

Jesus Gives  
Growing God's Healthy Church 12.11  
Luke 19:11-27

INTRODUCTION

The four areas we are focusing on in 2016 and 2017, as a church, are prayer, evangelism, disciple-making, and stewardship. Each one of these areas is being addressed in this initial sermon series, with three sermons each. In all four areas we are only introducing the subject, as the Bible is rich with teaching on prayer, evangelism, disciple-making, and stewardship.

Today, we begin with three messages on stewardship. I'd like to share one of Jesus' longest parables that deals directly with the matter. That will be in Luke 19. As you are opening your Bibles, let me give you a working definition of stewardship that will guide us in all three messages.

**Stewardship is about maximizing God's return on His investment in you in the following three life categories: your body, your time, and your possessions.**

Now, let me offer a couple of notes to go with that definition.

First, a steward is working with someone else's stuff. He does not work with his own possessions, but with another's. The Bible says,

*"You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."* (1Co 6:20 ESV)

The disciple owns nothing of his own. Rather, God owns him and all that he is and has. But the full management of the life and stuff and time you have been given is returned to you by God.

Second, a steward is not a storage facility manager. In other words, God expects a return on his investment. If a stock-broker was entrusted with someone's money, and, instead of investing it in stocks, he put it in a jar, then he would not be a steward—he would just be a storage manager. The customer expects the steward to invest the money and make it grow. Likewise, God expects disciples to bring him a return on His investment.

Third, salvation does not come by good stewardship, but the children of God are stewards. In other words, salvation does not come because you manage life in a way that brings a return on God's investment in you. Rather, salvation comes as a free gift to all who put their trust in Jesus who died to take away our sins. When a person gets saved, he or she is filled with the Spirit of Christ, and at that point, becomes a steward of God. Salvation is never earned. It is given as a gift.

So, once again, our working definition of stewardship is: *Stewardship is about maximizing God's return on His investment in you in the following three life categories: your body, your time, and your possessions.*

Now, let's turn to the parable that Jesus teaches in Luke 19.

TEXT: LUKE 19:11-27

*11 As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. 12 He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. 13 Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.' 15 When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. 16 The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' 19 And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.' 25 And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' 26 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"*

### **Observations From the Parable**

God expects us to work with what He gives us until the Lord returns.

In the parable, Jesus is the nobleman who went a way to a far country to receive a kingdom. The Bible says that Jesus, after dying on a cross and rising, ascended to the right hand of God. He will return and set up the Kingdom that He has earned for Himself.

*For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." (1Co 15:22-27 ESV)*

There is an order to things. Jesus is the nobleman who has gone away to a far country. He has returned to Heaven, but He is coming back to set up His Kingdom. Until He returns, it is the job of His followers to work with what He has given them.

*When the Lord returns, we will be measured and rewarded according to what we did for Him.*

The Kingdom of God knows nothing of equity. When the Lord returns, there will be no poverty or bad health in His kingdom. All there will be filled with joy, but that does not mean that everyone will be in the same position. Some will have more than others.

In fact, the ones with less get less! The ones with more get more! This is the opposite of the utopian equity that socialists and communists seek to achieve in this world. In fact, in the parable, the one who returns ten minas for the one he received was put over ten cities. Is this a promise for the millennial kingdom? For the new Earth? I don't know, but this idea comes up more than once in the New Testament. But then the person with the one mina who did nothing with it, when it is taken from the man, the Lord orders it be given to the one who already had 10! The rich got richer. When the inequity of this was pointed out, the response from the King was:

*26 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away*

That is an affront to human sensibilities. Nevertheless, there is the hint that in the Kingdom of God, the rewards continue on into the future, indefinitely. Faithful living on this earth may be quite difficult at times, but it will always be worth more than what it costs.

The ones who do nothing are not loyal to the King.

The tragic figure in this parable is the man, who when it came time to give an account of his stewardship, did nothing at all. Let's look again at what he said to the King:

*20 Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'*

This one feared the king, and so did nothing at all. He was entrusted with another man's wealth, but did nothing with it. How would the king deal with this excuse? He said, *'I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant!* The man knew the system. He knew what was expected of him and said so. Therefore, the king knew that this man, if allowed to remain in his kingdom, was not obedient to the King. He knew what was right and would not do it.

