

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #239

Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem Jesus' Parable About Faithfulness Until His Final Coming LK 19.11-28

11 While they were listening to this, he proceeded to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. 12 He said:

"A man of royal birth went to a distant region to have himself appointed king and then to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas (3 months of wages). He commanded them, 'Do business with this money until I come back.

14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to rule over us.' 15 He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he called the servants to whom he had given the money to him, in order to find out what kind of profit they had made with it.

16 "The first one came and said, 'Master, your mina has earned ten more.'

17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, I command that you take authority over ten cities.'

18 "The second came and said, 'Master, your mina has earned five more.

19 "His master answered, 'I command that you take authority over five cities.'

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

22 "His master replied, 'I am judging you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew 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?'

24 "Then he said to those standing by, 'I command you to take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'

25 "'But Master,' they said, 'he already has ten!'

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 reign over them--bring them here and kill them in front of me.'"

28 After Jesus had spoken this, he went walking on ahead--going up to Jerusalem.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

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| | CONTEXT DIGEST |
|---------------------|--|
| Location | On the Road, Somewhere Near Jerusalem |
| Timeline | Late March (Month 38) |
| Jesus' Life Context | Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea |
| | C. Jesus' Final Journey to Jerusalem |
| Title | 17. Jesus' Parable About Faithfulness Until His Final Coming |

COMMENT:

In addition to the powerful teaching message of the parable itself, today's reading shows us several important differences in the mindset between Jesus and his disciples in the final days before Passion Week. We will look at these first.

Luke tell us that *"the people supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once."* This shows us that their Messianic expectation of Jesus was for him to immediately take the throne of David and begin his universal reign on earth, destroying Rome and all the rulers of the earth in the process. They could not comprehend his repeated statements that he was going to be arrested, turned over to the Romans, crucified, and rise from the dead on the third day.

The full appearance of his kingdom that they were anticipating was still far in the future, when He would make his final return to this earth. The disciples did not have a clue. Therefore Jesus gave this parable to correct their thinking. Their Lord was "going away to a far region" soon, and it would be a long, intervening period before he returned. He called this "the time of the Gentiles," or "the church age," in which world evangelization would be the central focus of God's work.

While his disciples were preoccupied with their mistaken anticipation of the immediacy of the coming of the kingdom, our Lord was very concerned about the way his disciples would serve him in his mission to **"make disciples of all the nations"** after his return to heaven. The faithfulness of his people in this central task would determine the fulfillment of his vision in "the church age" that Jesus knew would soon begin.

All of Jesus' discipleship training and equipping was intended to enable his church to accomplish his mission UNTIL his final coming. His disciples had no idea how important their ministry was going to be in the long church age that would prepare for his final return to earth.

Jesus was living and breathing and preparing for his ongoing ministry through his body the church, not his final coming as he approached Jerusalem. How encouraging to realize that Jesus was thinking about, planning for, and praying toward the ministry of all future believers—including you and me—as he approached Jerusalem for Passion Week. We will see and hear Jesus including all believers of the church age in this thoughts and actions throughout passion week. You and I were there in the heart of Jesus, too.

The key point of Jesus' parable was the same as a similar parable ("The Talents," MT 25.14-30) he would deliver in "the Olivet Discourse" (MT 24-25) on Tuesday of the next week. However, a key difference in the content makes is plain that it was a different, though related parable.

In MT 25.14-30, the servants were all given differing amounts of money, "according to their ability," to manage for their Master in his absence. In this parable each servant was given the same amount of capital. The emphasis on going away to receive his kingdom is also stronger in this parable. However, the repetition of this key teaching in a matter of less than a week shows us its importance to our Lord.

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The punch line of the parable is the key. **"To everyone who has, more will be given. But as for the one who has nothing, even what they do have will be taken away."** The "has" or "has nothing" that Jesus was referring to was the "fruit" or interest produced by the capital. The future King did not give his money to his servants for them to merely protect it, but to increase it through working faithfully to grow what he had given them.

Faithful servants cause the assets and interests of their Lord to grow. Unfaithful servants do not cause any growth. Those who have caused growth through their management will receive more capital to work with in the future. Those who produce no growth will forfeit their capital as well.

Jesus has given each of us differing faith, personalities, life experiences, and spiritual gifts with which to serve him. The similar parable in MT 25 addresses our ongoing responsibility to manage those individual resources in his interests during the church age.

In today's reading all the servants received the same amount of capital. This refers to Jesus and the gospel itself. We have ALL received the same Lord, and the same Word from him. We are ALL responsible to produce the fruit of the common knowledge of Christ that each of us has received. It is not enough to remain a faithful Christian one's self. We MUST be a part of reproducing and multiplying the knowledge of Jesus "to all the nations,"--until every person in the world has had the opportunity to hear the gospel in their own language, and either receive or reject Christ for themselves.

APPLICATION:

Full participation in the mission of Jesus to "all the nations" is not optional for disciples of Jesus. As he said to Zachaeus, **"The son of man has come to seek and to save those who are in a state of destruction."** Faithfulness in multiplying the gospel seed throughout the whole world is our central task until Jesus makes his final return to planet earth.

How are you managing your knowledge and experience of Christ through the gospel to multiply its impact in the world around you? This is the question that you will face when Jesus requires an accounting of your management at his coming.

What can you do to be more effective in sharing the gospel? What distractions can you reduce? Where do you need to refocus your lifestyle in order to be more faithful as a wise manager of the gospel?