

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. 12 He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. 13 "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.' 14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' 15 "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. 16 "And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.' 18 "And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.' 19 "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.' 20 "And another came, saying, 'Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 "He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 'Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?' 24 "And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 "And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' 26 "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. 27 "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."

This story should be familiar to anyone who has been a regular attender during the 7 years that you have honored me with the privilege of this pulpit. But not for the full teaching that is here. I've brought you here in the past in order to clarify the concept of the kingdom of God in scripture.

We think of a kingdom like the United Kingdom, a collection of real estate

that is ruled by a government. Boundaries, land, people. And that's all viable, but the Bible in the time of it's writing understood a kingdom as an authority to reign. Authority to reign.

In our story this morning a man goes to a distant land to receive that authority to reign over a region. There is an ultimate ruler who can say yeah or nay, in Israel, that was Rome. But the local rulers would be put in place by Rome. So a man might travel to Rome to receive the authority to reign over a region. That authority was called a kingdom.

In our Bibles the concept of kingdom of God, or authority to reign of God is consistent with the picture presented here of a man who goes to receive that authority.

You might well ask, God owns everything! He is King over everything. True, but it's a little more complicated than that. When Satan introduced sin into God's good creation with the willing accomplice of Adam and Eve, that effectively separated God and men.

Sin is rebellion against the authority to reign of God and must be punished. But God who loves His creation, not willing to sweep all of it into the punishment of hell came up with a plan to redeem man out of sin.

Thus we have a planet with two opposing rulers. God who ultimately owns His creation, and Satan who has captured this world through rebellion. Man is born into sin, born into a rebellion against God, born condemned and under the ultimate wrath of God. Born into the rule and reign of a rebellious usurper who is Satan. Born in his kingdom and under his rule.

God is calling sinners to come out of the bondage of sin and Satan, and offering forgiveness of sin, and the possibility of being purchased back into His domain of authority. Out of Satan's domain, into God's domain and authority.

Folks, we're pawns either way. Someone of higher power and authority owns

you. How wonderful it is to be freed from sin's power and looming punishment and then re-instated into the riches of God's benevolent love and care.

Satan uses sin to hold his captors in bondage. But thanks be to God that He sent His own Son to die in my place and pay the penalty of my sins, and set me free from bondage. Sin is removed, righteousness, not my own, but the very righteousness of Jesus is accounted to my account and I am adopted into God's family as a son (small S) an heir with Christ.

The word kingdom is all about who has authority to reign over you. Are you in bondage of sin. Then the ruler of this world holds you captive and condemnation for rebellion awaits you. Satan and sin have authority to reign over you.

OR, if you have received Jesus by faith in His completed work of redemption, He lives inside you by the indwelling Holy Spirit, and you likewise are IN Christ, then God has authority to reign over you. You are in His eternal kingdom.

Now then, what you've just heard is the result of 50 years of blessing as God has unveiled the concept of the Kingdom of God to me. But in our story, the disciples really aren't there. They didn't have the New Testament and the 2000 years of 20-20 hindsight that we have. And our story this morning is given because of a partially false understanding of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is going to correct some mis-understandings.

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.

Who is the "they" in this first sentence Luke gives us to preface this teaching? I would refer you back to vs. 3. There is a multitude, a crowd around Jesus. They are moving towards Jerusalem for the passover. That would be somewhat normal in Israel as people poured into Jerusalem for this yearly

feast and slaughter of lambs for every family in Israel for remission of sins.

But this multitude is connected to Jesus on a level that is alluded to for us in Luke's opening verse. These folks have political aspirations. He's approaching Jerusalem and the tension between Jesus and the ruling Jews, the leaders of the false religion of Israel is at a dangerous breaking point.

This group knows that if Jesus shows up in the temple, something is going to happen, there's going to be a conflict, and they're thinking; maybe the guy who can create food out of nothing and heal all of our diseases is going to win this one.

This multitude are all wearing red baseball caps with M. I. G. A. embroidered on the fronts. Make Israel Great Again. Jesus is our guy and when He gets to Jerusalem He's going to get rid of the corrupt religious leaders and take over, and then He's going to boot Rome out and Israel is going to be on top.

Why not. That's what their prophets wrote would happen. These are the folks in John 6 who were considering taking Jesus by force and making Him be king. They want Jesus solely for the purpose of their political aspirations. They want Israel to be restored to the sovereignty it had in the world when David was king.

Let's think about this with our 20-20 hindsight of 2000 years. They were willing to settle for a David like king who would restore Israel to sovereign status and power in the world. Who's world? Satan's. Jesus had said many times that Satan was the ruler of this world.

