

This Sunday's Sermon

TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN – MATTHEW 19:11-27
PASTOR COLIN RIEKE ~ NOVEMBER 10, 2013

While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' " 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. '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.' "Then another servant came and said, '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.' "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? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' " 'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!' "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. 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.' "



Dear fellow children of God's promises,

I can remember my first semester in high school was the fall of 1999. That was when everybody was worried that the world was going to end because all the computers were going to explode or something. Religious leaders jumped on this bandwagon and said it's going to be the end of the world. I also remember a few months before I was to get married to Kristin, religious "gurus" were at it again and predicting the end of the world to come (that was the spring of 2007 in case you're keeping track), all I was thinking was if it's true, please God can you come after I get married, so I know what being married is like? I'll give you one more. I can also remember when people were predicting the end of the world to come on December 21, 2012, because it was the end of the Mayan Calendar, and they must have known something that we didn't. As you can see by looking around yourselves, we're still here and the end hasn't come.

That hasn't stopped people in the past from making false predictions about the end of the world. It hasn't stopped people from making future predictions about the end of the world. And for these Christian doomsday predictors, who claim to use the Bible in making their predictions, really don't do a

good job of looking at what the Bible has to say about these matters. People in Jesus' day were also enamored with the end of the world, at least the end of the pagan world when God's Kingdom would rule over all. And yet, Jesus when dealing with these people made it clear that this kingdom of God they were hoping for was not coming yet.

But Jesus did pull the curtain back a little bit about the end of the world and what would happen. This parable that we heard from God's Word just a few minutes ago was one of those times Jesus talked about the end. And at the end for believers there is yet another promise of God – a promise of comfort, a promise of hope. I PROMISE...

1. TO EVERYONE WHO HAS,
2. MORE WILL BE GIVEN.

(1)

Now before we take a look at that promise and what it means, let's review the situation that presented itself in our gospel for this morning. This parable is sandwiched in between the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector and Jesus going into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Zacchaeus, if you remember, was a hated man because he was a tax collector, and yet Jesus still came to dine at his house, he came to seek and save the lost. Palm Sunday was a week before Jesus would be crucified, when he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey, surrounded by adoring crowds.

For the last three years, Jesus had been telling anyone who would listen that he was the messiah from sin whom God had promised. And the prophecies concerning the messiah said he would bring about God's kingdom. Jesus of course was not meaning a physical kingdom, but rather a ruling in people's hearts. It was for this reason that Jesus told this parable, because the people around him thought God's physical kingdom would come at once.

And so he told the story of a nobleman, who wanted to be proclaimed king. This may seem unusual to us, but it was quite common in Jesus' day. At this time, the leaders of the territory of Judah needed to go to Rome to be declared governor. So here is the same principle. Before he leaves, he selects 10 servants, to whom he gives each one mina. A mina was a coin representing 100 day's work, so about three months. Certainly not chump change, but not enough to retire on either. He tells these servants, **"Put this money to work until I come back."** There is also mention about some of this man's unhappy subjects, who don't want him to be king.

However, the nobleman becomes king and returns to his home. He asks each of the servants what they have done with the money that was given them. We hear the story of three of them. The first servant appears and says, **"Sir, your mina has earned ten more,"** the second comes in and says, **"Sir, your mina has earned five more,"** and finally the third comes in and says, **"Sir, here is your mina, I was afraid to lose it, so I just hid it."** The nobleman praised the first two servants, and put them in charge of an appropriate number of cities, while he was disappointed with the third servant and took away the original mina. It is there that Jesus speaks this promise, I PROMISE TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN.

The first part of the promise, is "TO EVERYONE WHO HAS." What is Jesus talking about? Who has what? The ten servants in the parable were all given some money, those who made good use of it were

rewarded with far greater wealth and honor. But Jesus is not talking about those who have money will be given more money, but something else, something far more valuable – faith. We have been given faith, we have been given the ability by the Holy Spirit to say Jesus is Lord, to believe the message of the cross, which is far more valuable than silver or gold.

