

The Parables of the Ten Minas

If you have your Bible please turn with me to Luke 19. Do you ever find yourself wishing you had more time? Maybe you've said to yourself, "I would love to do such and such if I had more time." I'd love to write. I'd love to exercise. I'd love to get to that home repair that's been needing attention for two years... if I had more time.

There is no such thing as "more time". We're all given the exact same 24 hours in a day. What can vary is what we do with those 24 hours. Take the great 19th century preacher Charles Spurgeon for instance. Here is what he did in a typical week:

- Preached 4-10 sermons a week
- Read six hefty books a week
- Revised sermons for publication
- Edited a monthly magazine
- Pastored a megachurch
- Directed a theological college
- Ran an orphanage
- Oversaw 66 charities
- In his spare time, he wrote 150 books

Still think you have a busy schedule? It's discouraging, isn't it? We are all given the same 24 hours a day, how we invest those 24 hours varies from person to person.

We are going through the parables of Jesus, and two weeks ago we looked at the Parable of the Talents. In that parable each servant was given a different amount of talents and we talked about how God apportions to us varying amounts of talents. Some are given more talents, some less, and we shouldn't compare or be jealous of one another.

But this morning we're going to look at the parable of the ten minas, where the master gives the exact same amount to each of his servants, but like Spurgeon got different results from his 24 hours than most of us do, those servants get different returns on the mina they've been given.

Luke 19:11-27

I had no intention of our looking at this parable because it is so similar to the Parable of the Talents. But after I preached on that parable two weeks ago, I felt the Lord give me more to say on it. The central truth of both parables is the same, that is, what do we do with what God has given us, how do we invest our lives, our resources, our time, our energy in the work of the kingdom of heaven. But it's worth pointing out that there are a couple differences in these parable as well:

- Talent/Mina. A talent was a lot of money valued at about \$600K each. A mina was much less, worth about 3 months wages. In our currency, a mina might be worth about 12K. Not insignificant amount, but much less than the talent.
- In the parable of the talents each servant is given a different amount. In the parable of the minas each servant is given the same amount of minas.
- Each servant went out with the same amount (like we're all given the same 24 hours to work with) but each came back with different amounts of growth.
- In the story of the minas, the one who hid his mina had it taken away from him, but it doesn't say he was cast into outer darkness.

I think the big points of these parables are the same and I'm not going to repeat what I said two weeks ago so if you missed that message I encourage you to listen to it online.

The point I want to make this morning is that we are all tempted to be like this third servant sometimes in the sense of taking what the Lord has given us and hiding it under a cloth. The mina (and the talent) represents our lives and all God has given us – our time, our talents, our resources, our energy, our relationships, our affections – everything we have and are. The Master intends for us to invest our minas (our lives) in the service of the kingdom of heaven but we can be like the servant who hid it under a cloth. In other words, not use it. Not put it out there. Not risk it, but also not invest it. I know that I am tempted to hide my mina sometimes, so I'm guessing many of you are to.

I want to share 4 things that can stop us from investing our lives in kingdom service and then 4 reasons why we should

I. 4 things that can stop us from investing our lives in kingdom work

1. Fear

Fear is a stopper. It's fear that stopped this servant from investing his mina: *Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.*"

As we saw last week, this servant doesn't know his master. God is not a hard taskmaster, He is an awesomely generous and kind Father. But there are many ways fear can get us to hide our mina under a cloth.

- Fear of failure – what if we step out and fall flat on our face? Fear of failure can paralyze us from taking risks. *The person who never makes a mistake will never make anything.* Failure is a part of learning and growing and life but fear of failure gets a strong grip and tries to keep us from investing our lives in kingdom service.
- Fear of losing what we have – what if we invest our mina and lose it? Then we have nothing.
 - Tell my friend about Jesus and lose her friendship
 - What if I refuse to do something unethical my boss tells me to do and I lose my job?
 - What if I give financially to God's work and then don't have enough to pay my bills?

I know personally what it's like to hear fear say to my heart, just take your mina, hide it in a cloth and run out the clock...it's safer. But it's the wrong voice to listen to. Perfect love casts out fear. When we know the awesome, lavish love of the Father, we can overcome fear and pull that mina out from underneath the cloth and invest it.

2. Inertia

The definition of inertia is: *"The tendency of a body to resist acceleration; the tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest or of a body in straight line motion to stay in motion in a straight line unless acted on by an outside force.*

"The tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest..." In other words, if something isn't moving, it doesn't want to move. Wives, this explains why, once your husband hits the couch, he doesn't want to move. It's the tendency of a body at rest to remain at rest. It's only when an outside force acts on him, like the desire for a bag of potato chips, that he staggers into the kitchen. It's called inertia.

Inertia means we want to stay where we are. The hardest part of investing that mina is the first step of getting off the couch of life and investing it, serving with it, moving forward in kingdom service.

Another aspect of inertia is we want to keep doing what we've been doing. The second half of the definition says *or of a body in straight line motion to stay in motion in a straight line...*" Once something does get going in a direction, it wants to continue in that direction.

