



Grace Lutheran Church
Valentine, NE

MAIL MINISTRY

Trinity 25

November 18, 2018

Pre-Service Meditation: Psalm 54

Hymns: LSB 948 (TLH 238); LSB 585 (TLH 292); WS
754; TLH 608

Scripture Readings: Psalm 126
Revelation 2:8-10

Topics: Christian Life; Judgment; Word of God

In the Name of Jesus!

God's Word: Luke 19:11-27

Now as they heard these things, He (Jesus) spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' And so it was that when he returned, 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 came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 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. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you 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. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'***"

In Christ Jesus, whose glorious return we anticipate with joyous excitement, dear fellow redeemed:

God has created each of us as unique individuals. With the possible exception of identical twins, we all look different. Some of us are big; others of us are small. Some of us have long hair; others of us have short. Our skin colors vary, as do the colors of our eyes. God has created us with beautiful variety. He has also given each of us different gifts. Some of us sing like birds; others of us croak like frogs. Some of us like to strum guitars; others of us prefer to fix carburetors. Some of us are comfortable on stage; others of us dread public speaking. Yes, God has created each of us as unique individuals, whose individual gifts and abilities vary but are all to be developed and used to His glory and for the blessing of others.

While God has indeed created each of us as unique and different people, He has loved each of us the same! The Bible says, "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*" (Jn. 3:16). It does not matter who you—you are the object of God's love in Christ Jesus. That message of God's love for each of us is the central theme of God's Word. In our text the nobleman gave each of his servants the same thing—a single mina and told them to "*do business till I come.*" My dear friends—that nobleman is Jesus. Those servants are you and I. The ten minas represent God's Word, with which we are to carry out the work of God's kingdom until Jesus' return. **JESUS HAS ENTRUSTED TO EACH OF US THE USE OF HIS PRECIOUS WORD!** In response to that truth, we must ask ourselves two

questions—**while He is gone how well are we using His Word, and when He returns how will He evaluate our use of His Word?**

I.

How, then, are we using His Word? The Scriptures urge us to use God’s Word in at least four different ways. First, we are to use God’s Word, as Peter encourages us, to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 3:18). Our study of the Bible brings us great personal blessing. Paul explains how and why as he urges us to “*continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing...the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:14-17). Our personal use of God’s Word should never simply be a matter of fulfilling a duty or an obligation to God. It should be much more than that. It is to be a daily reminder of God’s love for us and His plan to rescue us. If we keep those thoughts in mind, we will find that we can indeed “*rejoice in the Lord always,*” as Paul also encourages us (cf. Phil. 4:4). Having been reminded of that love, the Word then serves the important function of instructing us in divine truth, reproofing our personal failures, providing correction for our missteps, and instilling within our hearts and minds an understanding of God’s will for our lives. It provides everything we need to know about our relationship with God and His expectations of our interrelationships with each other.

Second, we are to use God’s Word to strengthen and encourage one another. The writer to the Hebrews tells us: “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*” (Heb. 10:23-25). Our confession of faith is a confession of hope. We confess that God the Father both created and now preserves us. We confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and our Lord. We confess that the Holy Spirit has given us faith and lives within our hearts to strengthen us and fill our lives with His fruits. It is by sharing that confession that we build each other up, encouraging one another to ever greater faithfulness. Paul tells us to “*speak the truth in love, (so that we) may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ*” (Eph. 4:15).

Third, we are to use God’s Word to fulfill the Great Commission—“*to preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mk. 16:15) in order “*to make disciples of all the nations*” (Mt. 28:19). My dear friends, this is not something that only other people do in other lands. Rather, this is something we can and are to be doing every day and in every way. As parents it is our privilege, for instance, to share the message of God’s love with our children. In so doing we bring them ever closer to their Lord and Savior. This is something we do over break at work, when we share the comfort of the gospel with someone who is mourning or someone who is searching for that which alone can bring peace—the knowledge of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness He offers all by faith.

Fourth, we are to use God’s Word to defend the truth and answer the questions asked by skeptics and the adversaries of God. Peter tells us, “*In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect*” (1 Peter 3:15 NIV). We are living in a world absolutely opposed to the truths of God. Yet it is a world that is in desperate need of those same truths. We need to reach out to the people of this world—not simply to win arguments, not to prove that we are right and they are wrong, but rather to bring a message of life from the Life-giver, so that they might be right with their God and possess true hope and a genuine future! Yes, **JESUS HAS ENTRUSTED TO EACH OF US THE USE OF HIS PRECIOUS WORD! While Jesus is gone, let us use His Word faithfully!**

II.

Let us do so, for we must also ask ourselves—**when He returns how will He evaluate our use of His Word?** Before answering that question, I would like to make a suggestion. Sometime later today take out your Bibles and compare this Parable of the Minas in Luke 19 with

Jesus' Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. They are similar in some respects, but also very different. In both accounts upon Jesus' return He evaluates the work of His servants, but what is so very interesting is the difference in their rewards. In the Parable of the Talents each servant, who had been given differing talents and abilities to begin with, receives the same reward of grace—entrance into the joyful presence of the LORD. In this Parable of the Minas, however, each servant, who had been given the same thing to begin with—God's precious Word, receives a different reward of grace—varying degrees of authority within God's eternal kingdom.

Jesus will indeed return as did the nobleman in the parable. We are responsible to Him and will appear before Him. What is marvelous is that He will award by grace all who have used His Word faithfully in their lives. Notice that this is not to be viewed as a matter of competition. Jesus did not pit one servant over against another. He commended both the servant who gained ten minas and the servant who gained five minas. It is not you and I, after all, who bring about the success of the gospel proclamation. Notice that the servants in the parable say, *"Your mina has earned (the extra) minas."* *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"* (Rom. 10:17). It is God's Word and His Spirit using that Word that brings people to faith. Yet those privileged to share the Word receive Jesus' gracious reward in accordance with their faithfulness. The servant who gained the ten minas received as his reward of grace *"authority over ten cities,"* while the servant who gained five minas received as his reward of grace *"authority over five cities."*

Why the difference, we might ask? I believe it is because the use of God's Word here in this life prepares us for service in God's eternal kingdom. Remember Jesus' promise—abiding in His Word reveals to us God's divine truth (cf. Jn. 8:31-32). Those truths reveal God's wisdom. Think about Solomon's words: *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction"* (cf. Prov. 1:7). Paul picks up that thought in 1 Corinthians and explains: *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.' Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men"* (1 Cor. 1:18-25). The faithful use of God's Word in our lives here prepares us for future service in heaven. By such use we learn the heart of God; we prepare ourselves to counsel and encourage our fellowmen; we see the power of God as it changes other's lives; and we are better able to apply God's wisdom in every circumstance with greater success.

The alternative—the failure to use or heed the Word—sadly is devastating for those who do not trust Jesus and so ignore His Word or outright oppose it. They will be destroyed. My dear friends—**JESUS HAS ENTRUSTED TO EACH OF US THE USE OF HIS PRECIOUS WORD!** Let us use that Word faithfully in eager anticipation of God's temporal and eternal blessing! Amen.

--Pastor Paul D. Nolting
To God alone be glory!

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