

Cheltenham
Ps Rob Buckingham
5 & 6 November 2016

WHILE YOU'RE WAITING FOR JESUS

Message Notes

Text: Luke 19:11-17

Jesus is speaking in the light of recent history...

(Herod the Great made a trip to Rome in 40 B.C. seeking a Roman appointment as king of Judea, and his son, Archelaus, made a similar journey in 4 B.C. King Herod's trip to Rome was successful; he was made King although it took three years to subdue those who opposed him. His son Archelaus made the same trip because he didn't like that he had to share power with his brother Herod Antipas upon his father's death. Josephus describes Jews sending an embassy to Augustus Caesar, while Archelaus was travelling to Rome, to complain that they did not want Archelaus as their ruler; when Archelaus returned, he arranged for 3000 of his enemies to be brought to him at the Temple in Jerusalem, where he had them slaughtered).

- The setting: At Zacchaeus' house (1-9)
- "*Salvation has come to this house*" – the inference here being if salvation has come for a tax collector then it must have arrived for the nation.
- Purpose of the parable (11): "*While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, (1) because he was near Jerusalem and (2)*

the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once."

1. Because he was near Jerusalem – to celebrate Passover, a remembrance of national salvation from bondage to Egypt. Israel was again looking for freedom, this time from Roman oppression.

2. The people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.

NLT: *"he told them a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away."*

And so Jesus tells a story to correct the impression that the Kingdom of God would begin right away and to instruct his people on how they should live while they're waiting for Jesus...

1. A life of trust

"Put this money to work," he said, "until I come back."

Q. What would you do with your money in an unstable political environment if you were investing money on behalf of someone who was not always popular with others?

Kenneth Bailey in his book, *Jesus through Middle Eastern eyes* puts it this way, *"Are you willing to take the risk and openly declare yourselves to be my loyal servants (during my absence) in a world where many oppose me and my rule? Once I return, having received kingly power, it will be easy to declare yourself publicly to be my loyal servants. I am more interested in how you conduct yourselves when I am absent and you have to pay a high price to openly identify yourself with me...in the parable the master challenges his servants to live boldly and publicly as his servants, using his resources, unafraid of his enemies, confident in the future as his future."*

There is a cost to following Jesus. Being bold in our identification with him is not always easy, popular or safe. At times it would be much easier to bury the money under the floorboards.

Q. Can Jesus trust me with what he has entrusted to me?

2. A life of humility

There are three things here that keep us humble:

1. The gift is a gift of grace

He "*gave them ten minas.*"

It's important that we constantly remind ourselves that our faith is totally based on the grace of God (saving, serving & sustaining)

1 Cor. 4:7, "*What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*"

2. The gift does the work

"*Put this money to work,' he said"*

3. The gift bears the fruit

"*Sir, your mina has earned ten more.*" (Or five)

Everything that is ultimately effective for the Kingdom of God is because God showed up. Yes, we do what we can do; but God will always do what we can't do! (Cf. I Corinthians 3:6)

3. A life of faithfulness

"Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

Mother Theresa, (Asked by a British journalist how she kept going, knowing that she could never meet the needs of all the dying in the streets of Calcutta): *"I am not called to be successful; I'm called to be faithful."*

The reward of faithfulness is greater responsibilities, not privileges.

Q. But what about the unfaithful servant?

20 *Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.*

To keep money safe in uncertain times people would either give it to the moneychangers, store it in the temple treasury or at least keep it in a strongbox. But wrapping it in a piece of cloth would be considered irresponsible and stupid.

21 *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.'*

This is probably a compliment (some Middle Eastern cultures had an unwritten rule that they were permitted to plunder each other as long as no one got hurt. Everything was fair game). But the compliment backfired...

22 "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

The judgment the master passes on this man is to leave him with his distorted view of his true nature that his unfaithfulness has given him...

King David put it this way, *"To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the devious you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty"* (Psalm 18:25-27)

The way we live influences how we see God!

The master is gracious and generous (3 times in the story)

Religious people who are harsh and judgmental are that way because that's how they see God. They are only acting in line with their view of God. If we view God as compassionate and full of mercy and grace we will act in the same way towards others!

24 "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' **25** "'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!' (I.e. "that's not fair)

26 "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. **27** But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.'" (Just like Archelaus had done)

But note that the master says what his enemies deserve. He doesn't say what they receive...

Luke 6:35-36, "*But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*"