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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
November 10, 2019
22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Last Judgment Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Jeremiah 26:1-6, 2 Thessalonians 1:4-10

Hymns: 294, 608, 408, 283, (798:1,2,4)

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Luke 19:11-27

Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

¹² Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.' ¹⁵

"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. ¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

²⁰ "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I

feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’²² 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.’²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’

²⁴ “And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.’²⁵ (But they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas.’)²⁶ ‘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.’²⁷ But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.’”

(NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, who shall come again in glory on the Last Day, dear fellow redeemed:

INTRO: Today we are observing Last Judgment Sunday. There are a great many ideas that we associate with the idea of Christ’s return and the coming judgment. Many of these important truths shall be reserved for another Sunday coming in just a few weeks. One of the ideas that we need to be conscious of is the idea of what is expected of us as we wait and watch for the Lord Jesus’ glorious return on the Last Day. We need to focus on this aspect of our lives lest we forget that we are here in service to our King! We are not to think that this is a time for us to be laid back in expectations of great things to come, but a time for us to be busy, **very** busy indeed.

Jesus addressed the idea of readiness and faithfulness in waiting for the Lord's appearing in a number of different parables in the closing days of His public ministry, those last few days before He suffered and died for us and for our sin. In some of these parables He addressed the need for personal attention to one's own spiritual condition. In another Jesus addressed the different levels of gifts that He in His grace has bestowed upon His people with then different expectations from them in their service to Jesus during their lives. In the parable before us this morning, the parable of the minas, Jesus is teaching a lesson regarding His even distribution of the gospel to all and upon all who believe.

Let us then consider the Parable of the Minas --

THEME: A Lesson in Managing a Sacred Trust.

Let us learn to appreciate --

I. The Gracious Nature of this Trust.

When Jesus taught in parables He used pictures of life that His audience could relate to. Jesus' audience could relate well to the different aspects of this parable. The rulers, even kings like Herod, were subject to a higher power, a power in Rome, and they received their authority from Rome. When Herod became King after His father Herod the Great, he traveled to Rome to receive his office and the power and authority that went with it. The people also understood the relationship between a nobleman master and his servants, most of whom were either permanent servants, or bond servants or what we have known in American history, indentured servants, they were under the control of their master. They were lowly servants before a higher authority. The master was the one who was the "have" and they were the "have nots." What made this parable exceptional was what came next. The nobleman distributed ten minas among his servants with the instruction that they were to "*do business till I come.*" (v.13) Jesus' audience understood that this was an

exceptional trust placed in the hands of the nobleman's servants. A mina was an amount of money equal to about 100 days' wages for a working man. It was a considerable trust to place in the hands of his individual servants. The instructions made it clear that they were not given this trust to simply keep it safe. He was instructing them to do business, to put the money he was giving them to work.

Now let us consider the proper interpretation of this parable up to this point. It is important for us to properly identify the different characters in this parable if we are to draw the proper lesson. The nobleman is Jesus. It was only days before Jesus was to fulfill His mission of redeeming the world with His sufferings and death on the cross. It was time for Jesus to begin His journey of going to His Father, the Authority from whom He was to receive His kingdom. The disciples and many of the people were continually asking Jesus if this was the moment when He was not going to establish His kingdom. The people, including the disciples, were looking for a political kingdom on earth that would throw off the shackles of Rome and restore earthly glory to the people of Israel. Jesus needed to disabuse them all of this idea of some immediate earthly kingdom. Jesus told Pontius Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" (John 18:36) Jesus would return to His Father in heaven, and then return visibly, physically, and gloriously on the Last Day to take possession of His kingdom of glory.

So Jesus, the nobleman in the parable, entrusts to His bond servants His treasure that they are to put to work while He is gone, while they await His return. We, the believers in Christ, ALL the believers in Christ, are those bondservants. The number 10 is the number of completeness and it is significant here that we should understand that this was not a trust handed over to a few, but a trust given to all His servants, that all of us who believe understand that we are here to serve Jesus. He is **our** Lord! That valuable "Mina" is the gospel of God's love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus. We are to do business

with the gospel until Christ's return. Jesus has placed the gospel in **our** hands! He didn't give this trust to the angels; He gave it to human beings who were the beneficiaries of that redemption. He came down from heaven and became **our** Brother that He might secure the blessings of salvation for us! Jesus died on the cross and endured the curse of law in our place that He might secure peace with God for us rebels! He rose again from the dead to show us the truth of everlasting life in the resurrection from the dead, and the hope of everlasting life with God in heaven above.

This is the sacred trust He has given over to us, not that we should keep it to ourselves, but that we might do **His** business with this blessed gospel until He returns. And of course we need to know what the Lord wants us to do with His treasure, with this **sacred** trust which He has left us. We are to treasure it for ourselves and openly rejoice in its wonderful grace that all around us might know and understand that JOY that we have in the Lord. We are to diligently teach it to our children that they might comprehend exactly how special this treasure is so that they also might grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are to speak of Jesus to our neighbors and friends, sharing the hope that we have in our hearts with those around us. We need to know the Scriptures well and live our faith obviously enough that those around us will ask us concerning the hope that abides in our hearts. We are to support called workers of the Word, and pray for them, and support the work of the Kingdom with our labors around the church or even on mission trips, and with our offerings. This is the sacred trust that Jesus has left with us that we might have a divine purpose and calling in this life, a purpose that means something, something that lasts. We are to be busy with the gospel until our Blessed Nobleman returns to reclaim His kingdom!

