

When The King Returns.

Text: Luke 19:11-27

Suggested Hymns:
486, 488, 151, 377, 346

- 1) Why has the King gone away?
- 2) What is the attitude of servants and citizens toward the King while He is away?
- 3) What will happen when the King returns?

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 19:11-27, ¹¹ *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)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Today is the second last Sunday of the Church year and we are once again reminded of Jesus returning as King of King and Lord of Lords in all His majesty and glory to judge the living and the dead.

As Lutheran Bible Christians we cling firmly to the motto, *“We are saved, not by works, but by grace alone, for Christ’s sake, through faith.”* We refuse to acknowledge any other way to heaven.

Over against the many false doctrines that give man’s works either partly or wholly the credit for salvation, we boldly say with Paul in Ephesians 2:8-10, ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them and Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”***¹

We must, however, watch and pray that no one thereby despises the necessity of good works. There are many hypocrites who think that they can misuse the grace of God and spend their life in God’s kingdom in idleness. James refers to them when he says in James 2:20, ***“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”*** Should there any idle people among us today, they ought to experience a real awakening as we study our text.

As we approach the end of another church year, we need encouragement to work while it is day, before the night comes when no man can work.² Let us then approach this parable with self-searching earnestness and consider the theme, *When the King Returns*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Why Has The King Gone Away?

Who is the King or nobleman in this text? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour. Why did He go away? Many of the Jews still expected Jesus to establish a great Messianic kingdom of power on earth. Over against this opinion Jesus tells them through this parable that He must first withdraw His visible presence from them for a while and then return.

And when He returns, He will establish not an earthly, but a heavenly kingdom. For that reason He is going away *to receive for himself a kingdom and to return* our text says in verse 12.

Jesus ascended into heaven to be crowned King. His ascension was also His coronation. He had come to earth to earn that Kingdom for us.

The hymnist writes,³

*To this vale of tears He comes,
Here to serve in sadness,
That with Him in heav'n's fair home
We may reign in gladness.*

Jesus won the Kingdom, He alone, and no one else. Through His perfect obedience to the Law and through His innocent suffering and death He earned heaven for us. He knew the Kingdom would be His. He knew the Father would give Him the crown.

Before He died, He gave His disciples the comforting assurance, as it is written in John 14:1-3, ¹ *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.”* ² *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”* ³ *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”* This then was the chief reason for His going away: to receive the Kingdom that He would later give to His servants.

But there was another reason for His going away. We see that from the command to His servants, *“Do business till I come,”* in other words, *“Do My business for Me until I return.”*

He wanted to give these servants, or disciples, the opportunity to carry on the work of His kingdom here on earth that He had so nobly begun. Not that this work was necessary to gain the Kingdom above; Jesus had done that completely.

But this work is necessary to give the servants an opportunity to prove their loyalty and love to their King.

For that reason Jesus still remains away in the flesh today. There are still servants who require testing. There is still some of His business left to be done. As soon as that is done, the King will return. We are reassured of this in Matthew 24:14, ¹⁴ *“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.* Until that time the command “Do the King’s business” remains in force for every servant.

2. What Is The Attitude Of Servants And Citizens Toward The King While He Is Away?

But oh, what a difference is to be found in the attitude of citizens and servants toward their King and His command! Many of the citizens even refuse to have Him as their King as we read in verse 14, *‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’*

This had happened in the political life of the Jews. After the death of Herod the Great, his son Archelaus went to Rome to obtain his kingdom. An embassy of fifty Jews followed him to protest the appointment, and eight thousand more followed to strengthen the protest. Still this huge petition was not heeded.

In a similar way the Jews rejected their spiritual King, God’s Son, Jesus. And how many followers the Jews still have today! In our own country it is a shameful fact that most of our people follow these citizens in our text. They hate the Saviour and refuse to obey Him.

But the opposition of these citizens will not keep the King from receiving His Kingdom.

The hymnist writes,⁴

*Though all the powers of evil
The will of God oppose,
His purpose will not falter,
His pleasure onward goes,
Whate’er God’s will resolveth,
Whatever He intends.
Will always be accomplished*

True to His aims and ends.

