

Occupy Till I Come

Luke 19:11-27

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Luke 19:11 will get us started. It is the setting for our text. "Now as they heard these things, He..." that is, "Jesus" "...spoke another parable, because..." and now He gives us the reason for the parable "...He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately."

This is a wonderful introduction to our parable. All the way from chapter 9 of Luke to chapter 19, He was on His way to Jerusalem. And He is getting closer; He's about a week away. The next text is the triumphal entry, which is about a week before Jesus would be crucified.

So our text is approaching Passover time, and there are pilgrims that are journeying from Jericho. Remember that Jericho was below sea level, and from there to Jerusalem, one travels northwest up a steep road to above sea level. It's a long, windy road.

I want you to notice that verse 11 says, "As they heard these things." What things? It goes back to verse 10, where Jesus said, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." "The Son of Man" is a Messianic title for Messiah. In Daniel 7:9, He is called "the Ancient of Days," who comes to set up His kingdom.

They had heard that Zacchaeus had been saved. In the episode of Zacchaeus, the corrupt, wicked tax collector who got saved, he said that he was going to give half of his money to the poor, and if he had taken anything by extortion, four times that amount would be returned.

So in our text, these people were thinking that the kingdom of God had come. They were on their way to Jerusalem, it's Passover, they were going to celebrate their release from captivity of the Roman rule, they were going to celebrate that the kingdom had come, the Messiah was here and He would destroy the Romans. Jesus would sit on the throne of David and would reign forever.

The kingdom of God was on their minds. They were thinking about the literal kingdom in which the Son of David, Messiah, would sit on the throne and overthrow politically and militarily all their enemies and establish His kingdom. But that will happen at what we know to be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

You need to understand that this parable is about the two comings of Jesus Christ. The first Advent was when Jesus Christ came to die for the sins of the world. The Second Advent will be when He comes to reign and bring in the kingdom. During the interim between these two Advents, we need to be faithful servants who occupy until He comes.

When "they heard these things," some had seen what was going on with Zacchaeus, they knew Him to be the Messiah and they remembered the miracles He had performed. He healed blind

eyes, Bartimaeus' eyesight was restored, He had raised people from the dead, He cleaned the lepers with the power of His word, He walked on water, He calmed the raging sea. He had performed all these miracles, so they were hyped up.

I can just hear the buzz in the crowd, in verse 11, as they journeyed toward Jerusalem. "The King is here! The King is here! He's going to set up His kingdom!"

So as a result, Jesus was going to give this parable. This parable is called the parable of the pounds or the parable of the minas. It's interesting that this parable is based on a historic event that happened shortly after 4 BC, when Herod the Great died and wanted to give his kingdom over to his son, Archelaus. Archelaus went to Rome to get his kingdom, and the Jews sent messengers after him to say that they would not have this man reign over them. This is a parable, but it is unique in that it is based on a historic event that they were all familiar with.

Now Jesus gives us the two reasons, in verse 11, why He spoke the parable. The first is "because He was near Jerusalem" where He would be arrested and crucified. In Luke 18:31-34, Jesus specifically said that He was going to Jerusalem, He would be handed over to the Gentiles, He would be spitefully treated, spit upon and crucified, but three days later He would rise from the dead. Yet they understood none of those things that were spoken to them.

The second reason was because they thought the kingdom of God would immediately appear. That was their problem; they were wrong. The kingdom of God was not going to immediately appear.

That's why I don't believe in all-millennialism. Jesus came to bring a kingdom, but it was spiritual. He didn't come the first time to set up His throne on the throne of David; it will happen at the Second Coming. Christ must come back before the kingdom is here. Wherever the King is, there is the kingdom. So I believe in a premillennial, Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which is taught and clearly implied and supported in this parable.

This parable is talking about the importance between the first coming and the Second Coming. There is a huge gap between the two events. There have already been 2,000 years of the church age, during which we need to occupy and be busy about the Lord's business until He comes back.

So these were the two reasons He spoke this parable. They thought He was on His way to sit on the throne of David and that the kingdom would immediately appear. No; He was on His way to hang upon a cross. He wasn't headed for a throne; He was headed for a cross. He wasn't headed to reign in righteousness; He was headed to a place where He would be crucified, slain and then rise from the dead. He wasn't coming at that time to judge sin; He was coming to be judged, bearing our sin as a substitute and carry it away as an atoning sacrifice.

Prior to Acts 1:6-8, Jesus had been resurrected, had appeared to many over a 40-day period and now was on the mount of olives to ascend back into heaven. Jesus had come, He died, He was buried, He rose from the dead and after 40 days, He met with His disciples and physically,

visibly and bodily ascended back into heaven.