This sacred trust, the mina of the gospel is not to be neglected or hidden as if Jesus were someone of whom we were ashamed, as if He were the enemy of mankind.

There are those who perceive Jesus as the enemy. Jesus highlighted them in this parable as well. These are the people of this world, some of whom may even portray themselves as spiritual, who deny the Lord who redeemed them, and declare "*We will not have this man to reign over us.*" (v.14)

Let us then consider --

II. The Accounting at the King's Return.

The first of the servants was called before the King. This servant had put the money entrusted to him to work. The mina invested made a profit, a large profit. The servant was careful that the credit should not be his but his master's who had entrusted him with his treasure, and his mina worked! The power was in the mina!

So it is with the gospel which is the sacred trust the Lord placed in our hands. If we spread the gospel it will bring the increase. The Lord assured the prophet Isaiah, "*My word ... shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall **prosper** in the thing for which I sent it.*" (Isaiah 55:11) We don't need to add any power to God's Word, in fact we **can't** add any power to it. The gospel which the Lord has entrusted to us already is "*the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.*" (Romans 1:16) We only need to proceed with confidence, and the gospel entrusted to us will bring a profit in **souls** back to Jesus! What a privilege to be included in the business of our King, the Lord of hosts! What an honor that Jesus would entrust us with this treasure and give such meaning and purpose to our otherwise mundane lives!

And then when we look at the King's response upon His return! To His faithful servants He grants a gracious

reward beyond any expectation! The servant was faithful in a relatively small responsibility of putting the king's resources to work for themselves, and yet the King rewards the servant with a great promotion to greater responsibility in the service of the new King. The same was true for the servant who returned five minas to the king's mina. He also was credited with faithfulness in his trust to the king and was graciously rewarded with ruling over a portion of the king's domain.

The Lord would have us realize that He looks upon us with His favor. Yes, He has entrusted to us, spreading among us, all the believers on earth, the treasure of His gospel. When Jess returns to take **visible** possession of His kingdom, we shall then have the opportunity to report to Him the wonders which **His gospel** has done while entrusted to our care. That will be a joy, for what we will be reporting is the wonders the gospel has accomplished in the hearts of sinners, calling people to repentance, and to life and salvation.

It is a real mistake for children of God who have benefited from His grace and been brought to know this great salvation in the gospel to neglect, and even hide the gospel away that others might not see or hear it from us. It mischaracterizes the Lord and His gospel before the world. In the parable there was a servant among the several who had been entrusted with the nobleman's mina who simply bundled up the mina in a handkerchief that could have been used to wipe the sweat from his brow as he labored for his master. No, this servant bundled up the treasure entrusted to him by the nobleman and buried it where no one would see it, where it could accomplish nothing. This man saw his master as austere, or severe in his expectations. He is condemned by the king upon His return. He could have and should have done something with the mina entrusted to him! That mina he had been given was taken away and delivered to the one who had labored most faithfully for his master. He stood condemned and ashamed before the King.

Then of course there were those who sent that delegation in opposition to the nobleman. Their fate is even more severe. Instant judgment befalls them. They lose their lives. Live were lost for eternity!

So how shall we proceed knowing that what Jesus is telling us that in the end there will be accounting of our stewardship of the gospel? When we are the beneficiaries of His grace, and we are entrusted with a gospel treasure that is in itself powerful to save, shall we not seek every opportunity to make gains for our King with the treasure He has given us? Think of the joy that we shall experience when Jesus comes again, and we shall report to Him the wonders of gospel proclamation, of being faithful witnesses of His grace. He shall receive us into His glory bestowing us with grace upon grace! At the same let us be aware of easy it is for us to slip into the way of the unfaithful servant and just be warned. We need to relish the gospel that others perceive how much we rejoice in it day after day year in and year out! It will be our desire to live the gospel that all who are around us see Christ in our lives, so that He cannot be missed when they observe our choices in life, our language, our interaction with our neighbor.

Living in a society that in recent years is characterized by cyber bullying, and angry words and rude tweets, even rating other people's ugliness on social media, in such surroundings kindness, tender affection, and congeniality will be easily seen, and so will the gospel of God's love and forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Don't hide your faith! Don't bury the gospel! Don't perpetuate the false image of our Lord that He is austere and severe in His expectations. The Lord is gracious! *"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, Gracious in all His works. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth."* (Psalm 145:17-18)

And yes, we also need to appreciate the fate of all those who turn against the Lord who despise the gospel. Unbelief is consequential, and the response is severe, and it is eternal. The Lord does not desire the death of the sinner. That is why He came down to earth to save people from their sins. You know people that need the gospel. We also would deliver them from that fate that is before them. Share the gospel. Put the gift entrusted to you to work. It will deliver the sinner from the error of his ways and from eternal death to the glories of heaven. This is our hope. This is our purpose. Let us live it to the praise and glory of Christ looking forward to His glorious return.

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans 15:13)