

## **OUR PART IN GOD'S WORK**

**Luke 19:11–27**

**Dr. George O. Wood**

We're in Luke 19:11–27 today, then verse 28 begins the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem—Palm Sunday. I got to thinking and praying about this. Next Sunday is Mother's Day. I didn't feel that a Palm Sunday text was appropriate for Mother's Day. The more I began thinking and praying about it, I decided that we would take a few months leave of the Gospel of Luke until early 1987, if Jesus tarries. And if Jesus doesn't tarry, then we're going to take up this Gospel of Luke and have a background seminar in heaven. But if He does tarry, as we head into the Easter season of 1987, we're going to finish Luke at that time and walk through Passion Week, at the special time of the year when we can, those last four and a half chapters of Luke and really relate them to what the Lord went through in His last week. I feel some other things that are on my heart to share with you during the month of May, and also the summer months that are coming up, that I feel are especially directed to us as a church family.

Our Scripture today is from Luke 19 beginning with verse 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. He said: ‘A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. “Put this money to work,” he said, “until I come back.” But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, “We don't want this man to be our king.” 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. The first one came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned ten more.” “Well done, my good

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servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” The second came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned five more.” His master answered, “You take charge of five cities.” Then another servant came and said, “Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 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.” 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? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?” Then he said to those standing by, “Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.” “Sir,” they said, “he already has ten!” 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. 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”” (Luke 19:11-27, NIV).

I've called this text today “Our Part in God's Work.” Reading this Scripture reminds me a little bit of the story I read about President Franklin Roosevelt. Presidents have to stand in a lot of receiving lines as people go by and shake their hands. President Roosevelt was complaining one day that nobody really paid any attention to what he said when he was standing in a receiving line. So he decided, this particular day, to let people pass down the line, so the story goes, and, as they shook his hand, he would mumble something like, “I murdered my grandmother this morning...” Guests responded with things like “Marvelous! Keep up the good work! We're proud of you... God bless you, sir...” It wasn't until the line going past him was almost completed that the Ambassador to Bolivia came, and Roosevelt again murmured, “I murdered

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my grandmother this morning.” And the Ambassador to Bolivia, absolutely without being phased by it, leaned over to Roosevelt and whispered, “I’m sure she had it coming.”

I think, sometimes, I am like one of those guests. I think I know what’s being said, but later I wonder if I really heard what was being said. I think all of us are a little bit like that. At times, with the words of Jesus, we think we know what He is saying, but do we really?

Today, I want to look at this story that Jesus told with you from four vantage points. One is simply information. Three of the lessons we will look at have to do with application.

The first point is one of information. There’s obviously a difference between this parable and the parable found in Matthew 25, which relates to the story of the talents. Sometimes people think, “Did Jesus get confused? Or did the Gospel writers get confused and misreport the story? In one place, Jesus is talking about talents. In one place, He’s talking about minas or pounds. By the way, the reason why the King James has the word “pounds” is that it’s translated into English and they have “pounds,” so it’s easy to take the Greek word “minas” and let them become “pounds” in the King James. The modern translations go back to minas. If you’re putting this into Spanish, it would be pesos. In English, it would be dollars. But there’s a difference between the parable of the minas and the parable of the talents.

Jesus, as a public speaker, obviously told some stories more than once and sometimes told two different stories that were closely related to one another but slightly different in emphasis. Of course, the difference in the story is very easy to notice. One difference is that Jesus taught the parable of the minas when He was at Jericho. The parable of the talents was taught at Passover week up in Jerusalem. In the parable of the talents, you have a lot of money involved. A talent represents five-thousand days’ wages. That’s about fifteen years’ work if you get the weekends off. The parable of the minas is one-hundred days wages. A mina is a one hundred days—about

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three month's work. A talent is five-thousand days' work; a mina is one-hundred days' work. So there's a lot of difference in the money or currency involved.

Then, there's also the matter that, in the parable of the talents, you have one man given five, one man given two and one given one. Five makes five, two makes two and one makes nothing. But in the parable of the minas, you have ten that are given one each. One makes ten, one makes five, and one does nothing and we don't hear anything about the other seven.

