

There is an old story about a politician who was exhausted by the long lines of shaking people's hands. He felt like no one would listen to what he said. One day while shaking people's hands briefly in a line half a mile long he decided to smile and tell each person, "I murdered my grandmother this morning. No one paid attention except for one woman who replied, "I am sure she had it coming."<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes we can approach the Bible just like those guests. We can hear familiar stories, like the well known story of Zacchaeus and the parable of the Minas, and we just smile and nod. We assume we know the story. We assume we know what it means. We assume we have already mastered the text and applied it to our lives. And if we are not listening and paying attention, we might miss that Jesus is actually saying something unexpected.

Because these stories appear at a crucial part of the story. This is the very last time before Jesus will be in Jerusalem. The next time we read from Luke it will be the triumphant entry and the climax of the book begins. It is one of the last times a sinner will seek out Jesus. It is one of the very last parables Jesus will teach. I want us to be sure that we are listening and not going on auto pilot.

Turn in your Bibles to Luke 19:1-27.

### Point 1: **Seek the Kingdom's King (v. 1-10).**

Jesus' earthly ministry has been all about declaring the arrival of the kingdom of God.

And He has come as the King of that kingdom.

But He did not just come to tell us that He is in charge.

He came to live for us.

He came to die for us.

And He came to be resurrected for us.

---

<sup>1</sup> This story was first attributed to President FDR in a 1953 book titled "The Compleat Practical Joker" by journalist and humorist H. Allen Smith. It may or may have happened.

Part of that mission was to seek us.  
He came intentionally to seek out the lost.  
To seek out those who were on the edges.  
Those who would never hear of the kingdom of God.  
And Jesus came to them to invite them in.

Because Jesus seeks us, we too should seek Him.  
The story of Zacchaeus is the story of a man who seeks Jesus.  
And it begins in an unlikely place.  
The story again begins in Jericho.

Verse 1, **"He entered Jericho and was passing through."**

Jericho is a place that Joshua destroyed.  
It was filled with the enemies of God's people and was a place of wickedness.  
And in this place we are introduced to a man of great wickedness.

Verse 2, **"And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich."**

He has three things against him.  
He lives in an evil city.  
He is a tax collector.

We have talked about tax collectors a lot recently, but I want to remind you what makes them bad.

The government would let people bid for the right to become a tax collector.

A tax collector then has to collect the taxes for the government.

But they are free to charge whatever they want on top and keep it for themselves.

If I was the tax collector I could show up to your house and say you owe me 10,000 extra on your property taxes this year.

You would know it would all go into my pocket, but you couldn't do a thing about it.

It was an incredibly corrupt system that everyone knew about.  
And the poor and heavily taxed especially hated it.  
And Zachaeus is not just a regular tax collector, but a chief one.  
He is near the top of this corrupt system.  
He is rich because of how much he has robbed people.  
We saw last week that riches are a barrier to following Jesus.  
They are a much greater barrier when you have gained them through immoral means.

Yet with everything going against him, Zachaeus seeks Jesus.  
Yet, verse 3, **"And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature."**  
He wants to know who Jesus is.  
This unlikely man, in an unlikely place, seeks the King.  
He reminds me a lot of Rahab.  
Another unlikely character in Jericho who sought out God.

But it tells us that the crowd is hindering him.  
They are not getting out of his way.  
Because of how unliked he was, it is unlikely people would have moved.  
They would not have done him any favors.

And it mentions that he is **"small in stature."**  
A fancy way to say that he is short.  
He can't see over the crowd.  
And no one wants to let him in the front.

Why does it tell us that he is short?  
I think Luke does so to see that he is small in stature, but great in faith.  
And he does so to show us that Your physical limitations.  
Your emotional challenges and limitations.  
Your disabilities.  
Whatever it is in us that has made your life difficult.  
That has made it hard.

It does not, and it cannot keep you from Jesus.  
There is nothing about you that can hold back your faith.  
Whatever about you that you think is small, can be great when you use it to seek King Jesus.  
God uses the weak to shame the wise.  
And God uses what is "small" about us to make His kingdom big.

Verse 4, **"So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way."**

Zachaeus does not let the crowd hold him back.  
He does not let his height hold him back.  
He pushes through the crowd and runs ahead of them.  
He is close to missing Jesus, so he runs further up.  
He does not give up as if he has missed his chance.