*In the Kingdom to Come, Only the Good Stewards Remain*

When the parable ends, the nobleman has returned and is a king in his kingdom. He removes those who would not serve him and he rewards those who do serve him. Let's look at the severe way he purges his kingdom of the disloyal.

*27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me."*

Going forward, the king had a kingdom of good stewards. Some of them were better than others, but all of them were willing workers in the kingdom of their king. They proved themselves when the king was away. We must not miss this point of the parable. It is easy to ignore a king when he is not there, but the ones who love and fear the king are those who serve him voluntarily, when he is away.

Here is the heart of stewardship. We live in a place and a time when the King is away. He knows when to return, when all things are to be put into subjection to His feet. We are the ones with the minas. Those who love Him and are loyal to Him have the chance to show it now, when it counts. Those who don't love Him and are not loyal to Him will not serve Him. And when He returns, He will sort us all out. His coming Kingdom will have only those loyal to Him. People don't like to think of Hell, but the King banishes non-citizens from the Kingdom. It's what He does.

*Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? (1Co 6:9 ESV)*

*The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." (Rev 21:7-8 ESV)*

A separation of people is coming. All those who are good stewards of what God has given will be citizens on the Kingdom that is coming. All who are not stewards at all will be cast away from God, into utter darkness.

The ones cast into utter darkness will be people who have been entrusted with God's property, but did not handle it well. Remember, when people are not Christians and don't believe in Jesus, all that they own and all that they have belongs to Jesus. The only thing He doesn't have is their loyalty and love. When people use their bodies, their time, and their possessions for evil purposes, and ignore God, they are misusing things that belong to Him, not them. And, like the wicked man in the parable, they know better. They know in their hearts that God expects them to fear Him and obey Him.

This brings us back to the point I made at the beginning. Being a good steward of what God has given us will not save us –but those who love Jesus will serve Him now, while He is away. Salvation is free. Being born again and filled with the Spirit is a miraculous work of God, a

free gift to those who trust in Him, but not all who trust in Him claim to believe Him. The working ones are those who are saved.

The unsaved are described like this: *But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'* Those who don't want Him to rule over them will show it in how they behave with their bodies, their time, and their treasures – which are really His bodies, His time, and His treasures.

Application:

We will take up this idea in more detail next week. For now, let me offer a couple a few simple applications.

**First of all, instead of whining about your working conditions, whistle while you work.**

In other words, don't spend your time complaining about how the world you live in is so imperfect. Your King is away taking care of necessary business. When He returns, He will set things right. He knows that you are surrounded with difficulties and imperfection and people who just don't want Him to rule over them (some in the church, most outside of it). Don't whine, but work with a happy spirit, for He is watching, and He will reward your faithful work. No act of good stewardship of your body, your time, or your possessions will be overlooked. Be a cheerful servant, not a whining crybaby.

**Second, begin the habit today of praying for the Holy Spirit to instruct your work.** You have a body, you have time, and you have treasures of various kinds. "Holy Spirit, how can I use your things to bring a return on investment to my King when He returns?" Make this your daily prayer. Pray for me! I will be preaching two more times on this subject directly. "Holy Spirit, lead our preacher to say the things I need to hear, and give me the heart to listen!"

We are not alone. Unlike in the parable, when our King goes away to set things in order before He returns, He doesn't leave us without help!

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (Joh 16:7 ESV)*

The Holy Spirit is there with you. Ask for His help in thinking, seeing, and doing the work that brings a return on His investment in you.

**Third, begin the habit of being a thoroughly generous manager of your life.** Begin to share the work of your body even more for good. Share your time. Share your stuff (your house, your car, your toys, and your finances) with more generosity –with an eye to bringing glory to God in all these areas of your life.

**Fourth, ask the Holy Spirit's help to examine your life to find where you are being a poor steward.** Where are you using God's possessions of your body, your time, and your

possessions in such a way that you are wasting your life and His stuff? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you and lead you.

Finally, **if you have not yet signed up to be a good steward of God, do so today.** In other words, repent of your sin, and put your trust in Jesus, who is the most generous and effective steward of all –for He gave His body, His time, and His possessions, without reservation, for the citizens of His kingdom.

*32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:32 ESV)*

*. . . so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (Eph 2:7-8 ESV)*

Jesus gives all He has to bring a return on His investment to the Father in Heaven. He gave His own life, His own time, His own treasure –to win you! But you must choose. Will you follow Him?