There's one other difference between the stories. That is, in the parable of the minas—the parable here, the one He told at Jericho—there's an added element involved. That is, the king is going away on a journey to receive a kingdom. And while he is gone, his subjects reject his kingship so that when he comes back, he must not only deal with his servants to whom he had given the minas, but with the rebellion against his authority. That is an element not found in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25.

That's information. You're not going to get edified or super-blessed for knowing that.

Now, let's look at the spiritual applications that we get from this text. We always want to try to do that. There are three specific applications that we need to note.

**I. One is that Jesus, through this story, is telling us that He planned a delay in inaugurating His kingdom.**

He was not going to sit on the throne of David. He was not going to, at that time, judge the nations. He was not going to end disease and poverty and war at that time. The Kingdom would be delayed.

Why is that an important point here? Because it is Passover time. In fact, last week, in the Jewish calendar, was Passover time. Passover is a remembrance of God's greatest deliverance of His people in the old covenant, the deliverance through Moses and the Exodus. It was a reminder that

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a new deliverance needed to be accomplished. So Jesus is moving from Jericho up to Jerusalem and throngs of pilgrims are gathering in Jerusalem. Some of them, who are Jesus' followers from Galilee, are not really understanding all that Jesus is doing. They are assuming that He's going to declare His kingdom in Jerusalem, that He is going to bring the kingdom at that point, Jesus teaches them this parable because people thought the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He says, instead, "The king went away to a far country." In that one little phrase, He's telling us, telling His disciples of the first century and His disciples of all centuries, that the display of His kingdom power is reserved for a later time. That He will go up to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem, He will go to the far country, to the presence of the Father, where He would receive the kingdom which He will—in His return—bring with Him. But for an indeterminate period of time, He is going to be gone and we will not see Him reigning except through faith, except through seeing His reign in our hearts and lives.

Jesus used language that His listeners could readily understand. This parable was taught at Jericho. Just thirty years before Jesus teaches it, a man by the name of Archaelus—who was one of the three sons of Herod the Great, who had died at Jericho—left Jericho and went to Rome, to Augustus Caesar, and asked Caesar to make him king, and sat on the throne of his father, Herod the Great. A delegation of fifty leading citizens was sent from Jerusalem to Caesar, asking Caesar to not appoint Archaelus as king, asking for the Romans reign over them instead. And because of their petition, and because of Caesar's suspicions about Archaelus, he refused to give him the title of king and sent him back to Jericho as tetrarch, a ruler of three; a ruler of a nation without the title of king, with a promise that, if he ruled well, he might be given kingship. But he never ruled well and the kingship was never given to him.

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Jesus takes that story known to every boy and girl in Jericho about a king who went to a far journey and subjects who opposed him and said, “This king is going on a journey, not to Rome, but out to Jerusalem and beyond Jerusalem into the heavens. When He gets there he will not be denied. He will have a kingdom. But He will be resisted. And when He comes back, he will deal with those who reject his offer, who reject Him being king.” That is one of the central points of this story. The kingdom will be delayed, but it will ultimately be inaugurated.

### **II. The second application of this story is that Jesus was saying that He has left His work in our hands.**

That’s an awesome thought. I know that when we talk about the work of the Lord, there always ought to be that humility which says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they who labor, labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1). But the fact of the New Testament is that God works through us, not without us. He has left us with potential and capability to serve Him. We’re to serve Him with all of our heart. We’re to seek the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our life so we don’t just do what the flesh can do, but do beyond that. He expects, when He returns, for us to stand before Him and give an account of what we, His servants, have done with the life He has given to us. What we have done with the responsibilities He’s given to us. What we have done with the work that He has given us to do. He’s going to hold us to account for that. He wants us to develop that gift that He’s given us.

For each of us, our gifts of ministry and our calling may be different, although all of us—if we’ve believed in Christ—have received the gift of salvation. The particular ministry gift that we have to offer—the pound or the mina or the talent we have—may differ from one another, but the Lord says that His work depends upon us because He wants to use us to minister to our family. He wants to use us to minister to our church. He wants to use us to minister in our

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community. He wants to use us to minister in our schools and in our work. He will use us. His work is in our hands. So He says, “Be pragmatic until I come.” I love the word “pragmatic.”