The multitude wants to kick Rome out. Jesus wants to kick Satan out. Those are two wildly different world views. Jesus views a world where Satan is deposed and locked up in chains, evil is completely eradicated, rebellious sinners are crushed and removed, and God reigns over this world and all of its inhabitants. The fall is reversed. The original intended blessing is restored. The whole world shines its glory back on the Creator.

The multitude views a world not much changed from the current one, but Rome is deposed and Israel is restored to its status and blessing under David. The multitude is driven by personal self interest. The same self interest that drives all political movements. We can create a better world. We've got a messiah that can make our lives better.

They did have a messiah, but God's intentions for His Messiah far surpassed the low views of this particular mob. And as they near Jerusalem, Jesus speaks to this multitude about their short sighted selfish wishes with a parable.

Who understood all of the ramifications of the parable on the day He spoke it? I'm going to say; Almost no one. It's actually pretty cryptic for this short sighted mob. But isn't it interesting that the mob is gone, but the parable remains. Nothing that the mob wanted happened, but everything in the parable makes sense to those of us who belong to Jesus.

In the parable we'll discover there are three categories of people that encompass all the dwellers on earth. Just 3. And blessing comes to only one of those 3 possibilities.

12 He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.

This is a concept they understand perfectly. In fact within the memory of a generation this scenario that He will describe had played out before their eyes.

Herod Archelaus, son of Herod the great made just such a trip to Rome after he had slaughtered 3000 jews. He was hated by his citizens. He went to Rome to receive the authority to reign that his father had left to him. A delegation of Israelites went to oppose his purpose. Rome gave him the kingdom, the authority to reign and he reigned 10 years in Judea.

This is a parable but Jesus uses common situations that would be easy for the mind's eye to visualize.

13 *“And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’*

A mina was equal to about 3 months wages, so not an insignificant amount. A used pickup truck perhaps. In our economy 10 to 15 thousand dollars. I'm sure the little town of Mina, Nevada got it's name from this biblical passage. A mina equaled wealth.

He has 10 slaves and each receives a mina and he asks them to invest his money with a hope of a return. That's what "do business" means. He may be gone several months. He would likely sail to Rome on a ship like Paul did. He expects to be away for a significant time and he gives his slaves some cash for them to engage in business in his interest.

14 *“But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’*

Could that be any more clear. Anyone need further translations here? His citizens hate him. They do not want him to rule or have authority over them. So much so that they send a lobby delegation to that purpose. We hate him. We reject him as ruler.

15 *“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.*

He gets back home, he was in fact granted the kingdom, the authority to reign over this realm, and he calls his slaves in for an accounting of what they did with his money.

16 *“And the first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’* 17 *“And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.’* 18 *“And the second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’* 19 *“And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’*

Wow! If you can turn \$10,000 into a \$100,000 you're Hillary Clinton! That's an amazing amount of gain. 1000% We're happy with 10% This is an amazing gain.

Notice the wording here, because it's important. The slave didn't cause the return, the mina did. Your mina has made ten minas more. Somehow it's the mina that's regenerating itself. That becomes important when we try to assign the meaning of the parable.

Notice also the nobleman had a method to his madness. He expects to gain the kingdom, the authority to rule and reign over a region. And he knows he'll need faithful trustworthy people to help him rule over cities and regions within the larger region. So to find out who can be trusted with wealth that isn't their own, the ones who will work for his interests and not just their own, he gives them these mina's to invest. He plans to use the faithful folks by giving them much more authority when he returns as king. This is like a test to see who can be trusted with his business, his wealth.

He gains the kingdom. His first thing to do now is set up sub-rulers in his realm. Who is trustworthy? He calls in his slaves to find out. The 10 mina guy can be trusted with 10 cities. The 5 mina guy can be trusted with 5 cities. These men were faithful to invest their masters wealth wisely in order to give him a return. If they're trustworthy in that small matter, he can trust them with huge responsibility.

The application for us here is pretty straight forward. Are you investing now in the Kingdom of God. Are you working for Jesus interests, or are you only spending everything this world can give you, on yourself. That's a good introduction to our next slave.

20 "And another came, saying, 'Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.'

Here we need to dig into some words in order to try to understand exactly what this slave is accusing his master of. You are an *exacting man*

Austeros. Austere. Unapproachable? Or someone you don't want to approach. Certainly, unlikeable. This slave really didn't like his master. The synonyms in the greek dictionary for this word are; grim, severe, strict, exacting, harsh, rigid.

Ask just about anyone in our culture these days to define bible believing evangelical christians. What would they say? Not the progressive evangelicals, the old fashioned ones who hold onto their bibles because they believe it is the very word of God and that it defines morality for all people and not only defines sin, but claims that God has authority to judge sinners.