If we get out of the habit of investing our lives in God's mission, it gets easier and easier to not do it. And it gets harder and harder to get back in the game. Inertia speaks fluent procrastinane: don't do it today. Do it tomorrow. Today it's inconvenient.

"You can act your way into feeling long before you will feel your way into action. If you wait until you feel like doing something, you will likely never accomplish it." – John Maxwell

3. *Inadequacy*

MacMillan Dictionary offers one definition of inadequacy as *a lack of confidence that makes someone feel they are not good enough to deal with a particular situation or with life in general.*

Some people are very confident (sometimes people who are very confident really shouldn't be, but that's a different message), but many people live with this constant voice of inadequacy. "You're not good enough. You don't have what it takes. You won't measure up. Leave it to someone else."

I had a friend years ago who struggled big time with this and the way he dealt with it was to try and look like he didn't care about anything. Better for people to think you didn't get it done, or get the job, or succeed at something because you don't care than because you're inadequate.

2 Cor. 3:4 strengthens our confidence, not in ourselves but in God: ⁴ *Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.* ⁵ *Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God...*

Faith in God can help us overcome feelings of inadequacy as we trust God to make us adequate.

4. *Poor life management*

We intend to invest, but we just aren't doing a good job of managing our lives. We squander our time, our energy, our skills, our relationships, in all the wrong directions and have nothing left. Intending to pull that mina out from under the cloth isn't the same thing as pulling it out. Eph. 5:16 encourages us to *"make the best use of time, because the days are evil."* It's a good thing to try and improve how we manage our lives so we don't miss opportunities the Lord gives to us. We want to make the best use of our time to make a difference in this world with the love of Jesus.

II. **4 reasons why we should invest our lives in kingdom work**

1. *The Lord generously rewards us for our efforts*

The Lord is not a hard and miserable person looking to zap anyone who doesn't get it right. That's what this servant thought but he was so wrong. Whether you bring back ten minas, five minas, two minas, or one mina, if you've invested to the best of your ability, the Lord is thrilled. All our rewards are going to be far more lavish than our efforts and results actually deserve – cause God is a prodigal (lavish) Father!

2. *The only way we can get better at investing is by investing*

There are very few things we start out good at. We start out wobbly, and the only way to get better is by doing it. Look at a baby's first steps. Listen to someone just starting out on an instrument. Or driving. Or pretty much anything.

It takes a lot of work to make something look easy. It takes a long time to become an overnight success.

What mina has the Lord given to you? The gift of encouragement? The ability to teach? To lead worship? Work with children? Evangelize? Prophetic word? Help the poor? The gift of leadership? The only way you'll get better at investing that mina is by investing that mina. Be prepared for some bumps and falls and failures along the way. But if you hide that mina until you're sure you're gonna be good at using it, you'll probably be waiting a long time.

3. *The more we give, the more we get*

Jesus says in verse 26 *"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."* That doesn't make sense or seem right if Jesus is saying that God will enrich the rich even more, and take away what little the poor have from them. But that's not what Jesus is saying.

They all have one mina, so no one "has not" in that sense. But some took that mina and put it out there, invested it, risked it, and multiplied it. They are the ones who have, not because of what they got, but because of what they gave. One took that mina and covered it. He hoarded it. Never put it out there, never risked it, never invested it. He had not because he gave not. The more we give the more we get.

This is the law of sowing and reaping.

- a. We reap what we sow
- b. We reap more than we sow
- c. We reap later than we sow

Farmers know if you hoard all your seed and don't sow any of it, you won't reap a harvest.

4. *People need to get what you have to give and you need to give what you have to give*

When we talk about investing our lives in the kingdom of heaven, we're really talking about investing in people. That can look many different ways, direct or indirect, large or small, but it will be giving to people.

Nothing else in the world will make it to the kingdom. Money won't, buildings won't, reputations won't, fame won't.

The only things in this world that are eternal is God's word and people. And people need to get what you have to give. Your word of encouragement can make a difference. Your witness for Christ can make a difference. Your teaching Children's Ministry can make a difference. That act of kindness can make a difference. Never think that whether you invest your mina or not won't make a difference. It will, God promises.

At the men's Bible study yesterday, I was challenged by the things other men shared. My perspective was lifted up to more eternal things and my heart was encouraged in Christ. You never know the difference your sharing a scripture verse, a prayer, a word of encouragement or exhortation, can make in someone else's life. People need what you have to give.

But not only do people need to get what we have to give, we need to give what we have to give. As much as others benefit from our kingdom investment in their lives, we also benefit from investing what God has entrusted to us to invest.

I heard something that I can't get out of my head. It's simple but profound.

Information without implementation leads to frustration

It's not good for our souls to accumulate information about serving the purposes of the kingdom without implementing any of that information. We will grow frustrated in our faith. God didn't create us to be reservoirs of grace, He created us to be channels of grace. And we'll be frustrated if we don't give and risk and invest the grace-mina He has entrusted to us. The Lord has given His church a mission. Let's everyone of us join the mission!