Before He ascended, the disciples asked Him, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They still anticipated an immediate kingdom that would be set up on the earth. Then Jesus said, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses..." during this interim period between the first coming and the Second Coming "... to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." That is the period we are in right now.

We need to take the time, treasures and talents God has given us right now and spread the Gospel. We are to occupy until the Lord returns in His Second Advent or Second Coming. So Jesus wants them to understand that the kingdom will not immediately appear.

But don't misunderstand this point. Jesus is King and reigning in heaven right now. But we still live in a world that is rebelling against God. We live in a world where men are shaking their fist at God and saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). They will not be subdued; evil will grow in the world until Jesus Christ comes back and sets up His kingdom.

That's why I don't believe that we're going to Christianize the world. I don't believe we're in the millennium. I believe that is for a future time. It won't come until the King Jesus Christ comes in His Second Coming and establishes His kingdom on earth on the throne of David.

So that is the setting for this parable in verse 11.

But the parable is based on a historic event. The historic event was when Herod the Great died in 4 BC, and he left Judea to his son, Archelaus. Archelaus had to go to Rome to have his inheritance approved in order to be made king. Not wanting Archelaus to rule, the Jews sent 50 men to argue their case before Augustus Caesar, who ended up ratifying the inheritance but not giving Archelaus the title of king. So in the parable, Jesus used this true story.

In verses 12-14, we first have the departure and the rejection. I'm going to tell you who these people represent as I go. "Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman..." which means "born of royal blood" and represents "Jesus Christ" "...went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." This represents Christ's first coming. He came to die, returns to heaven and receives for Himself a kingdom from God the Father. Jesus came from heaven and would go back to heaven.

Verse 13, "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas..." which represents four-months wages "...and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'" Jesus was saying, "Don't just sit around, put a white robe on and sit on a mountain waiting for the rapture." Don't go out and charge out your credit cards hoping the rapture will come, so you don't have to pay them off. You don't do that. You do the Lord's work, do the Lord's business.

I believe the minas or pounds represent the Gospel and the call to "Do business till I come"

represents the great commission to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

But notice verse 14: "But his citizens..." which represent the Jewish authorities and the nation of Israel and today who say they will not have Jesus reign over them "...hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'"

Isn't it interesting that they are following Jesus to Jerusalem and think the kingdom is coming, they believe He is the Messiah, but the same crowd that will be singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 21:9) would one week later be saying, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" (Luke 23:21). "We have no king but Caesar!" (John 19:15).

Jesus wanted them to know this was part of God's plan; He came to die on the Cross for the sins of the world. That was His purpose. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10) by bringing salvation and accomplishing redemption. He would go back to heaven, receive a kingdom, is seated at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), come back to earth and sit on the throne of David according to the Davidic covenant, which has yet to be fulfilled, and according to the promises the prophets made, which have not been finished yet. They will literally be fulfilled then. They have not been spiritually fulfilled in the church today.

I don't believe we are living in the millennium. During the millennium when Christ comes back to reign, Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. But Satan is not bound right now; he is free and hanging out at our houses. And every time I turn the news on, I see the tragedies and wars, and almost weekly someone in our church dies of cancer and there is sadness, tragedy, loss, bereavement, hurt and pain. I say, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come! Thy kingdom come! Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" (Matthew 6:10).

But there is going to be a great period of time between His first coming and His Second Coming, and we must not lose heart. We must not get discouraged. As the world gets darker and darker before the dawning of a new day, we need to share the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to "Do business till [He comes]."

it's been 2,000 years. They thought the kingdom was coming right then. But it's been 2,000 years! It's easy to get discouraged. There have been places in the United States where there were great revivals, and now there is apostasy. There were places in the world where there were great revivals, and now it's post-Christian. We see persecution of Christians in the world. We see what is happening in Africa, Christians dying for their faith.

"When will you come, Lord Jesus?! When will you set things right?! When will you judge the wicked?!" We don't know, but until He does come, we must occupy, we must be faithful to preach the Gospel. We want to take as many people as possible with us to heaven. We want to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for

the Greek" (Romans 1:16). So we must be faithful servants.

Verse 14, "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'" Those were the Jews of Jesus' day. But there still are many people today who shake their fist at God and say, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

Next, beginning in verse 15 down to verse 26, the largest section of the parable, we see there is going to be the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and that will bring a day of reckoning, both for God's servants and for the wicked who will not have Him reign over them.

"And so it was that when he returned..." There is a huge gap, called the church age, between verses 14 and 15. "When he returned" refers to when Jesus will come again. We're still waiting for that to happen, for the King to come to reward His servants and punish His enemies at His Second Coming. "...having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

Then He comes to the first servant, verse 16. This is the day of reckoning for God's or the nobleman's servants. "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'" So he used the mina to multiply the Lord's money. "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'"

You'll find that every one of us will either be one of the first two servants who multiplied the money, the third servant who doesn't multiply the money or like the enemies who say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Which are you?

So we want to be like the first, faithful servant. "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). The requirement isn't that we're to be smart or talented, but to be faithful. God wants us to be faithful, because everything we have we are a steward of—my time, my talent, my treasures. They all belong to God. They are not mine.

"I am not my own. He bought me with His blood." You are not your own. It's not your own time. Everything you have belongs to God.

So we are to be like the first servant and multiply what God has given you. When you use what God has given you, God adds more. He gave this servant "ten cities."

What was the blessing promised to those who were faithful? More work. The master gave them more responsibility.

Let me give you the Biblical principle here. When you use your time, your talent, your treasures and the Gospel that has been given to you faithfully, God will give you more. God will give you more blessing, more opportunities and more service. If you don't use what God has given you, why would you expect Him to give you anything more?

If you're an employer and have an employee who doesn't do what he's supposed to do, are you going to give him more to do? No; you're going to take away that which he seems to have and give it to the person who is working harder and producing more. We'll see that God will take away the servant's mina and give it to another. So we want to be faithful in what God has called us to do.

I can't tell you how important it is to understand that you're not your own. "You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20) with your time, talent and treasures. They belong to God. Be faithful and God will bless you with more to do. God gave this servant "authority over ten cities."

The historic person of this parable who was declared king by Rome and had his empire could actually give cities to other vassal kings.

Now notice the second servant, in verses 18-19. "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'"

So there were 10 servants, and they each got one mina. The first servant grew his mina into 10, and this second servant grew his mina into five minas. Then the master said, "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'"

The principle is to use what you've got or you'll lose it. Have you heard the phrase, "Use it or lose it"? That's what this passage says. Use what God has given you so they will be multiplied, or you'll lose them.

Look at the third servant, verses 20-26. The largest section of the parable deals with this disobedient servant, who doesn't produce for his master. "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man.'" He was saying his master was harsh or cruel. "'You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him..." here is the master's reply "...'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant.'" Can you imagine that? The master returns and calls you a "wicked servant"!

"'You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

I want to make it clear that this wicked servant is saved; he's going to go to heaven and will be in the kingdom. But he will get there by the skin of his teeth. His works are "wood, hay and straw," and they will be burned up. He will be saved but as "by fire." The other servants were faithful; their labor was "gold, silver, precious stones" (1 Corinthians 3:12-13). It would be refined by fire. They would have blessings when they entered into the kingdom.

The Bible says we will all stand before Christ at the bema reward seat. We will all give an account of our service. As Christians, we won't be judged for sins because of our salvation; our sins were paid for on the Cross. But we will give an account to God for our service.

What did you do with the opportunities? With your time, talent and treasures and the Gospel of Jesus that God entrusted to you?

The third servant basically said to the master, "You gave me a mina. Here it is back. I wrapped it in a towel and buried it in the ground." And in verse 21, he says why he did that. "For I feared you, because you are an austere man." "Austere" means "harsh, cruel, hard."

I believe what influenced this servant to not be faithful was a false view of his master. An unknown God can neither be trusted nor served. If we don't believe that God is gracious, loving, kind, merciful and that his mercies "are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23), we won't joyfully, thankfully serve Him. This servant's view was wrong.

This nobleman who the servant called "austere" was Jesus Christ! Would you call Jesus harsh? Would you call Him cruel? Would you call Him unfair? Would you call Him unkind? I would not. He will judge the wicked, but He will do it in righteousness and fairness. And He has already shown His graciousness to the first two servants. They multiplied what was never theirs to begin with. So He gave them more duties, more responsibilities.

In the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, in the kingdom age, we who have been faithful in serving the Lord will co-reign with Christ for that 1,000 years. That's pretty cool! That's going to be awesome. "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

There are marvelous promises about the millennium and the kingdom age. There will be no more sickness. Sin will be judged immediately. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb" (Isaiah 11:6). "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears..." that they do war with "...into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation" (Isaiah 2:4). And there will be peace on earth because "The government will be upon His shoulder" (Isaiah 9:6). There will be a literal, physical, actual presence of Jesus Christ on planet earth. The curse will be reversed, and the earth will be restored to its original, garden-of-Eden state. Jesus will be reigning, and we will be co-reigning with Him. I can't wait for that glorious time.