Oh, the foolishness of these weak, hateful citizens to oppose their mighty, majestic King!

Besides these wicked citizens, our attention is directed particularly to the King's special servants. To each of them the King gives *one mina* of money before He leaves. One mina was worth about 3 months wages, so its value is considerable.

Every servant has the opportunity, the duty, and the means to promote the King's business. The *mina* here means God's Word and the Sacraments. By means of them the work of the Church is to be promoted. This is the substance with which these servants are to do business until the King returns, not their business, but the King's business.

But these servants are not all alike. The one is lazy and unconcerned. He takes the entrusted *mina* and wraps it in his handkerchief. He thinks the King expects too much, and he will not even try to do any of his business.

Such pitiful and foolish people are all those who have the Gospel but will not do business with it. They think Christ requires too much of them. They feel that they themselves will lose something if they work for Christ and not for their own selfish interests.

Take any work devoted to the Word, support of the home church, of Synod, and its work at home and abroad. They are always afraid to give too much, to pray too diligently, to work too zealously, to use their Bible too frequently, and to urge others too earnestly. They are often the ones who murmur and complain whenever any money or time or effort are required for the King's work. Friends, your Saviour gives you work to do which can only bring you blessings so away with all fear and laziness!

The other servants accepted their one *mina* as a challenge to earn more. They went out to do business. Not all with the same success. Yet they all worked.

We hope this is a picture of all of us present today. The King has entrusted to us the means of grace. In this respect there is no difference. We all have our one *mina*. But there is a difference in our zeal to do business with it. According

to that, the King will judge when He returns. He doesn't count statistics, because the results of our business for Him lie with Him alone. But He does count our faithfulness.

Have we used our moments, our money, and our opportunities to do His business? Has there been no fear, no laziness, and no unfaithfulness holding us back? We know there has been. We plead guilty. He gladly forgives.

But Jesus has not returned, nor has He taken us out of the world. As long as He leaves us here, He says, *"Do business for Me."* Never grow tired or careless in your task. The great preacher Whitefield once asked a pious old pastor, *"Don't you wish you could die?"* The old pastor replied, *"No, not yet."*

Whitefield was astonished. Then the old pastor continued, *"My good brother, how would you regard a servant whom you sent in the field to work for you and to whom you promised extra high reward, as well as plenty of rest in the evening, if this servant, before evening came, would want to rest or quit. My King will tell me when it's time to rest. Until then I want to work."*

How many Christians there are who want the reward and the rest of the evening but fret under the midday sun! Work, trade, do business until the King returns! That will be sooner than you imagine.

3. What Will Happen When The King Returns?

When He comes, there will be no chance to make up for the time we wasted or the opportunities we neglected in doing His business. For when He returns, He will immediately proceed to the accounting.

He calls His servants before Him. The faithful come first. The one says, *'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'* Notice his humility. He takes no credit. He says, *"Your mina did it all."*

Likewise the other said, *'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'* They recognise themselves only as tools through whom the business was done. So do all real Christian stewards. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:10, ***"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."***

The Psalmist sings in Psalm 115:1, ¹ *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.* The faithful servants of the King know how often they failed in their duty. They know they are not worthy of any reward.

Yet the King richly rewards them in His grace. Since all their faults and failings were covered with Jesus' blood, all their works shine before Him. He gives them cities over which to rule and showers them with blessings and glory.

The lazy one is also rewarded, but only according to his laziness and stubbornness. His one *mina* is taken from him, and he is cast into hell. And with him are cast out all those wicked citizens that refused to acknowledge the King. For them there is now eternal wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Surely, it is not a light matter with our King whether we do business for Him or not while He is away. He bids us do it. Let us answer in the words of the hymnist,⁵

*Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee. Amen*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Romans 3:28

² John 9:4

³ Hymn 22 v2

⁴ 520 v 5, TLH, Commit whatever grieves thee (409)

⁵ Hymn 377