Pragmatic describes a person who is practical. The literal Greek word Jesus uses here, about how we’re to do business until He comes, can be translated correctly into the English language: “be pragmatic until I come.” Trade and do business.

That doesn’t square with some people’s ideas of the return of the Lord (“The Lord’s coming so we just go out and act like crazy people for a while”). But Jesus says, “No, stay involved. Get your mina, get your pound working for you. Get out there and invest. Develop your potential. Do business until I come.”

Who is the servant who is successful in developing the potential the Lord has for them, and who is the servant who is unsuccessful? In this particular parable, Jesus wants to communicate to us about the unsuccessful servant, and how it is that we can learn best what He expects from us.

Jesus has left us to do His work with all the help of the Holy Spirit He’s going to give us, but He’s left us to do it. Left us to live our life with His help. What is He expecting from us?

The guy who does nothing with his talent tells us what Jesus is expecting from us.

**A.** First of all, He is telling us that we must not fear. The person who will be unsuccessful in doing the work of God is the person who fails to risk, and fear cuts the nerve to risk. If you are afraid, you won’t do anything. If you let fear overcome faith, you’ll never put faith into motion.

The guy who had the one talent was afraid—that cut the nerve to risk.

All of us have to make decisions about how we’re going to live life. I think, for example, in our country, we’re facing—most recently—the terrorist threat and people are afraid of air travel. I understand that. I was intrigued this last week to read that, in the United States last year, there were four times as many people killed by lightning as there were by terrorists. Yet, we’re all

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scared to death of getting on an airplane. I'm probably Calvinist enough to say, "When it's my time to go, it's my time to go. I've lived a full life and had a wonderful time and my family's going to be blessed and the church is going to be paid for if I go." Why live life cooped up with fear? Life's meant to be lived. Be prudent, yes. Be careful, yes. But live it. Get on the cutting edge. The greater the potential for gain, the greater the risk is. You who have investments know this. Somebody says, "I know a hot stock and you can make 25 percent." You know that if you're going to get paid 25 percent on a stock, you're taking a risk. So the higher the level of return, the greater the risk. If you want to play it safe, conservative, put it in an insured account. But if you're going to get a great gain, you've got to take a great risk.

It's interesting in Jesus' story that the people who take the risks never fail. The five-talent guy and the two-talent guy are the guys who turned the one into ten and the one into five. All of them, in the two stories, show that not a single person who takes a risk ever fails. You look at the story and wonder, "What if we arranged the story and say that the guy that had the one and was going to make the ten says, 'I meant to get ten off of this, but my investment turned sour and your mina is no more. It's worthless. It's all gone.'" Do you think the Lord would have chewed him out? I think the Lord would have said, "Bravo for trying!" But the fact is, in Jesus' story, people who risk do not fail.

I've found this in the Christian life. People who get out on the cutting edge of faith instead of saying, "I can't do this and I can't do that. I'm not well trained enough to teach a Sunday School class. Or I'm not trained enough to work with boys or girls. I could never go next door and invite somebody out for dessert. I just can't do that. I can't talk to anybody about the Lord." When we say, "I can't," when we're afraid to risk, we fail. But God's in people who risk, who get out there on the cutting edge. It's a great, great thing coming out of this story. People who risk do not lose.

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Our district superintendent in Hawaii is a Japanese brother, a delightful man of God. I was reading the history of the Hawaiian district council. When a single missionary by the name of Bernice Strickland—who was the first Assembly of God missionary to ever go to the Hawaiian Islands to try to establish a work in about the mid 1920s—went, she didn't begin with a group of adults. They were difficult to reach. So what she did was open a Sunday School. The very first little group of kids who came there were two Japanese boys, Woodrow and Albert. Both of them gave their lives to the Lord. Albert today pastors one of our churches there in Hawaii and Woodrow is district superintendent of the work there. The missionary, Bernice Strickland, went out. It was a big risk. People were telling her, "You don't want to go there. You don't have any visible means of support." But she went out and she gambled and she risked. Out of it came a harvest, years and years down the road.

Our risks always pay off when we take them for the Lord. Even if it seems like we failed in the risk. Maybe God is calling somebody today to get you out of your complacency. Instead of just letting life go by with your arms folded, maybe He's given you a new opportunity and said, "Just go for it!" But you're saying, "I'm afraid to do that. I've got this invested or whatever." If you risk, you don't lose. Even if you lose, you don't lose! I'm not going to guarantee you that just because you pick a stock you're going to make it.