So I want to faithfully serve Him until He comes back, so He will reward me. I don't want to hear Him say, verse 22, "You wicked servant." In verse 23, he basically said, "Why didn't you at least put it in the bank, so when I came back, I'd have gotten some interest?!" So he said, "Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas." Then the crowd freaks out, verse 25. "(But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')" Then Jesus said, "For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

Which servant are you? Are you the faithful servant, who takes the one mina and makes ten

from it? Are you the faithful servant, who takes the one mina and makes five from it? Or are you the fearful servant? The Bible says we should fear the Lord (Proverbs 1:7), but this is not the good fear; this is a dreading fear. The servant feared the Lord, so he wrapped it in a handkerchief and gave it back. So the master called him a "wicked servant."

God actually expects us to produce in the here and now by being faithful with what He has given us. It may be ten minas or five minas He has given us, but we are to add to what God has entrusted to us. So there was the King's judgment on that wicked servant.

There was the crowd's response and the master's response through accountability. If you multiply what you have been given, more will be given. If you don't use what you've been given, even what you seem to have will be taken away from you.

Then notice verse 27 in closing, the King's judgment. This is the last category of individuals in the parable. "But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me." You don't want to be in this category. You want to at least be a servant.

Remember verse 14? "But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him....We will not have this man to reign over us." And we get this again in verse 27: "But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me." Jesus said, "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25).

Judgment is coming for the people who shake their fist at God and say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Why anyone would say that, I don't know.

Maybe you are shaking your fist at God. He made you and gave you breath. He wants to forgive your sins and make you His child and give you the hope of heaven. But you are shaking your fist at God and say, "I will not have You to rule over me!" He is going to return in His Second Coming, His Second Advent, and will destroy His enemies. Jesus will come as the righteous King and will come to judge.

Here's how it all works out. Jesus came the first time and took on humanity. He lived a sinless life, voluntarily died a substitutionary death on the Cross. All the sin of the world was placed on Jesus when He was on the Cross. "He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). He died and atoned for our sins. He was buried, and three days later, He rose from the dead. I like the song:

"Up from the grave He arose,

With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.

He arose a Victor from the dark domain,

And He lives forever with His saints to reign.

He arose! He arose!

Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

But we are living in that period between verses 14 and 15. He has entrusted to us His goods. What are you doing with them? Are you a faithful servant? Are you occupying until He comes? You will stand before the bema reward seat of Christ. You will either receive rewards or lose the rewards you have; they won't go with you to heaven. So what are you doing now for Jesus?

So the parable teaches that there will be a prolonged gap between the first coming or Advent and the Second Coming or Second Advent of Jesus Christ. And you can't have the kingdom unless you have the King. I believe this whole passage speaks, supports and clearly teaches a premillennial return of Jesus Christ to reign as "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16) upon the earth. For the 1,000 years, Satan is bound and Jesus is reigning. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is loosed for a short season to tempt people.

In the New Testament, Jesus is called "the last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45). What happened to the first Adam? He was in the perfect garden, no sin, given dominion over the garden and over the world, but he fell into temptation, sinned against God and brought the curse. He failed on every point.

So Jesus comes back as "the last Adam," and He succeeds on the actual, physical earth in a way the first Adam did not. It's necessary and essential for a premillennial return of Jesus Christ that "the last Adam," Jesus Christ, conquer and reign and subdue the earth where Adam failed.

Jesus also saw that the church has been persecuted and suffered in this world. So for 1,000 years, the church will reign with Jesus in righteousness on the earth. The same sphere, the earth, where Jesus was rejected He must reign on. There is coming a day when "every knee should bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). With all the sin, suffering and sorrow, even "Creation groans and labors" and "eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19, 22). How our hearts yearn for that coming again of the Lord!

But when Jesus comes, we want Him to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord" (Matthew 25:21).

He said in this parable that "You were faithful over one city, so I want to give you 10 cities." To the next servant He said, "You were faithful over one city, so I want to give you five cities to reign over."

Are we faithfully occupying until He comes? Are you the faithful servant, or are you the slothful servant? Will you get rewards, or will there be a loss of rewards? Where are you in the

parable?

Perhaps you are one of His enemies, in verse 27. You're shaking your fist at God saying, "I will not have Him to reign over me!" Sadly, if you maintain that position, don't repent and get right with God, Jesus will come back, and in righteous judgment will wipe you out.

So this parable is a warning. It warns us to occupy until He comes.