He even climbs a tree.  
When was the last time you climbed a tree?  
I haven't climbed one since I was a child.  
What would make you climb a tree?  
Just the chance of seeing Jesus was enough to send Zachaeus up one.

Verse 5, **"And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."**

Zachaeus does not just see Jesus, Jesus sees Zachaeus.  
And Jesus seeks out Zacchaeus because Jesus seeks the lost.  
Jesus seeks out those who seek Him.  
Jesus does not just say hello.  
Jesus comes to say that I want to spend time with you as your guest today.

Verse 6, **"So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully."**

Zacchaeus joyfully receives Jesus as His guest.  
You may have had guests over for Thanksgiving you weren't too joyful about.

But Zacchaeus receives Jesus with joy.

Because seeking out the Kingdom's King, means you have to receive Him with joy.

We need to receive Jesus into our lives.

He stands at the door knocking.

Will you let Him into your life with joy?

Verse 7, **"And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."**

But the people again are angry.

They don't like it.

They do not want Jesus to spend so much time with sinners.

And they are not seeking Jesus.

They have spent their time opposing Jesus and trying to trap Him.

Another way we seek the king is through repentance.

If you are truly seeking Jesus with your life, then you will repent of your sins.

And Zacchaeus gives us one of the best and most clear models of repentance in the Bible.

Verse 8, **"And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."**

Repentance is an internal attitude revealed with external actions.

It is something we do based on how we feel and believe.

Zacchaeus repents.

He stands and acknowledges that he will give half of riches to the poor.

Half of all that he has.

He does what the rich young ruler would not do last week.

He actually gives over half away, but he does not give 100% away.

Because the exact amount is not the issue.

Legalism would put a percentage and give you an exact number that brings salvation.

It is about a willingness to give it all away, not about exactly how much you do.

And he goes above 50%.

He says, **"And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."**

He will give back all the money he has stolen.

And he does not just give it back.

He will make reparations.

Because true repentance would not just be giving back what you stole.

But he seeks to make it right.

He gives back more than he stole.

He does not just say, "I'm sorry."

He shows his repentance by repairing his relationship with those he stole from.

We must do the same thing when we repent.

True repentance is not content with an apology.

It is willing to do whatever we need to make it right.

We should seek to restore what we break.

If you break a friend's vase, you don't just buy a new one.

You ask and do above and beyond.

And because Zacchaeus truly repents, he receives salvation.

Verse 9, **"And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'"**

He does not buy salvation.

But he does not earn it.

But his faith, his seeking of Jesus, his repentance, brings salvation.

His offering and faith is accepted by Jesus.

Because Jesus came to seek the lost.  
This is the entire purpose of Jesus' coming.  
He came for the lost and the without hope.  
He came seeking us.

And we can never repay all that we owe.  
Our sins are too numerous.  
We can never pay back those we stole from.  
But Jesus paid it for us.  
He paid our debts through His death on the cross.  
And because He paid it all, all those who seek can be saved.

### **Do the Kingdom's business (v. 11-14).**

Here we have the parable of the Minas.  
This parable is very similar to the more well-known parable of the talents.  
They have similar elements.  
But I don't think we can allow our familiarity with the other parable to  
make us think we already understand this one.  
That is a trap we can fall into when it comes to reading the Bible.

This one centers around the disciples understanding in verse 11, **"As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately."**

Jesus is almost at Jerusalem.  
His disciples can sense that they are nearing the end of the story.  
And they think the appearance of the kingdom is coming.  
Surely now, the Messiah will bring the Kingdom.  
Now He will begin to overthrow the Romans and the Kingdom of Heaven  
will come to earth.  
And they think it will happen the moment Jesus enters the city.

In an answer to that question, Jesus tells a parable.  
Because the kingdom is not coming immediately.  
And if it is not, how should the disciples behave?

Verse 12, **"He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return."**

A man is going to be officially declared the king of a kingdom.  
Then he will return to that kingdom as the King.

And this parable has historical precedent.  
People would have to go to Rome to see Caesar.  
They would argue their case and petition to be giving the right to call themselves the king.  
This is the image the crowd would have had in their minds when they heard Jesus tell this story.

In the Roman Empire, Kings would have to be appointed, even if their father was the king.  
And this appointment was not automatic, you had to ask.  
When Herod died, two of his sons went to Rome to apply and ask to be made kings and receive the kingdom for themselves.