He was a failure because he was afraid to risk.

**B.** Another thing that this one-talent guy shows us is that the person who doesn't succeed in God's work is the person who has distorted perceptions. This one talent guy had a crazy view of God. "You take out what you do not put in and you reap where you do not sow." You are an "austere" man. That's the literal word in the Greek. You are a hard man. "Austere" meaning

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difficult; like getting blood out of a rock. Impossible. That's what he's saying, "You're an impossible person. You're a hard taskmaster."

When I think of what an incorrect view of God is, maybe some of you can think back this far, to when you were in first and second grade. The teacher slipped out of the room and one of the little kids went up to the chalkboard and drew a picture of "teacher" on the board. Hair all over her head and probably even a beard on her chin to show dislike, a big scowl and a mean, cranky look. Underneath is the word "teacher," as though that thing on the board represents the teacher. She looked like an old, mean person, but actually, if you had the eyes of an adult, you'd have seen she wasn't an old, mean person. She was twenty-eight years of age, young and married with two young children—a fine example of humanity. But somehow, a little kid got a caricature of what "teacher" looked like. That's what "teacher" was to him—that mean caricature.

I think people do that all the time with God. They do it with Jesus. They put a caricature up on the board of their life. They say things that aren't true. Like, "God is going to take all the fun out of your life... It'll cost too much to be a Christian... All this stuff about Jesus is mythology... Christianity is for wimps..." All these kinds of things that are said. They're not true. But we wind up believing them.

That's what this guy had done. He wound up believing this stuff.

Then the third thing that Jesus indicts him on: Not only was he afraid to risk, not only did he have distorted perceptions, but:

**C.** The way he lived did not correspond with what he believed. What he believed was true, but he didn't act by what he believed. If he believed that God was that much of a miser in getting money where he hadn't put it or reaping where he hadn't sown, then it would seem—Jesus says—that you would have really gone out and gone to work. Instead of putting your money in a

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handkerchief, you would've put it in the bank. The word for "bank" there actually means "a money table," because before there were banks, there were moneylenders. They put the money on the table. You lent them money you had, they paid you interest, and they turned around and lent it to somebody else at a higher rate. Isn't that what banks do? That's what a bank is—a moneylender's table.

At least he should have put it out to moneylenders, a nice, conservative investment. But he didn't even do that. He lost it. So he didn't act the way he believed.

Jesus is telling us, therefore, that there is, ahead of us, a real day in time and space when we are going to appear before Him and He's going to ask us, "What did you do with the minas I gave you?" When the one-talent person who has made the ten comes before him, he says, "Here are your minas." Notice he doesn't say, "Here are mine. You gave me one, I made the other nine." But they're all his. So does the five mina guy, "These are yours." Jesus is going to ask us, "What did you do with what I gave you?"

Of course, we're making decisions right now in our life that are going to influence us for years and years to come. We're hardly aware of it. We sometimes stumble through life and do not realize the tremendous import of the decisions we're making, whether we're going to go with Christ and serve Him with our whole heart, or if we're going to hold back. And if we hold back, it's going to affect us years down the road. It's going to affect our families, and years out, the world. If we serve Him with our whole heart, it's also going to affect years out down the road. I think a modern analogy of this is last year's popular movie of Stephen Spielberg: "Back to the Future," in which he tells the story of Marty, the All-American boy who grew up in an All-American town who strikes up an association with a mad scientist, Dr. Brown, who has fashioned, of all things, a time machine out of a DeLorean automobile. In the plot, Marty is

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propelled back thirty years, to the great year of 1955. Because he has a 1985 chronology and body, he is back with people in 1955 who are in 1985 much older, like his mom and dad. But in 1955, they're about the same age he is. So in the story, his mother initially kind of falls in love with him and he's got to get that all taken care of and get her together with his father, so that he can be born and his brothers and sisters can be born. If they don't get together, he's not going to happen.

You have this sense that the film, in a humorous way, is underscoring the significance of the decisions we're making now—that 1955 had everything to do with 1985. May I say that 1985 has everything to do (if Jesus should tarry) with 2005 and 2015? Because of the decisions we're making in our generation, do you realize that the turn of the century is only thirteen and a half years away? I got to figuring, the other day, that I've got maybe twenty more years of active ministry, then I'm probably going to retire. Twenty more years, and then it's the next generation! What we're doing right now in our prayer life, in our training of young people and getting the church ready, is going to impact us. It's going to hit the road twenty to thirty years from now! If you're a young person, the decisions you're making now may seem so inconsequential. But the study habits you're implementing, the decisions you're making about dating, the decisions you're making in regard to morals and values and reading and the whole of life, that's going to impact you down the road.

Jesus is saying to us that there's going to be a time when the consequences of all those decisions will come. We come to Him and say, "Lord, what You gave me has become this."

Then, He's going to give a favorite phrase. In fact, if I were asked—on the basis of what I know about the New Testament—"What was the favorite phrase of Jesus?" I'd have to say (and this phrase would shock us, I think, but it's mentioned five times in the Gospels. I think it's Jesus'

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favorite phrase because He repeated it more than any other phrase.), “To him who has will more be given. And to him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” What He’s saying is that, as you go through life, you’re either using it or losing it. If you’re giving, if you’re producing, if you’re growing, you’re gaining. You’re producing more. But if you’re letting life sit on you, if you’re becoming passive and inactive, even what you have is taken away from you. Awesome words!

Anybody who’s studied a foreign language knows immediately these words are true in an educational sense. If you’re learning a foreign language, you know you have to keep using it or you’ll lose it. Or if you buy a car, you can’t just park it in the garage, and twenty years later—or even five years later—it starts. You just can’t let things sit. You have to use them.

That’s what the Lord’s telling us about the potential He’s given us in His work. Use it or lose it.

To neglect opportunities is to lose them. To make the most of opportunities is to gain more opportunities. The Lord says that’s even going to go on in eternity. Because what you do here is going to determine, to a great extent, the rewards you’re going to have in heaven. We’re all going to be rewarded with eternal life, but there’s going to be something even beyond that, which speaks of additional opportunities to serve Him.

The story tells us, one, Jesus has gone away. A king who has delayed His inauguration. Two, while He’s gone, the work is in our hands. We need to develop whatever potential God has given us and begin doing it now, and not wait around till it’s too late.

**III. I think the third and last thing this story is teaching us, is presented through a question that confronts us, “Do you want Me to be king over you?”**

There are two groups of people in this story: the people who are given the minas, that are his servants, and then there are the people who are His subjects, who rebel against Him.

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Have you noticed, in the paper, there's been a conference of liberal New Testament scholars who hold seminary and graduate positions in the United States? They have had a colloquy going on to determine what the real words of Jesus are. They've isolated the words of Jesus into about two hundred and some sayings in the New Testament. They are voting on them as to which words are the words Jesus said and which words are the ones the church put in His mouth. I am not a person who is anti-intellectual, who tries to take intellectuals and beat them over the head with a baseball bat, but I've done my graduate work so I think I have a few credentials to speak. But there are people who teach graduate school and seminary and theology who, in their teaching, teach their own opinions. They disguise it as scholarship. If you've been through some of these things, you get filled up! But what is really happening is that these people are voting on the sayings they agree with and the sayings they don't agree with. That's what the vote is all about. It isn't about scholarship. It's about opinions. I haven't seen how this particular phrase was voted on, but I suspect this one didn't make it: "Those enemies of mine, who do not want me to be king, bring them here and kill them in front of me." We're very uncomfortable with that. The nice, pale Galilean would never say anything like this. Jesus says, "Whether you're an atheist or a skeptic or a member of a non-Christian religion, you don't change reality. Right now, in this life, you are free to debate, read or argue. But when the final curtain is closed, I am the Lord." There's an awesome day ahead.

I ran across a story of what a significant opportunity this is in life and what we have right now, and what Jesus Christ has done for us is what this parable of the talents illustrates. In World War II, when the Italian army and navy were being routed and defeated, one of the strongholds that the Italian navy had was the harbor in North Africa. When the allies were coming in, they had to retreat from the harbor, but they did not want the harbor to be usable for the allies, so they took

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great barges and filled them with concrete and sunk them in the harbor, so that the allied ships couldn't use them. Then they fled the place. The allies came in, and of course they immediately had a problem, how to clear the harbor of all these barges that are lying on the bottom of the harbor with concrete in them, making it impossible for ships which require deep sea lanes to put into port.

