



40.DAY 2023

40.DAYS 40.VOICES 40.PRAYERS

DAY 8 | JULY 8

Visible Loyalty to the Invisible King

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BIBLE READING

LUKE 19: 11-27 | 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. ¹² He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘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 be our king.’ ¹⁵ “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.

¹⁶ “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, 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, take charge of ten cities.’

¹⁸ “The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ ¹⁹ “His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’

²⁰ “Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it 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 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? 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, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ ²⁵ “‘Sir,’ 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 be king over them— bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

The parable of the pounds in Luke 19, I believe, is one of the most misunderstood parables that was told by Jesus.

Because we are often resource-centric and capitalistic in our worldview, our focal point of this parable is the pounds that were distributed to the 10 servants of the nobleman. Our attention is drilled into how successful each servant was in multiplying the pounds that were entrusted to them. Hence, our conclusion is that this parable is about stewardship.

But there remains some contradiction within the parable. If the issue is about the ability of each servant to multiply the pounds entrusted to them, then why is the commendation of the servants one of faithfulness and not success?

If profitability is what the nobleman was after amongst his servants, then shouldn’t the commendation be: “Well done, good servant because you were successful in the very little.”

Faithfulness just isn’t something we associate with good business skills. What may shed light for us in this parable is that this parable actually mimicked actual events that took place in the days of Jesus.

In 40 BC, Herod fled to the Romans, seeking an appointment to become king over the region of Palestine. King Antigonus, backed by the Parthians, had taken Jerusalem. The Romans wanted to counteract the Parthians and so they appointed Herod and gave him the title "King of the Jews" and sent him back to retake Jerusalem. It took another three years and a bloody war before Herod conquered Jerusalem in 37 BC.

The parallels to the parable that Jesus told were well-recognised by His hearers. The sentiments the scenario evoked would have been palpable. In a situation of political flux, where the outcome of who shall rule was uncertain, it would have been folly to state at the onset who you are supporting.

In the first century, supporting the wrong political side could easily cost you your life. What the nobleman was asking his servants to do was to publicly and openly declare their allegiance to him before the issue had been settled. To conduct business in the name of the nobleman during his absence, and before his appointment to rule, was to risk it all.

It was to risk the animosity of those opposed to the nobleman. It was to risk ridicule, persecution, rejection, cancellation and the like. All of a sudden, it didn't seem like such a bad idea to hide the pound and wait till it was certain that the nobleman had indeed been appointed ruler before coming out and declaring where your allegiance lay.

The parable speaks about Jesus, of course. Just as the nobleman left to receive an appointment, Christ has gone back to the Father. Some day, He will return with the public coronation as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, but in the interim of His absolute absence, we, His followers, are left here.

The parable now begins to take form. This isn't a parable about stewardship, it's about loyalty. It isn't about how we handle resources but about our bold public witness of Christ during His visible absence. It is about us declaring that we are on His side in a situation where there is not yet absolute evidence of His rulership.

The original Greek language in this parable indicates, as well, that the nobleman was interested in the volume of transactions done and not the amount of profit made.

All these indications align themselves now to give us a very clear picture of what the Lord was driving at. This is what I want to share with us as we pray for Singapore during this season of 40.Days, 40.Voices and 40.Prayers.

A Scripture exaltation from the lips of our Saviour, let's pray that the Church will always stand boldly for Christ, sharing His love and doing the works of God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let our light shine boldly and publicly and let us openly declare that we are followers of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray: *Our dear heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word and for the exaltation that comes through Your Word. We pray, O God, that in this season, You will give us courage and boldness to always stand for You publicly, Lord, that we will never shun nor turn aside from declaring that we are Your followers. Give us grace and fill our hearts with such love for our nation. We ask this all in Jesus' name, Amen.*



REFLECT

- 1 What is one new insight you gained from the Parable of the Ten Minas in Luke 19:11-27?
- 2 How does this new insight affect the way you live now while waiting for Christ the King who has yet to return?
- 3 What can the Church in Singapore do differently to wait in loyalty?



PRAY

- 1 Pray for God to increase your faith and strengthen your resolve to be His testimony in every arena in your life, even if publicly declaring allegiance to Him may cost you.
- 2 Pray over your church, that loyalty to Christ might be seen in the preaching of sound Word, the joy of true Worship, the enabling of strong Witness, the doing of good Works and the love of a warm Welcome.