

I Am Grateful To Be Entrusted

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This month we have been focusing on Gratitude. When gratitude for God's blessings is like a spring within us, the generosity fills and overflows from us. So far we've looked at two stories from the perspective of gratitude.

When we think about the disciples gathered and the Last Supper – a motley crew to be sure – we are **grateful to be invited.**

When we reflect on the story of Martha and Mary, and how Jesus honors the one who is more concerned with spending time with the Lord than in doing things for the Lord, we are **grateful to be included.**

Today, we are going to look at a cautionary story Jesus tells about the importance of being **grateful to be entrusted.**

Luke 19:11-27

11 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 he has 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.’ ”

Of the four gospel writers, Luke is the one most concerned about the poverty, justice, and the corrupting forces of power and money. By retelling this parable of Jesus, Luke helps us understand that Jesus was no doe-eyed idealist. He see how the so-called real world works, and uses this context to explain how the Kingdom of God works.

Your life is not your own. *Your time, your talents, your treasures.*

But

What you have been given WILL grow if you invest in Kingdom purposes.

And

When you invest what has been entrusted to you, you will always be entrusted with more.

Key Ideas:

1. We are all entrusted with one with one “wild and precious life.” As Mary Oliver asks at the end of her famous poem “The Summer Day”...

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

2. Each of us is called to invest that life. Such an investment always has some level of risk.

19:13. Each of the slaves was given a mina, the equivalent of about one hundred days' wages, which they would probably entrust to the moneychangers. Because of exorbitant interest rates in the Greco-Roman world and because only a few people had significant capital, those doing business could quickly multiply their investments.

3. It is the ones who are ungrateful for being entrusted and who resent the Master – they are the ones who end up losing. They struggle with CYNICISM, which is an incredibly toxic force in the world. It is what kills hope.

Commentators note on verse **19:20. Not only was this servant's failure to invest the money contrary to the king's orders and common sense (19:13); he even failed to protect the money, as giving it to moneychangers, storing it in a temple treasury or even keeping it in a strongbox might have done. Wrapping money in a perishable handkerchief was considered one of the most irresponsible ways to take care of money and suggests that the servant was stupid or treasonous (cf. v. 14), or (most likely) both.**

4. It isn't how much you are given to start with that matters. What matters is that APPLY it.

5. Those who honor the gift will always be entrusted with more.

If we truly wish to have a life that counts, then we must be willing to commit ourselves to the building up of God's kingdom at the expense of our own.

6. Whenever I think about this story, I tend to think that Jesus neglected to mention a fourth servant – the servant who perhaps received two minas, and worked hard to make them grow, but failed. Isn't it possible that might do our best, but still not succeed? By not including this scenario, I think Jesus is saying that the answer is, "no." That which is risked, in love, for Kingdom good will always grow. We fixate on "how much," but notice that the Master is equally pleased with the first two servants. He isn't comparing them to one another. Neither should we.

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