

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 19:11-17

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We continue to read Luke chapter 19. Today we read verses 11 to 17.

Verse 11a: "Now as they heard these things,"

In the previous section we read about the chief tax collector Zacchaeus. Because he received Jesus, this man was not only saved, but he immediately cleaned up his old life. This person had already received redemption. Therefore the following events are a continuation of Zacchaeus' story: after a person has received salvation and obtained redemption, the things he must do immediately afterward are found in the parable in the following section.

We were originally all sinners. After receiving grace, we immediately become God's servants. For a person to receive grace and be saved, there is no requirement— as long as you are willing to accept it, you can receive it. But once you become a servant in God's household, since you are a servant, there are naturally requirements. Therefore, right after Zacchaeus was saved, Jesus spoke the following parable. What is very special is that these things were all spoken in Jericho, this cursed city.

Verse 11b: "He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately."

Here it tells us the reason Jesus spoke the following parable. Why? The first reason is that He was about to go to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the capital of the nation. In the later period of Jesus' earthly ministry, many people had already come to follow

Jesus because of His fame. Although Jesus only cared about the few disciples around Him, but because Jesus had performed many miracles, they more or less all had this expectation: perhaps He is the Messiah who is to come.

In the prophets of Israel, they all said that the Messiah would come to establish the kingdom of Israel. Therefore they all hoped that Jesus would come to help them overthrow Roman authority and establish the kingdom of Israel on earth—a political and material kingdom. Especially when Jesus was about to reach Jerusalem, this expectation of theirs became even more obvious. They thought the kingdom of God was about to appear and the kingdom of God was about to come. Therefore Jesus spoke this parable specifically to correct their wrong concept concerning the kingdom of God. There were two aspects in which it was wrong.

The first is the matter of time. That time when Jesus entered Jerusalem was not to establish the kingdom of Israel; rather, He went to Jerusalem to suffer and to be killed. The time for the establishment of the kingdom of God was delayed. He was not going to immediately establish a material kingdom of Israel. In nature, what He was going to establish was a spiritual kingdom of God, full of God's life and ruled by God. This expectation that Jesus would enter Jerusalem to establish the kingdom of Israel was also present among Jesus' disciples. Therefore Jesus told them several times that He would suffer in Jerusalem, but the disciples could not understand.

God's plan: The first time Jesus came to earth, He was the Lamb of redemption. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, just like Zacchaeus. And after these people are saved, God wants them to grow in life and to be faithful in serving. This means that the first time Jesus came was to first prepare the citizens of the kingdom of God, waiting until the end of the age. When Jesus comes the second time, He will come with a rod of iron. When He comes again, He will first see whether His people are ready, and at the same time He will judge the nations at that time. In order to correct their wrong concept concerning the kingdom of God, Jesus therefore spoke the following parable.

Verse 12: “Therefore He said: ‘A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.’”

The parables Jesus spoke were often taught according to the people and drawn from the local situation. Actually this was something that happened in Jericho. At that time King Archelaus had built a palace in Jericho. Because the kings in the land of Judea were appointed by Rome, Archelaus had to first go to Rome to be officially appointed as king, and only after returning could he truly begin to exercise kingly authority. It was just like this nobleman who went into a far country to receive a kingdom and return.

In that event, before Archelaus left, because he had much property and many businesses there, he distributed his property and businesses to his servants to operate and manage for him during the time he was away. In the event concerning Archelaus, because at that time he was not favored by the hearts of the Israelites, the Israelites formed a delegation and went directly to Rome to petition the Roman emperor not to let Archelaus be their king. Jesus used the background of this event to speak this parable.

Verse 13: “So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’”

Ten servants, ten minas, meaning each one received one mina. One mina was about one hundred denarii. One denarius was the wage for one day at that time, so one mina was equivalent to one hundred days’ wages. This was the money the master gave to each servant. We know that in the Bible silver often typifies redemption. Through the effectiveness of Jesus Christ’s death, we have received redemption; that is, you have received that one mina. This is the same for everyone. The divine life has begun in you, because you have already received redemption, just like Zacchaeus was saved. Once you are saved and have received redemption, and you have this one mina, the master will assign you to do business until the master returns.

Every one of us who has received grace and been saved must recognize that when we are saved and receive this eternal life, the concept is one of doing business, not that I have received a ticket to heaven and then I just sit here doing nothing, waiting until the day Jesus returns and I go to heaven. No. The Lord's command to you is that since you have this one mina, you must carefully and faithfully, with the attitude and heart of doing business, cause your mina to increase. That is, God's redemption produces effect in you, redeeming and obtaining one by one all the things in you that are not of God and do not please God, so that your life, words, and actions become more and more like Jesus Christ. This is doing business. We do business until the Lord returns.

Verse 14: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'"

Because Jesus drew material from the local situation, this should be referring to the event concerning King Archelaus. However, through this event Jesus is saying to us who have become His servants: the environment we are in, the people around us in Israel, are basically unfriendly toward us, just like the Israelites at that time. That is to say, your business should not be so easy to do.

Christians often, within God's permitted scope, will experience all kinds of difficulties, all kinds of environments, and even all kinds of sufferings, in order to let this divine life in us become even more abundant through testing. Although sometimes it seems as if our Lord is delayed, one day He will surely return. We should not, because the surrounding environment is dangerous or the circumstances are unfavorable, forget the commission God has given us: we are servants. He has given each of us one mina, and we must do business in such a way that this mina can increase.

Verse 15: “And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”

One day our Lord will return. When He returns, He will first call His servants to give an account. Before He left, each one received one mina; each one received redemption and had eternal life. When He returns, He will ask each one: What did you do with that one mina I gave you? How much did you gain? The Lord’s return is certain, and therefore the Lord’s return to require His servants to give an account is also certain.

Verses 16-17: “Then came the first, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’ And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’”

Today each of us has received one mina. What we need is to become a good servant and a faithful servant, so that this one mina can be fully developed and become ten minas. Ten is a number of completeness. When you have fully developed the potential of this life God has given you, you have earned ten minas. One day when Jesus returns, He will commend you as a good and faithful servant, and you will rule over ten cities, because you were faithful in a very little.

We must know that what we encounter today is in time, in the service in the church. Many times we feel it is big and difficult, but from the viewpoint of eternity, these are all very little things. God wants to see whether we are faithful in these very little things. If you can be faithful in little things and let your life be fully developed, when Jesus returns you will be able to reign with Him over ten cities.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Through this parable of the servants, You tell us that everyone who has received grace and been saved already has this eternal life of Yours. Let us be faithful in the things we encounter every day, so that our life may receive appropriate growth, until the time You return and require us to give an account, You may call us good and faithful servants and allow us to reign with

You in the millennial kingdom. Bless my life today. In every matter of my life, let me have this realization: I must be faithful in every little things so that on that day I may receive Your commendation. Thank You for blessing my life. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ.