guy's standing before the Lord, the Master. Hard for me to find an example. Be warned, my friend. Be warned. Now, for those of you with sensitive consciences, I know who you are, and I know that you're probably not seeing all that you have done.

Reminds me of when the Lord comes to those that he just charged, you know, "I was in prison. You didn't visit me. I was sick. You didn't come and visit me. 'S hungry, you didn't feed me. 'S thirsty, you didn't give me a drink." And those who are false say, "Lord, when did we see that?" But you know, the people with sensitive consciences, they're like "Lord, I, I don't know what you're talking about." He says "No, no, yeah, I was hungry and you gave me food. Thirsty, gave me drink. I was sick, and, m, you visited me. I was in prison. You came and visited me. You were there." "Lord, when did we see you like that? I don't know."

True believer, take courage. Be comforted in the fact that your God is omniscient, and he sees all things. He sees your good deeds. He designed them (Ephesians 2:10), planned your good works from before the foundation of the world, and he is gui,

guiding you through every wicket, every gate, leading you through every little good work he wants you to do. And he's taking note. It's great! He gives you the power, he gives you the ability, he gives you the energy, he gives you the mina, he gives you the resource, he gives you the strength, he gives you the motivation. Everything comes from him. And then when you do it, he rewards you. He gives you the credit. So for you with sensitive consciences, know that the Lord marks your service.

There's a particular warning, I think, here, for a church like ours, where we do strive to be faithful in our doctrine. But it's really important to us that I, there's good reason for that. I'm not gonna argue at all right now, but we want to be accurate. We want to be biblical in our theology. We count it to be lifesaving, really. Essential.

But the mina of the Gospel that we've received, sometimes we can tend to think that we know how to protect that mina, keep it really shiny and dust free and keep it indoors; you know, out of the elements, wrapped in a handkerchief, away from the dust that would tarnish its shine. We got to be careful. Striving for doctrinal soundness, we need to be careful that the Gospel that

we try to protect and guard and articulate very, very well; It's not for admiring. I mean, we do admire it, but it's, that's not its purpose. It's for saving souls.

It is like the, the life preserver that you throw into the water. You don't say, "No, keep it on the ship where it's dry, and it sparkles and it's all shined up, and..." No, there's somebody drowning in the water. We throw it in, we're gonna get that thing wet. We don't care if it gets seaweed on it. We don't care if it hits 'em in the face, and I get a little blood on the life preserver. "Hey, what, what's that? We're going to keep it polished up." We want to save souls. We want to save lives. That's what the mina is for.

And don't worry about the mina. It gets a little scratch on it, tarnish, it's okay. The Gospel is a hearty, powerful thing. So take it out of its hiding place, wherever you've tucked it away, unwrap it from its handkerchief, or sweat-rag, or whatever it is you're putting it in, and preach it. Go preach it. Proclaim it. Teach it. Explain it. Defend it. As Spurgeon says, "Let the lion out of the cage," and see it do its work.

We preserve the Gospel when we use it. We guard the Gospel best when we open the vault and give it away. We defend it by proclaiming it. Church, let us never be so interested in doctrinal precision that we fail to see the point of the precision, which is to apply the doctrine with wisdom for the souls of men and women. Fastest route to dead orthodoxy is a failure to proclaim the Gospel we claim to know, failing to preach the Gospel that we say we believe. Let none of us be anything like this indolent, wicked servant. Let us instead follow the example of the faithful.

So after hearing this vile justification by the servant, after delivering a just condemnation, the king passes sentence, and then executes the sentence. We see this in point three. Number three: "The swift execution." The swift execution. In any trial, in any courtroom, after the prosecution has rested, after the judge has made his decision and dropped his gavel, condemned the guilty, there is a sentence to follow. There's a sentencing phase. And we, here we enter into the royal courtroom, presided over by a king, and so (unlike our legal system), justice here

is swift, isn't it? He is lawgiver, judge, jury, executioner, all wrapped up into one man. With the king, sovereign, he's the entire government, embodied in one person. Everything is much more efficient. Justice is much swifter, and that's a good thing in the, in the hands of this good king.