Some of the navy engineers came up with an ingenious plan, which worked. They took these large empty drums that had been used for gasoline and the like, big drums that you'd find at an oil refinery, not the fifty gallon drums we have here. They took these huge drums, sealed them so that they floated on the water, took them out into the ocean and, when the tide went out, the tops of the barges were revealed. They took chains and fastened them, from the sealed drums that were floating to the barges, which were down on the bottom. They waited for the tide to come in. When the tide came in, the lifting power of the tide raised the sunken barges and allowed the allies to clear the harbor.

I thought of that in reference to the kind of life Jesus Christ makes possible. A lot of things we can't do on our own. But you let the lifting tide of Jesus Christ come into your life, and He's going to pull you up into the possible, pull you up to your potential. The tides exert unseen but immense, almost immeasurable, power and so does Jesus Christ. To neglect Him is to remain stuck at the bottom. That's the bottom line really, of Jesus' story. To neglect His presence, to neglect His kingship, means to lie there useless. But to let Him hook up with you is to become buoyant.

Shakespeare, in the fourth act of Julius Caesar, gives us the story of Brutus, trying to enlist Cassius in his deed. Brutus refers to the power of the tides and says to Cassius, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. Omitted, all the voyage of their

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life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat and we must take the current when it serves or lose our ventures.” Shakespeare’s saying, “Tides have great power. They cannot be stopped or retrieved. But their lifting strength comes only for a few hours and then it is gone. If we miss the flood, we are condemned to the shallows and the miseries, never floating to our intended purpose.

Jesus is saying, “I am giving you talents, I’m giving you minas, I’m giving you abilities, I’ll give you the strength to float these. Latch on to My life and get ready for the great adventure. Don’t do it and you lose.” There is a moment when His tide inexorably pulls at our life. This was one at Jericho. He was going through only once. There was that opportunity to be with Him. He comes through this sanctuary again today, offering to hook up the immense power of His life to our life and give us buoyancy out of His resurrection life, and help us to live. If we hook up and let Him lead our life and use our talents for His honor and glory, in that day to come, He will approve. If we refuse the greatest offer of all and do nothing with our life, in that age, we will be mired in the nothingness of eternity, separated from God and judged by Him.

### **Closing Prayer**

Our Father, we only have this life that You’ve given us, only once to live. We only have one time we can be thirteen, only one time we can be seventeen, only one time we can be twenty-five. Only one time to turn forty. Only one time to be sixty-five or eighty-five. Just once. Every day is a just one-time day; a day in which opportunity is given or opportunity is ignored. The accumulation of those day-to-day decisions makes up what our life is, determines what’s going to be out there ten, twenty, thirty years down the road. Even beyond that—what eternity is going to hold. Each of us, in the quiet of this room, before You, know that You have struggled with us. Each of us, Lord, has felt impressions in our life, pulling us in certain directions, giving us a

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**Luke 19:11–27**

dream of how our life could count for You. Sometimes, Lord, we dismiss those ideas as they're passing, as if they were fancies. It's easier to play it safe, to do nothing. Lord, baptize us in faith, to get out and do whatever You've called us to do, to do it with all of our strength, to risk for You. It may not be anything great, as this world counts greatness. It may be visiting people. It may be opening our home to people. It may be just opening our life in a greater way to our family. It may be charting out a life that involves a discipline of prayer and study of Your Word. It may be assuming some responsibility of ministry to children or young people, which You know, maybe thirty years from now will wind up blessing our life because of investing ourselves in them. Whatever it is, Lord, help us not to hold back anything from You, but to take whatever You've given us and, with Your help, develop it to the fullest. Lord, I want for my own life, and I pray for everyone here, that there would not be anything in us holding back the dreams and plans You have for me, and for each one here. Help us, Lord, to face You on that day and say, "Lord, You gave us so much. With Your help, it has become this. Here it is." And rejoice and hear Your word of approval. We seek that, Lord, for each one here today. In Christ's name. Amen.