Define those folks please. austere, grim, severe, strict, exacting, harsh, rigid. Is that true? We hope not. I try very hard to be winsome. I'm far from perfect but my hearts desire is to be a winsome person. A forbearing person. A person who genuinely loves people who I come in contact with. If you work with me you'll discover I love to laugh while I work. It makes the day go by so much easier. Sometimes to a fault.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is what? austere, grim, severe, strict, exacting, harsh, rigid. No! That's not the fruit of the Spirit of God who live in me. The fruit of the Spirit is; Love, joy, peace, patience, longsuffering, self control. Why is it that the world looks at real christians and they say; grim, severe, strict, exacting, harsh, rigid. Austere.

I'll tell you why. Because the world loves it's sin. And the world hates anyone that tells them, you shouldn't do what you love to do because God forbids it in His book and He will punish all sin. You have to stop doing what you love the most because God says it's an abomination to Him and He will punish you.

We're in a pickle folks. We want to be winsome. But God says I'm going to

pour out my love in your heart to distribute to lost mankind, and love demands that you give them my warning about their sin. Ouch. So it makes perfect sense what this slave just accused his master of; grim, severe, strict, exacting, harsh, rigid.

You are austere. Who do you think you are demanding of me what I don't want to give you? Well, God, for starters, who created you and ultimately owns you and who gives you every successive breath while you're alive.

Then the slave accuses the master of being a thief. *you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.* ' You treat me like I'm your slave and you own me or something.

You're austere and your expectations from me are untenable. Why should I work for you? Who died and made you God? Why do you for one second think I owe you anything?? Why would I invest my time in your enterprise. If there's any investing that's going to happen on my watch it's going to be for my benefit, not yours Mr. Austere.

That's a pretty loose transliteration. But I get the sense from his words that that's exactly what he is saying to the master. And it most certainly captures the mood of our current ME culture. 'Not gonna waste ANY of my time workin' for someone else's interest but my own'. 'specially not some austere sky God with a bunch of rules' But notice how "righteous" he is. I kept your mina safe. I don't want any part in what is yours. Have it back, safe and sound.

22 *“He said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 ‘Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’*

Is the worthless slave's description of the master accurate? Is He austere? Is He stingey? Does He require what doesn't belong to Him? We'll see the plain answer to those charges forthwith.

But he argues, assuming you're correct, why didn't you at least put the money in the bank so I could make 2% interest?? That would have taken no effort at all. The fact that the slave was unwilling to even do that shows a real personal disdain for the master. Yeah I could've done that, but I really don't like you and I don't want you to benefit. AT ALL! This gets sort of personal.

The possibility comes to mind and you can accuse me of parable pushing if you like, except we see this so often in our current so-called evangelical tent. That mina is like magic. It will reproduce itself. It's like the fish and the loaves in the basket. It can't help but reproduce itself.

Did this slave actually use the Master's mina to produce wealth, and he kept it all for himself. A few mansions perhaps, and a lear jet or two. But he spent it all on himself and when the Master came to receive the increase that was supposed to be His, the guy has none because he extorted the Master's wealth and spent it lavishly on himself.

It doesn't say that but the parallels in our world with that sort of thing happening, A LOT, are evident to everyone. Phony religion that enriches the people spreading it and impoverishes the people preyed upon. Just a possibility for you. Here's your mina back, safe and sound says the guy with the Armani suit and the Italian loafers.

24 "And he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 "And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.'

Is He austere. Is He graspingly stingy? No, the other slaves are shocked because obviously he gave the original mina plus the money it made to the slave who invested it. He was interested in their love and faithfulness. He doesn't care about the money, in fact he lets the faithful investors keep the original plus the return!

You say, how do you know that? When he tells the slaves to take the mina

away from the worthless slave, he doesn't have them bring it to him, even though it's his money. No he says give it to the guy with 10.

The onlooking slaves are astonished! Give it to the first guy?? How many does he already have?? 10. The master gave it all to him. Then he gives him the one from the worthless slave too. Does that sound austere to you? Stingy. Reaping what he did not sow? Doesn't to me. Sounds like this master is the best Master EVER!! Gracious and generous is how I would describe Him.

26 "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.

I'm going to go out on a limb here and tell you what I believe this means; I think the parable portray's 3 categories of people in the world.

Real christians who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit with new life who lovingly spend themselves for their Master's interests. They live for Him, for His concerns and His kingdom, and they work tirelessly and with single hearted focus for the increase of His kingdom and for His glory.

I believe the mina represents the good news of the gospel. It regenerates itself, over and over and over. All you do is throw it out there like seed on the soil. It does the rest. Notice in the story that the mina is what made more mina's. The slaves take no credit. Master, your mina made 10 more. I didn't do it, your mina did it!