The condemnation is in verse 22, and now the sentence is handed down, verse 24. And we see then it's followed by a protest in verse 25, which then is answered, and then finally the execution in verse 27. First, let's look at the sentence, verse 24. "He said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'" When the Lord takes away that which He has entrusted to every one of his servants, what is he saying here by taking this guy's mina away? I mean, if the mina represents what every true servant of God's household in Christ's Kingdom has received, which is an equal measure (the Gospel, at the very least); taking away the mina is saying what? "You can no longer identify as my servant." That's what he's saying. Let's illustrate this briefly by considering what such a judgment might look like against a church. A church.

Turn over to the Book of Revelation, Revelation, in the second chapter. Revelation chapter 2. This is the first letter that the risen Christ has sent to one of the seven churches in Asia Minor from his own mouth and have it written by John. He sends seven letters out to seven churches in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), and the first one goes to the church in Ephesus. We know a lot of, about Ephesus from the pages of Scripture: From Acts, from the Ephesian letter, from the, the letter to Timothy, first letter to Timothy. But we see in Revelation 2:1-5, we see precisely the danger that Jesus warned the Ephesian church about, is precisely the danger that Jesus is warning the disciples about in our parable.

Revelation 2. "The, to the Angel of the church in Ephesus, write, 'The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands. I know your works, your toil, and your patient endurance, how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you've not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love that you had at first. Remember, therefore, from where you have fallen. Repent, and do

the works you did at first. And if not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.'"

The seven golden lampstands. You know what a lampstand's for? It's for shining light. It's for bearing light. It's pictured, basically picturing the, the menorah in the temple. And here the lampstand is taken out of the holy temple, and now put into a local church. That is what a local church is, is a light-bearing entity. As we preach the Gospel, as we see people saved and then sanctified, and then they go out, that light goes out into the community. We let our light shine before men. That's what the lampstand is.

So to remove their lampstand is to say, "You can no longer be one of my churches. No more light is gonna come out of this place. Not my light. You may be preaching sermons and giving talks and doing all that stuff, but whatever you call this gathering that you're in, if I have removed the lampstand," Jesus says, "you're no longer a church." Doesn't matter what it says on the sign.

So this is a warning to the Ephesian church; a warning of judgment, a historically sound church having a record of good works, a legacy of patient endurance, a reputation for doctrinal clarity and discernment. But since they had left their first love, the heart had been ripped out of this place. Apart from repentance and a renewed love for Jesus Christ, their drift into cold orthodoxy is gonna result in Christ abandoning this church, removing the lampstand, taking away the light-bearing privilege that he'd given it, taking away their mina. Go back to Luke 19:24.

To take the mina away is tantamount, as we're saying, tantamount to removing a lampstand. Just as Jesus is no longer gonna allow a church to identify with him (or in the terms of the parable, to have the privilege, or having the mina, bearing one of the lampstands), the same principle applies to an individual believer. Professes to be a believer, professes Christ, but he hides his mina and he never uses it.

This false pretender who disdains the nobleman, he's sided with the rebellious citizens, essentially, hasn't he? He, too, refuses to have this man rule over him. He's demonstrated he does not want this guy to rule over him. How does he demonstrate that? By not doing what he says. His mask has been removed, his

true character's revealed. He's exposed as a fraud, a false servant. So the sentence is passed. This man is no longer a member of the master's household. Where does he go? Outside.

Protest is v, a, voiced here in verse 25. The protest is not about the sentence that's passed upon the servant. That's patently just. Everybody sees that. The protest is about the Lord awarding another mina to the already successful servant. Verse 25, "They said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas.'" But, number of commentators believe verse 25 represents an interruption from the crowd. They interject. The audience of Jesus is so engrossed in the story, so emotionally engaged, they just jumped in, interrupted Jesus, protested out loud. They refused to let Jesus finish without an explanation.

And I'll admit that's an attractive point of view. I could be persuaded if I've tipped a little bit. But I think Luke is so competent as a narrator that I think he'd be able to make it very clear that if it was the crowd protesting, or if this protest is a part of the story. I think here it's a part of the story. I think it's best to see it that way. But still, I do think that this represents Jesus knowing this is a big deal. He

can sense the unease of the crowd around him, their agitation. "Give it to the one who has ten minas." What, hoo ha hoo ha? What? Take the mina away from an unfaithful servant who wasn't using it anyway? That's clearly just, okay, we get that. No problem. "Hand it over to the guy who already has ten minas." What do they say? "That's not fair." It's not fair.

Let's consider a few theological principles about the way God works. First, God is absolutely sovereign, isn't he? He's absolutely sovereign. He chooses who gets what and how much. He chooses whom to reward and in what measure. He creates as he wills. He decides as he pleases, and he acts according to all his good pleasure. He's sovereign, which is always right and never wrong.

Because, second, God is perfectly just. God is absolutely sovereign, and he is perfectly just. The judge of the earth will always do what's right. He'll always think what's right, decide what's right, speak and act with righteousness, because it is the essence of God to be righteous. Take away righteousness, and God is not God.

The third, God is freely gracious, also. Means his grace is never owed. If it were owed, it would no longer be a matter of grace, right? It'd be a matter of justice if it were owed. So if it's a matter of justice, see point two. But if it's grace, then it's a matter of divine freedom. He has freedom to dole out his gifts as he wills, in whatever measure he wills, to whomever he wills, however he wills, and for how long he wills.

As recipients of his grace, our sole duty is to receive his gifts with a heart of gratitude, enjoy the gift that he's given, and steward that gift faithfully according to the will of the giver; according to his will, his design, his intention. So the king in the parable (representing Christ), he acts according to the prerogative of absolute sovereignty, in the confidence of perfect justice, and by the freedom of his grace to give as he sees fit.

And let's add a fourth theological principle to our little list. God's absolutely sovereign, he's perfectly just, he's freely gracious and, we see here, he is tremendously generous, tremendously generous. God is love. And love is a giving, generous attribute. That's why when I see a person who professes

to be a Christian but doesn't show any love, I got a lot of question marks. God is characterized by love, and he takes great delight in pouring out blessing, and doling out kindness after kindness, and showering his people with mercy and compassion. He simply loves being generous.

He does good to the evil and the good, to the just and the unjust, to the righteous and the unrighteous. Just gives and gives and gives and gives. He never stops giving. So to take the one mina from the pretender, that's just, that's just just and right. The man squandered the stewardship he'd been given, treated his gift like cheap grace, took it for granted, despised it, thus proved to be a false disciple.

But then to give the mina to the one who had already had ten minas? You know what Jesus wants us to see here? He wants us to see in this king the generosity of God and the generosity of Christ. He takes great delight in giving, and he does it over and above. He pours out blessing upon blessing upon blessing. And we tend to think in our human, typical human limitation, along the lines of the reasoning of verse 25, "Lord, he already has ten minas. He's good. It's good enough. I mean, come on,

give him too much, he's gonna, it's gonna, it's gonna make him slothful." Jesus wants us to see something completely different in the divine arithmetic of generosity. He doesn't stop. Ten minas is just the beginning of his generosity. It's just the start. More is coming. And believe me, beloved, you have no idea of what is in store for those who love God. He's gonna give, and he's gonna give, and he's gonna give.

Don't fail to notice what the king says in verse 26 as he answers. He says, "'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given.'" It's not just the one with the ten minas who's receives more, it's to "everyone who has." If your mina earned .00000001% more, right? It, if there's been an earning on your mina. Guess what? Abundant blessing upon you. All servants, already recipients of the King's grace, they are all also going to receive of the magnanimity of his generosity.

Just a brief footnote here I want to insert, on a couple questions that came to me after last week's sermon, where the king rewarded his faithful servants with ten cities, and then five cities. Remember that? The response of some dear saints was something like this: "Ah, really? Having responsibility over an

entire city? Sound may, maybe, that sounds like a terrific honor for you, Travis. You got control issues, and you, Type A, and love to be in charge of stuff. That 'being over a city' makes me anxious to no end. I don't want to have anything to do with ruling a city, thank you very much. Got no interest in that. I don't even want to serve on my homeowners association. I'm not even on the PTA. Don't even want to be on, signed to Neighborhood Watch. Nothing."

Rest assured, dear saint, rest assured. We can trust our omniscient, benevolent, omnibenevolent, all-wise Lord to reward us in exactly the way that is going to thrill each and every one of us to the core of our souls. Don't you think that? Is he able? He created you. He knitted you together in your mother's womb. He's known you from before the foundation of the world. He knows precisely how to reward you and how to thrill your soul. You can trust him for this.

Besides, we don't want to become so tied to the picture in the parable, which I, I'll just say I do believe represents something quite close to reality. I think, considering the upcoming millennial kingdom, ten cities, five cities, there are

going to be cities that need oversight. And Christ is going to assign those responsibilities and give those honors. But don't become so tied to the picture in the parable, that you fail to see the point. Don't miss the forest through the trees here. He loves you. He will reward you in a way that fits you, in a way that fits how he made you, in a way that fits the purpose that he designed you for, and what he plans for you, which is a thousand years into the future.

Another thing besides, what may appear to you today, now, to be daunting from your limited, frail, weak, sin-laden point of view (and by the way, those are not insults. It's just facts. We're all that way, right?) Take away all the sin, all the effects of sin on the mind, all the effects of sin on the body, the weakness of mind and body, which, take away that, all of that, and put us into our glorified state with sound mind, sound body, no sin. You think our judgment might be a little different than it is right now? Rest assured, dear saint, you will be fit for the honor that He bestows upon you. And the honor that he bestows upon you will be fit for you. He's gonna bring them together in perfect wisdom. Okay?

All right, returning to the false pretender, the bad guy, (boo, hiss, hiss), here he is. One more time we want to look at him.

Jesus also puts the words of explanation into the mouth of the king. Verse 26, he says, "'Take away the mina. Give it to the one who has ten minas.'" And, "'From the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.'" And when the king says, "The one who has not," of course he's not talking about taking the mina that he originally gave him. That's the very thing he's taken away. It's not as if he's given the guy nothing. It's not as if he has absolutely nothing here. Like the other nine servants, he started with what the nobleman gave him, and he refused to do anything with it. He spurned the master's grace. He treated that gift (and, by extension, treated the master as well), with cold indifference.

So this saying, "'From the one who has not even what he has will be taken away,'" that saying is from Jesus' earlier teaching in Luke 18. It's a warning. "Take care how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given. And from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." It's a warning. He instills the same level of sobriety in his disciples, warning them in Matthew 13:11, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it's not been given." To those who hear this parable and ignore it, just keep on moving ahead, they haven't received the secrets of the

Kingdom of Heaven. "For, to the one who has, more will be given and he'll have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

Warning is so clear, that to all who hear the Gospel, all who hear preaching, all who hear sermons, Jesus wants them to realize they are responsible for what they hear. They have a duty to make use of the Gospel, to use truth like a mina granted by a gracious Savior, so they might put it into work for the service of the Kingdom, for the glory of God.

Let's be very clear about this, lest there's any mistake. The one who, like this unfaithful servant, the one who fails to put the mina to use, does not matter how long he's been listening to sermons. Doesn't matter a, if he's been listening to and learning from the best preachers and teachers. Doesn't matter how long he's been a member of a doctrinally-sound, biblically-healthy church. Doesn't matter if he's been sitting under expositional preaching, even in the church of Ephesus itself. Doesn't matter if he's, knows to discern between good and bad preaching. If he fails to use the mina, invest the mina, put the mina that he's received to work, that man or that woman is not a

true Christian, but a false pretender. Even what he thinks he has, even what she thinks she has, even that will be taken away.

Well, what's the final end of the wicked servant, unfaithful servant? Just briefly turn over to Matthew chapter 25 and verse 24. Jesus adds a note of great consequence. We see in that passage (it's, it's implied here as well, which I'll show you), but Jesus tells the parable again, as I said in Matthew 25, and from the perspective of where we are at Luke 19, it's just a few days from now. It's just a slightly different version of the parable, but same structure, similar elements. And note the clear warning about the fate of the unfaithful.

Look at Matthew 25:24. "He also who had received the one talent, came forward saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, gathering where you scattered no seeds. So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant, you knew that I, I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I've scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with

interest. So take the talent from him, give it to the one who has ten talents, for to everyone who has more will be given, and he'll have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Outer darkness. This place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? What's Jesus talking about there? Picture of Hell, isn't it? The fate of the unfaithful is to be sentenced, along with all the rebels and all the enemies of God, to spend eternity in Hell, in eternal conscious torment. The unfaithful are self-deceived, and they are shocked at the verdict.

According to Matthew 7:19, they've claimed to be fruit-bearing trees, but they bear no fruit and they're cut down and they're thrown to the fire. But they think they're faithful trees.

