Put This Money to Work

 Luke 19:11-27

**So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. “Put this money to work,” he said, “until I come back”** (Luke 19:13).

What is the greatest investment you can ever make? People everywhere talk about investment and business. In this troubled generation, people don’t know where to invest. In his parable Jesus said, “Put this money to work,” “Do business.” It sounds as if Jesus is teaching us business, how to make money. I believe many of you are concerned about how to be successful in your life such as in self-supporting, in study, and in family. In today’s passage, Jesus gives us a clear perspective of where you are and how you are to live. I pray that we may learn this morning about our life investment and how to make it.

Verse 11 reveals the context of today’s parable. This parable is at the end of Luke’s travel narrative, which tells the story of Jesus’ journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. This journey was not an ordinary journey such as family vacation trip. It was a trip of destiny. Our parable took place in Jericho, which is less than 20 miles from Jerusalem (only about a six- hour- walk). “**And** **the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once**.” They expected that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately, overthrowing the foreign domination of Rome. **Jesus was near Jerusalem** where such expectations of a political Messiah were extremely high.

In verse 12, Jesus starts the parable. It looks complex, but it is pretty simple. The whole point of this parable was to correct some misconceptions. It is about a nobleman, who had as his inheritance the right of kingship. He had to go to a distant country to claim his position. It was going to take a long time for him to get there and then come back. People thought Jesus’ rule was going to be established immediately. It is somewhat like saying we should all be wealthy, healthy, and successful all the time. When you believe, you get smart and rich, and so on. If you have to go through sufferings you are a loser. We can call this the prosperity gospel, which doesn’t talk about suffering and the cross. Jesus says: no, there will be a delay. Jesus is going up to Jerusalem not for His kingship to be proclaimed right away. We now know what happened in Jerusalem: Jesus died, rose again, and then ascended into heaven. But one day He will return and His kingdom will be established decisively over all creation. We are currently living in that in-between time. On one hand, today salvation has already come to us because Jesus the King died and rose again for us. On the other hand, we are still awaiting the full outworking of His kingship. So Jesus is stressing that there will be a delay which is the time period we now live in. It is a delay divinely orchestrated, until He returns in His full power. We have to wait for Jesus to return.

The parable continues to tell us about what we should do during that delay! Jesus wants us to turn our focus away from **when** the kingdom of God will appear; instead he wants us to focus on **what** to do in the meantime until the king comes. Look at verse 13. The master called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. He said, “**Put this money to work, until I come back**.” He gave ten of his servants (slaves) ten minas, that is, one mina each. One mina was about 100 day-wages for a laborer. That means a mina was worth about 4 months pay for a laborer (it would depend on how much you make a month, but maybe about $10,000). The amount that was given was not a massive sum. But it was enough money to be able to start something with. The master said, “**Put this money to work, until I come back**.” The servants were commanded to trade with this money. It was a command, not an option. The master’s command was to engage in business with the money for the benefit of his kingdom.

“Put this money to work” is our life instruction and mission. The coming of Jesus and his grace to save us give us a clear life perspective. But what exactly is the task Jesus is calling us to? What is this money that He gave us to do business? Some might say it means one’s talents, abilities or skills. Others say it is the gospel of Jesus. Still others say it means our money or possessions. When we take all these together, the money entrusted to us is our life. God has given us life. He has given us not only money, but time, abilities and other resources at our disposal. So Jesus is saying, “Put this life to work until I come back.”

The greatest blessing from God is life itself and salvation through the grace of Jesus. Jesus is calling us to put every aspect of our life to work for the benefit of the kingdom of God. God gave each of us good things: time, abilities, resources, houses, and so on. Most importantly, God gave you the gospel of Jesus.

Why does God give us such good things? The money given to the servants in trust was for the sole purpose of increasing the master’s business. It was given to his trusted servants with a mission. That mission is made clear when we look at last Sunday’s message: “The Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost “(Luke19:10). Jesus said in Matt 28: “Go and make disciples of all nations!” When he says “put this money to work,” Jesus is saying that here is your life which I have given to you in trust. Engage in business with it. Use it to further the name of Jesus to all people and to the ends of the earth. When we live as God’s servants, then his business become our business and his work becomes our work.