We have been given instructions with this faith. The master in the story had given the instructions to make use of the money he had given them, so too, we are to make use of the faith that has been given us. The Greek word used here gives an idea of what this means, it's where we get our word "pragmatic" today. The master asked them to use the money in a practical, realistic and sensible way. There is no one "right" way to be pragmatic with money, just as there is no one right way to be pragmatic with your faith. Everyone's faith, while centered on Christ, is slightly different. We have been molded by our experiences for better or worse, it is molded by our personalities, for better or worse.

We have been given a gift that keeps on giving. Many times if you give something away, you have less of it (you pour water in a cup, you have less water in the pitcher). Not so with faith. Giving people the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work in their lives through the message of God's Word may not only potentially create new faith, but it strengthens your own. How do we keep on giving? Be pragmatic. You have been placed in a situation in which no one else in the world has been placed in. God has used the experiences in your life to mold you into the person you are, the person he has called you to be. In what ways are you able to be pragmatic, faithful with your faith until the master returns?

Follow Jesus' line of thought here. He told the parable because people thought the end was coming. This parable reminded them of the grace Jesus gives, but then also the instructions he leaves us with. Instructions about our faith, not instructions about how to tell when he's coming back. These instructions have not just been given us for our own benefit, but for the benefit of others – believers and unbelievers alike. These are instructions that have been around since the beginning.

Think about it, after Adam and Eve fell into sin, what did God tell them? He told them of the promise to crush the devil's head. This was a promise they would not keep to themselves but one they would share with their children. Or when God came to Abraham and said, "**All nations of the earth will be blessed through you**" – a continuing promise of the Savior, Abraham didn't need to be told to share this promise, he just did. The New Testament speaks of faith in this way too. The book of James tells us that faith will be accompanied by deeds. Not deeds that in any way contribute to heaven, but deeds that are a natural reaction to faith. Think about it, Christ is our motivation for all of this, for he is the one who has given us what we have.

(2)

But that's not all he will give us. If we continue on in the parable, the master rewarded the faithful servants with even more wealth and honor. One was given ten cities to rule, the other was given five cities. The master stated, "**Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.**" Comparatively, the ten cities were worth far more than the few month's wages the servants were given before. This applies to the second half of the promise given by our God, "I PROMISE TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN."

If we continue the thought process from the first part of the promise, God is not talking about more money will be given, and he's even talking about more than just how many people we can share the gospel with. He's talking about the last day, Judgment Day, when he comes back, what is going to happen. He will give us what our faith has been yearning for. He will invite us into the full glories of heaven.

But the story of Last Judgment has a sad ending too. Not everyone will live happily ever after. That third servant we heard about, he was not faithful in his master's instructions. He was given a gift and he did nothing with it. His gift was stripped of him and given to another. He did not have a happy ending, just as those who didn't want the nobleman to be king, their time of judgment was now, the nobleman did not give them another chance.

Now this parable, like the rest of God's Word seems so simple on paper. Be like those faithful servants who followed their master's wishes. Be the person that follows God's commandments. We all like to be told what we're doing is good, we all like to be told we're doing what we're supposed to be doing. But our lives are not played out on paper. But why is it that we feel more like the wicked and lazy servant that just hid his gold? He didn't even think to put it on deposit at the bank. Why is it that try as hard as we can we cannot do what God wants all the time? Even when it comes to strengthening our faith or sharing our faith there is always more we could do. We know we deserve to be in the category of the wicked servants and the wicked subjects. And this problem certainly does not rest with God, but with us.

Many times a "solution" proposed for this problem is to try harder – read more of your Bible, put more money in the offering plate, tell more people about Jesus. But that is no solution at all, it only serves to show you how much more you can read, give or do, and these actions might even turn resentful against God and lead people to throw their hands in the air and give up. The solution is just that, when I realize nothing I do can fix this problem, I throw my hands in the air and rely on Jesus. Because if I ever think it's up to me, I've gone wrong. It was our Lord who gave us grace and our gift of faith, it is our Lord who sustains us day by day, and it is our Lord who will be there on the Last Day as our King and our Judge.

This promise of God that TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN, is not a promise based on anything we can do, but is based entirely on God. This is how all of God's gospel promises work. He makes these promises, because he knows we need them. And he gives them so that when the last day comes, we will not be caught unaware. There will always be those who want to know when that day will be. But that is not where our focus is to be. Jesus will come at just the right time, not a second earlier, and not a second later. And on that day God will say, TO EVERYONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN. Amen!