Jesus tells us, "Look past what they say, look past their claims, and you will know them by their fruits." And then these memorable words in Matthew Chapter 7, verse 21 and following, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father

who's in Heaven. On that day, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

It's a sobering reality that this wicked servant (Luke 19 you can go back there), he's one of those. King has rewarded the faithful. He's recompensed the unfaithful. And now, in the interests of justice, there's one more group to deal with. Those in verse 14 hated the king, rebelled against him. Most of the parable, we see, has been focusing on the king's household. We notice that he does what's right, wise and prudent. He cleans up his own backyard first, before he turns to deal with the rebellious citizens outside his gates in his own country. Reminds me of what Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:17, "For it's time for judgment to begin at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who don't obey the gospel of God? And if the righteous are scarcely saved, what'll become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Those who refuse to bow the knee to the king, Jesus portrays their fate in verse 27. He does it graphically. "As for these enemies of mine who did not

want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."

The unfaithful servant is now grouped in with them. He didn't say "I don't want this man to rule over me." He just didn't let the man rule over him. His actions tell the truth. He's cast into the lot of the enemies. Very strong, vivid language here. "Drag them here. Execute them before me." Our king takes personal responsibility for the execution of the rebels. He makes sure that the last face that they see before they enter into eternal judgment is his. The king on his royal throne, personally witnessing their execution. That's the image that they're gonna take into eternity.

Whatever your view of Jesus is, if it does not include the picture of him presiding over the execution of his enemies, then you've got a wrong view of Jesus. He is a great king. He is a mighty sovereign. He is not to be trifled with, as those who rebel against him are gonna find out, but too late.

Well, we know that the nobleman-become-king is Christ. The Kingdom that he receives is the Kingdom of God. And when he

returns, he will take possession of the world that's his. He'll put all his enemies under his feet. Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

At his second coming, Christ will come reward the faithful, all those who are true Christians, who are known as such, by bearing fruit, by using the mina that each one has received, mina of the Gospel. Why do they do that? Because they love their nobleman-become-king. They rejoice to see him come in his glory, count it a great honor, glorious privilege to serve him, a profound joy in a spirit of humble, hardworking gratitude. That's how the true servants are.

Also at his second coming, Christ is gonna rep, recompense the unfaithful, all those who are false Christians. And they're known as such because they bear no fruit. They don't invest the mina of the Gospel. They hide it, keep it tucked away, hidden, refusing to let its power multiply and bear fruit. Fake Christians occupy many seats in many churches, and as slothful pretenders they will join the rebels in the eternal torment of judgment.

And when Christ returns, he will put all his enemies under his feet. He will execute the evil. He will slay the wicked. Then, the world is going to be, on that day, put to rights, when God reconciles all things to himself, rightly aligning everything, all things, to his perfect justice, so that righteousness is the standard, and it covers the earth like the waters cover the sea, and righteousness is done on earth as it is in Heaven.

So my friend, what about you? Where do you stand? And whatever God has given you to do, whatever place he's assigned to you, whatever roles he's given you, put you in, are you doing all your work to glorify God? Do you adorn the Gospel in how you conduct your work, or not? Are you opening your mouth to proclaim the Gospel to unbelievers? If any honest self-examination before the Lord frightens you, take the time now because God is patient, as we read from 2 Peter 3.

Take the time now to do what the wicked servant failed to do. What is that? Confess your sins. Humble yourself before him. Confess your sins to the Lord, 'cause he knows them all anyway. Seek His forgiveness. Ask him to give you the gift of faith and

repentance, that you might not be swept away in judgment, but would stand with the righteous, welcoming, rejoicing at his coming, knowing that there is a glorious future of magnanimous generosity from God for you forever. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you so much for, again, for sending the Lord Jesus Christ, and giving us this nobleman who you have made king. We thank you that we belong to him, and that we are servants in his household; that you have granted to us the gift, the precious gift of a mina. You've given us time, gifts to serve one another, serve others. You've given us this precious Gospel.

We pray that you would help us to be faithful. Help us to see your heart of love, your heart of generosity, and let us be like you. Let us demonstrate and show the world our love for you. Let, let them see how much we love you by how much we work for you, how much we desire to do in your name, to be bold and, and outward with our profession of faith in Jesus Christ; to be clear about the Gospel, to be lovers of people, lovers of sinners, lovers of saints.

Help us to give ourself to the work of the ministry with the days we have, with the time we have. Let us not be slothful, indolent. Let us, let us never, ever try to blame you. Let us instead see you as all glorious, wise, loving, kind, good; and our king as the most noble, and the fairest of ten thousand. We love you, Father. Because of him, in his name we pray. Amen.