

Last Judgment Sunday

November 6, 2016

**Prayer of the Day:** Lord God Almighty, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by your Holy Spirit that we may always look forward to the end of this present evil age and to the day of your righteous judgment. Keep us steadfast in the true and living faith and present us at last holy and blameless before you; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Verse of the Day:** Alleluia! Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. Alleluia! (Matthew 24:42)

**Sermon Text:** Luke 19:11-27

Do you really believe that? I mean, every Sunday we say out loud— no, actually more than that— we confess: *I believe in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord ... he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

Our reading says Jesus will do just that; he will *come to judge the living and the dead.* But do you believe he's going to do it that way? **"Take away the mina"** from the frightened servant? **"Kill [his enemies] in front of [him]?"** Is Jesus really being serious? Or is he saying something dramatic just to

**Luke 19:11-27**

<sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. <sup>13</sup> So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

<sup>14</sup> "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

<sup>15</sup> "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.

<sup>16</sup> "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'

<sup>17</sup> " 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

<sup>18</sup> "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

<sup>19</sup> "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

<sup>20</sup> "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. <sup>21</sup> 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.'

<sup>22</sup> "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? <sup>23</sup> Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

<sup>24</sup> "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

<sup>25</sup> " 'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'

<sup>26</sup> "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. <sup>27</sup> 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.' "

get our attention? How concerned should you be when Jesus says *he will judge the living and the dead*?

Let me explain what I mean. In our reading, a man of noble birth travels to a far away country in order to receive power and authority over a new kingdom. Before he leaves, what does he give his servants? A mina (which is about three months' wages). Then he attaches a firm command: "**Do business with these.** Put them to work. Start new investments. Buy products; sell products. Buy and rent out properties. **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK** until I return."

While he is gone, he expects his servants to do what he commands. So, how shocking to watch the third servant stand up and say: "I did nothing!" He had the mina; he had the ability to **PUT IT TO WORK**. Yes, at first, it sounds like he has a legitimate excuse. "Master, I feared you. You are a hard-working man. You take what you do not put down, you reap where you do not sow."

Yet, under this excuse lies something deeper. You know, if that servant had just said: "I was terrified," then he may have sounded a little more believable. At the same time, if he was frightened, you would think fear would compel him to work so that he is not punished. His own words reveal his true feelings. "Master, you take interest on money you did not put down and invest. You reap where you do not sow." This servant actually stands in front of the master saying: "Master, you're too hard on us! We do all the work and you take all the credit. It's not fair! So, I'm not going to **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK.**"

How utterly disrespectful to receive such trust and such a gracious gift, but not put it to work. How appalling to point a finger at the King and accuse him of being too rough, instead of gladly serving him with what he has given you!

It's no secret that your king lives in heaven. You confess that truth every week: *[Jesus] is seated at the right hand of God the Father*— ruling, reigning, commanding— and with authority. Jesus hasn't left you with a literal mina; he has given you something better: his Word. He has graciously, freely put his Word in your hands. He attaches a firm command: "**Do business with this.** Put the Word to work in your life. Read the Word. Confess your sins. Receive God's forgiveness. Live a life which follows my teachings. Grow to trust God more. **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK** until I return."

So, do you? Or do you feel like that third servant— thinking God just demands too much of you? "God wants me to read devotions and worship him? That's too much of my time! I just don't have that time to give! I'm too busy!" "God's commands make me stand out in the world. Why should I suffer insult, while he lives in perfect heaven?" "God's expectations make life less fun. It means I have to watch my words, watch what I consume, watch how I treat my body! Compared to how my friends act, I look like the one who is boring!" How often our sinful nature points a finger at the King and accuses: "You are too hard on me!"

The King will return—whether his subjects like it or not. When comes, he will judge the living and the dead. That is what happens, right? Our reading says: **He was made**

**king, however, and returned home.** He arrives at a time his servants don't expect. The King expects that his servants did what he commanded; he expects that his servants **PUT HIS MINA TO WORK!**

When your Jesus comes again, you will not find him in Bethlehem's manger. You will not find him walking alongside a group of poor fishermen, wandering throughout the region of Israel. You will not hear reports that a governor sentenced him to death. You will stand before the One crowned King!