That's one group. Next group are people who hang around the church and identify as christians, they have the gospel, they can tell you something about Jesus, but they are not regenerated by the Holy Spirit. They aren't real. And deep inside their motives aren't driven by a love for the Master, they're driven by a love for themselves. I'll take the free fire insurance offered, but you can keep the rest.

They can't be bothered with throwing out the gospel to others. They bury it in the ground or wrap it in a handkerchief. Or worse. Sometimes they spread a

gospel that's as fake as they are and generate more tares. I think we have a LOT of them in christendom these days.

And the final group are the rest. They are openly hostile to the Master and anyone associated with Him. They are enemies of the gospel.

This week I watched a shocking video on YouTube. It's called "Paint The Wall Black" and I encourage you to go search for it and watch it, because it's current, all within the last year or so. It happened just last June. June of 2020

A business in Chicago. A deli that made exquisite sandwiches. There was a line down the block every day, waiting in line for one of his sandwiches. He was the darling of Chicago. Nike made a special edition of their shoe with his deli name on them. Everybody was in love with them. Until they took a stand because they were christians that involved black lives matter.

They said, we can't support that group because they affirm LGBTQ++ lifestyles and abortion and other things that God clearly says are abominations. They said we believe all lives matter. Every life matters. And they gave a clear clear presentation of the gospel.

This is June 2020. An angry mob descended on the deli. The streets filled up with angry shouting people. Death threats. The police had to escort the women and children from the building for their own safety. The angry mob painted out the sign on the building, they painted the walls black. They boarded up the windows so the mob wouldn't burn it down.

The Riesco's, they're puerto rican / cuban heritage fled by car towards Florida. The mob hacked their phones and told them they would follow them to Florida and destroy them there. So they got rid of their phones and headed for Texas. Anyone related to these folks, brothers, sisters, inlaws, anyone sympathetic with them at all, lost their jobs in Chicago. Just for being sympathetic associates with them.

The cancel culture went out about 3 levels into their immediate family with

threats and job canceling. This was last year folks. Christian people who lovingly took a stand for christian truths. Cancelled 3 levels deep into their surrounding family members. Wiped out. No business, no life, no nothing when the cancel culture got finished with them. Death threats. It's an amazing story and I urge you to watch the video. Nini's Deli. Paint the Wall Black! June of 2020, Chicago, USA.

14 “But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’

It's getting real. But in spite of what may happen now, if you read the end of the book, we win. Not now! There's no promises of winning now. We win later. And these folks that are throwing dust into the air screaming out their hatred for our Master . . . it doesn't end well for them.

For the ones who hate God and His people and refuse His rule over them, even though He is their creator. This world loves sin and hates God. But if you read the end of the book, it doesn't end well for the rebellers.

27 “But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.”

What a story! What a parable. Only the mind of God could come up with a few simple words that define the future of all peoples on earth.

Meanwhile, Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem, and a mob similar to the one that canceled the Riesco's life work and Deli because they love Jesus will be waiting for Jesus in Jerusalem, and they combine . . . these are enemies who normally hate each other . . . they will combine their forces to cancel out Jesus. The Jews and the Romans will combine to cancel out Jesus.

They thought they did. But He rose from the grave!

Who are you in this parable. If the treasure is the gospel of Jesus, who lived a perfect life, died for our sins, arose from the grave, gives to those who believe

in Him a righteousness not their own, but His very righteousness. The good news that reconciliation is available to any sinful rebel who will leave this world behind and follow Jesus. That's the gospel. The gospel is the treasure.

If the gospel is the treasure, are you investing in the Masters business by spreading that news, that treasure in a way that it reproduces itself over and over in other lives. Is the master's treasure reproducing itself because of your investment in His business?

That's the only safe place to be in the scenario Jesus gave. Jesus is going to enter Jerusalem and His citizens, in about a week from this time, are going to throw dust in the air and shout; WE WILL NOT HAVE THIS MAN TO REIGN OVER US!!

14 "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' And then they will shout; Crucify Him! Crucify Him!

Three possibilities in this parable that encompass all lives on earth at all times. You can be the angry mob who hates Jesus and anyone associated with Him. Or you can be a self centered false slave who associates with the slaves but inwardly has no love for the master and does not invest in His kingdom.

Or you can be a slave with a heart on fire for the Master and you're spending yourself now for His purposes, His interests, His glory, spreading the Master's treasure as far and wide as you can figure out how to spread it, while it causes it's own increase to give back to the Master.

Do you fit any of those categories? You say, where's the category where you're just a quiet American living a comfortable life minding your own business, enjoying the ease, not hurting anyone? I'm going to let you re-read the parable and answer that question for yourselves.

To be used of God, to sing to speak to pray.
To be used of God, to show someone the way.

I long so much to feel the touch of His consuming fire.
To be used of God, is my desire.