There are many who live in rebellion against God. There will always be people who want to deny the kingship of Jesus. These enemies of God are condemned and will be punished according to verse 27. Who will reach out to them and lead them to acknowledge Jesus as King? It has to be you and I. It is for this very reason that God has called us as his servants. I thank God for the growing number of disciples among us. They have spiritual desire to live for Jesus. They are willing to stand for the kingdom of God. We pray for them to be good ministers of Christ and to be the mothers of many nations.

The motto of the world is: Please yourself! What is the motto of your life? According to Jesus, the only reason he was given life on this earth was so he might lay it down for us. We too have been given life so that we might lay it down for others. This is God’s blessing and his calling to us to be his servants. We can serve by sharing the word of God with others or by praying for them. In any case, we have a clear focus: the kingdom of God. One way or another, we are to put our life to work for His kingdom.

We are preparing for the Genesis Bible Academy which is coming up this Thursday through Saturday. I pray that we all have an opportunity to put our life to work. I pray that we may put our life to work and use it for the glory of God.

Let’s look at verse 15. After the king came back, he called for his servants in order to find out what they had gained with the money. The first servant said, “**Sir, your mina has earned ten more**!” His master replied (v.17), “**Well done, my good servant! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.**” The second came and said, “**Sir, your mina has earned five more**.” His master answered, “**You take charge of five cities**.” Wow! They were rewarded in an incomparable way. Why was the king so pleased with these servants? It was because they had been trustworthy in a very small matter. Whether it was ten minas or five minas or even one mina, the king was looking for the servants who were trustworthy in very small matters. It is not about aptitude, but about attitude.

The principle of being trustworthy in a very small matter is very important to God. Why? Your love for Jesus is revealed in very small matters. The true test of your faith comes in small matters that happen every day at home, at school, or at one-to-one Bible study. These things don’t seem gorgeous. One mina is not a massive sum. But by being trustworthy with one mina, the servants confirmed that they were truly devoted to the king and that they had a genuine relationship with him. To be a trustworthy person is not easy because it requires a willingness to place other’s interest above your own. It means putting priority on what God wants over what I want. Our selfish desires make this kind of sacrifice very difficult. But if we love Jesus, then we will care about what Jesus cares about and be willing to make sacrifices for him. The closer we are to Jesus, the easier this becomes. To be a good and trustworthy servant, we must work on our relationship with Jesus. The more we know who Jesus is, the more we desire to conform to Jesus’ desires.

Does doing the work of God seem hard and burdensome? Then, we must first look to work on our relationship with God. The servants did such a good job because the work was not a burden to them, but instead became their delight and joy. If we love him, we will seek to understand him and know what he delights in. When we know Jesus, then we know what Jesus cares about. When we go the way of Jesus in a small matter, we will share our Lord Jesus’ joy and happiness. I pray that we might be good servants who grow in our love for Jesus and be faithful in small matters for the kingdom.

Now let’s have a look at the third servant’s report in verse 20. This servant disobeyed the king and stored his mina away in a handkerchief. This servant offered an excuse in verse 21. He was afraid of his master and saw him as a severe man, taking what was not his, and reaping what he had not sown. The king now uses the servant’s own logic. Surely, if you think someone is a hard master, you will make sure you do what they tell you to do. If he was scared of losing the money, he could have at least put it on deposit at the bank. His own words condemned him and revealed that his heart was far from the master’s heart. Do you think you can fool God? No. We cannot fool God, for He looks at our hearts.

What happened to this servant who disobeyed his master? The master told him, “You, wicked servant,” which means evil servant. Then he took the one mina from him and gave it to the one who had earned the ten minas.

In verse 23, the king calls the money “my money” which means the mina was only the servant’s money in the sense that he was entrusted with it. In the same way, the things God has given us are only ours in the sense that we have been entrusted with them. Our money, our time, our resources, are in fact not really ours, but God’s. They are borrowed. We are accountable to God. We must then be careful to do with them what their owner has commanded. God gave us one life. We must give an account of it. How we invest it and put it to work will determine what God will say to us. How do you deal with your life? How do you deal with your resources that God has entrusted to you? Do you take Jesus seriously? Because of Jesus, we can say: The kingdom of God is the greatest investment you can ever make. Every person is accountable to Christ, and will be examined by Him.

What do you want to hear? I want to hear the words from the king, “**Well done, good and faithful servant!**” Let us stay away from being called a “wicked servant” by God. Our life seems to be long and never ending. People like to enjoy life as much as they can. However, all of our lives will end at some point and we must give an account before Jesus. I pray that we put them all to work for God’s kingdom. May God bless you and help you to put your life to work for the kingdom’s sake!