This is also what Jesus will do.  
He is preparing to go away to the farthest country.  
He will not go to Rome, but the heavens.  
He will receive His kingdom not from the Caesar of the known world, but the King of the Cosmos who rules in places we still know nothing about.

And the kingdom of Jesus has begun now.  
It still spreads today and we can see it.  
But it has not arrived immediately or fully.  
Jesus is in heaven right now interceding on our behalf.  
But one day, He will return.



The question is what should followers of Jesus do now?  
While the king is in the far country, what do we do?  
Should we fight the kingdom's enemies?  
Should we raise the flag of Israel?  
Should we claim territory in the name of Jesus and conquer the world?

No.

Jesus tells us instead to do the kingdom's business.

Verse 13, **"Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.'"**

You notice in this parable everyone is given the same amount.

All ten of his servants the same amount of money.

It is about three months salary each.

For simplicities sake you might picture 10-20 grand.

The point here is not the amount.

But I want you to catch that here that each get the same amount.

This is why I don't think this parable is about stewarding our gifts or abilities.

I think this is more about doing the common responsibilities.

It is about what every single Christian has the capability and responsibility to do.

We all are commanded to be about the business of the Kingdom.

If Jesus has taught us anything, it is that the Kingdom is not of this world.

The kingdom's business does not look like the world's business.

It is not about making the most money for Jesus.

It is not about the size of church buildings or bank accounts.

You cannot measure and track the kingdom's business with fancy software developed by Silicone Valley.

So what is it?

Most simply, it is the great commission.

Every single Christian has been commanded to go and make disciples.  
To proclaim the gospel to all around us.  
To teach people about Jesus.  
To teach them the commands of Jesus.  
To baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as part of our family.  
To seek out the weak, the lost, the widow, the orphan, all those overlooked and outcast by the world.  
To seek out our enemies and win them with the love of Jesus.

And we do all of this with the hope and goal of making disciples and followers of Jesus who become our beloved brothers and sisters in the faith.

There is so much business that churches can get distracted by.  
There is no end to the activities we can plan.  
There is no end to the events or conferences we could have.  
We could have Bible studies every single night.  
We could do all of that stuff and never make disciples.  
We could be busy for Jesus and yet not do His business.

And the business of the kingdom is something every single believer is to do.

It is not just for elders, pastors, key leaders, or those more gifted.  
It is for all of us.

We all have been given 10 minas.  
We have all been given the same great commission.  
Are you engaging in the King's business?

Unfortunately, there are some not engaged in kingdom business.  
They are not only ignoring the king's commands, they oppose him.  
Verse 14, **"But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'"**

Some hate the would be king.  
They wish strongly that he would fail and be given the kingdom.

They feel so strongly about it that they chase him.  
They also want to go to Caesar to plead their case.  
They are going to be heard and argue that this man should never be made king.

And this happened historically.  
When Herod's sons went to Rome, an official Jewish delegation was sent to follow them.  
They protested Archelaus' cruelty because of how he murdered the Jews.  
And they asked that he not be made king.  
Their opposition helped keep Herod's sons from being made "Kings."

There are those who oppose Jesus in the same manner.  
They will do this with Pilate.  
They will go to the earthly leaders and say that this man is not their king.  
They will cry out for Barabbas.  
They will say they want nothing to do with Jesus.

If we want to be different.  
If we want Jesus to be our king.  
Then we should be engaged in His business.

And I want you to know that our King's business is not just in large moments.  
It is not just when you are on a plane and share the gospel with your neighbor.  
It is every single ordinary moment that we spend in submission to Jesus.  
It is every second we spend engaged in Kingdom business.  
Every moment when we invite the poor to our table.  
Every moment we spend studying the King's words.  
Each time that we love our enemies as Christ loved us.  
Each time we serve those around us as Christ served us.  
All of those small moments are kingdom business.  
And for those who do the King's business, there is a reward.

## Receive the Kingdom's rewards (v. 15-27).

One day Jesus will return.

And everyone will receive their just reward based on what they have done.

Just as in the story the man returns.

Verse 15, **"When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business."**

The master returns and all the servants have to answer.

They need to bring the books and the money.

They must explain what business they have been engaged in.

Someone told me recently that I talk about the return of Jesus a lot.

Once they pointed it out, I've noticed they are right.

But Jesus is returning.

And His return is our great hope.

It is worth reminding ourselves about.

Because one day all of heavens records will be opened.

And our lives will be judged.