Christ your King will summon you to stand before his throne. He will ask quite simply: "What have you gained with my Word?" To all those who neglected the Word, who consider it unnecessary to hear, who thought it too demanding on their schedules or too harsh in their life, the master will reply: **"I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant!** If you think I am punishing you now, then you will actually get to experience my full wrath! **Take his mina away from him and give it [someone else]!"** How terrifying *to fall into the hands of the living God!* ([Hebrews 10:31](#)).

Dear Christian, **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK**— just like the servants did! Remember our reading. The first two servants approach the throne— one after the other. They say the same thing: **"Your mina has earned ten more... five more..."** These servants put the mina to work. They started new investments. They bought and sold products. They purchased and rented out properties. They are good stewards of what was given to them. They do this out of humble love for their King.

The King leans forward, looks at them and booms: **" 'Well done, my good servant!' ... 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities... of five cities.'**" You see, the servants multiplied the mina-money. Yet, the King gives them a gift that far outweighs the little money they earned him. Ten minas would amount to three years of income; ten cities amount to something priceless.

Look and see what Christ your King has placed into your hands. Yes, that object more precious than a mina— his Word. His Word teaches the reality of life: *All have sinned and fall short of God's glory... the wages of sin is death* ([Romans 3:23](#); [6:23](#)). That same Word becomes flesh, is born in Bethlehem, and grows up to tell you he is the *Way, Truth, and Life* ([John 14:6](#)). You follow the Word to the cross, where you see the King suffer for his servants. The Word stresses that you are *saved by God's grace* (undeserved love) *alone* ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). Most of all, Jesus' saving work becomes your own by faith. *Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ* ([Romans 10:17](#)).

How precious is that mina— that Word which creates faith in your heart! On the Last Day you will stand before the King with confidence! Not because of your own efforts. Not because you worked hard to love him. You can stand before him because Jesus loved you. You get to point to Jesus and say: "He is perfect for me! He paid with his life in order to give me heaven!" You will hear the King boom: **" 'Well done, my good servant!' ... 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take [possession of heaven]!"**

**PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK!** Remember the question at the beginning of our sermon? How concerned should you be when Jesus says *he will judge the living and the dead*? What I am getting at is this: Do you stop and think about what those words mean?

Our hearts delight in knowing Jesus will separate us as sheep for himself! ([Matthew 25:31-36](#)). Yet, have you ever stopped to think about who the sheep and the goats are? Or here, in this parable, who the faithful and unfaithful servants are? The faithful ones are those who **PUT THEIR MINA TO WORK**. They had the gospel message; they heard Jesus died for their sins. They believed this message; they cling to it. Yet, the lazy servant is the one who rejected God's message. He heard it, but thought it was boring. Maybe he felt it did not apply to him. Maybe that servant had some other excuse. Yet, on the Last Day Christ your King will reply: **"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."**

Yes, when Jesus says he will **put to death those who are his enemies**, he intends to do just that. It means that our non-believing spouse, friends, family members who ignore God's Word stand opposed to God. If that sounds terrifying and unsettling, then what how can you prevent it? **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK!** Not only do you use the Word for yourself, but you get to do business with it!

You may know people from this congregation who have been confirmed, who have worshipped with you, but have started staying away from the Word. This is a concern! First, those who claim to believe in God would want to remain in the Word. Instead of making excuses to stay away from it, they would want to hear more of it. Second, those who drift away from the Word can wander into unbelief. I have met those who were confirmed years ago, who know some Bible teachings, but are convinced that they must try hard to obey the Ten Commandments in order to enter heaven. They have completely forgotten that only Jesus gets them into heaven! They have the mina, but have hidden it away!

You have your mina; you have the Word— and you have opportunities to share that Word with others. The King is away; you still have time to **PUT YOUR MINA TO WORK!** Share the Word! Share the Savior! Share God's free and gracious forgiveness! Point people to the life that is coming!

Because you know Jesus *will come to judge the living and the dead*. You confess this truth. You believe this truth because the Bible teaches this truth. Jesus' words do catch our attention. **"Take away the mina! Kill my enemies in front of me!"** Shocking words. Frightening images. Yet, your Jesus equips you to walk through this great Day of the Lord!

He gives you a mina— his Word— for you to put to work in your life. Remain in the Word. Do not merely hear the Word, but do what it says ([James 1:22](#)). Take your mina— the Word— and use it to multiply servants for God! Then on the Last Day, you and those whom you have touched with the Word will hear: **" 'Well done, my good servant!' ... 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take [possession of heaven]!"**