This story gives us a taste of what it will be like.

Verse 16, **"The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' 19 And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'"**

We can get caught up on the numbers here.

It might make us want to calculate and figure out what our rewards in the life to come are.

But this is a parable.

It is not focused on teaching exact numbers, but principles.

And the faithful servants are all rewarded.  
Those who are faithful with the little are rewarded.  
And they are rewarded far beyond what they have gained.  
The little money they have made turns into entire cities.  
They gain kingdoms unto themselves.

Whatever our rewards in heaven will be, they will be beyond your dreams.  
And you will never be disappointed.  
The man with five cities is not upset or jealous.  
Because he has already been incredibly blessed.  
If Jesus gave one of us 50 billion and another 25 billion, I doubt we would be angry over the difference.

Especially considering they are blessed according to their faithfulness.  
But even based on that, they are far greater than what we deserve.  
What I want you to take away from this is that every moment matters.  
Every penny you give away stores up treasures in heaven.  
Every prayer you prayed.  
Every gospel conversation you have.  
Every moment you were faithful to Jesus even when it was costly.  
Jesus will reward them all and so much more.

Now I don't think we should focus on the reward.  
Our goal should not be maximizing our return like it is some kind of game.  
We should just seek to be faithful.  
And be encouraged that Jesus awaits us.

Those who are faithful servants will be rewarded.  
But now the hard part.  
The unfaithful will be punished.

Verse 20, **"Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because**

**you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.”**

Another servant has done nothing.

He has not engaged in the king's business.

He has done nothing that was asked.

He hid it because he does not seem to respect or love the king.

He is not just saying that he thinks the master is unfair.

He thinks he is not a good king.

He does not like his character.

He thinks he does not deserve the kingdom he has.

He does fear him, but his fear does not lead him to obey and be faithful.

This servant is like those who say that God is loving.

Who say that they could never serve a God like the one of the Bible.

He seems too server and demanding.

Who is He to tell me who to love and how to live my life?

They may even say, "If God is really like that, then I want nothing to do with Him. Even if He existed I would never serve Him."

Look at how the master responds

Verse 22, **“He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?’”**

The servant is condemned with their own words.

If he thought the master was so harsh, what did he think he would do to unfaithful servants?

What would he do to enemies of his kingdom?

Jesus will do the same.

Because our words condemn ourselves.

They reveal that these people know enough about God.

They have been revealed enough about Jesus that they should bow and serve.

They should know better like this servant should have known better.

Verse 23, **"Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and 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 the one who has the ten minas.'"**

The master wants to know why they didn't do the bare minimum.

Why he didn't do the least and just put some in the bank?

Why did he not at least accept the master would be king?

And it is a warning to us.

Those who do not accept Jesus, will lose what little they have.

It will be given instead to those who are faithful.

Verse 25, **"And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 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.'"**

We can try to object, but Jesus' rewards will be just.

They will not be unfair.

And we have plenty of time to repent and make the right choice.

And those who are not just unfaithful but enemies, will be dealt with.

Verse 27, **"But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"**

Those who refuse to bow.

Those who sent delegations to argue against the masters rule are killed.

They are slaughtered and executed in his presence.

They face justice.

And the justice of Jesus will come one day.

But the good news of the gospel is that for now Jesus offers grace.

Jesus did not come to destroy His enemies.

He came to love them.

He came to save them.

He came to die for them.

As He lay with His body naked and broken.  
And He bleed out and slowly suffocated to death drowning in His own blood.

With His few last breathes He forgave those who were murdering Him.  
He shed his blood on the cross to offer salvation to them.

We might die for our children or grandchildren.

Some might die for their country or a great cause.

But Jesus died for those who hated Him.

He died for the men who nailed Him to the cross.

He died for the men who organized His murder.

He died for the priests who murdered him for power and influence.

He died for the crowd chanting "Crucify Him!"

He died for you and for me.

He spilled every last drop of blood not just for those with great faith like Zacchaeus, but for all of us.

And any who cry out to Jesus for mercy and grace will find it.

Anyone who puts their faith and hope in Jesus will receive the inheritance of Christ's riches.

If you have not put your faith in Jesus, please do.

Come and seek the King.

Because He is seeking you.

He came and died for you.

He already bought your salvation.

You just have to accept it.

If you are not a believer, seek the kingdom's King.

If you are a follower of Christ, then Do the kingdom's business.

And all those who do will receive the kingdom's rewards.