

Text: Luke 19:11-27 (Pew Bible pg.1040)

Title: “Taking Care of Business”

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION – Last week Hugo Chavez, the controversial president of Venezuela, died after a long battle with cancer. According to a news report, the people who were around Chavez when he died told of his last words. Though he could not speak he mouthed these words, “I don't want to die. Please don't let me die.” I don't know why Chavez was afraid to die. Was it that he feared what was before him after his death? Was it that he had not finished his life the way he wanted to? We simply don't know. But what a tragic way to face God at the end one's life ... “I don't want to die. Please don't let me die.”

Two thousand years ago Jesus Christ came to this earth. He lived a perfect life, taught perfect truth, and died for our sins on the Cross. Three days later He arose from the grave, victorious over sin and death. A few weeks later Jesus ascended into heaven; but before He did He promised that He would come back to this earth, not like the first time when He entered history as a little baby in a manger. When Jesus returns it will be as a mighty King. So we are living today in the interval between the first coming of Jesus and the second coming of Jesus. This is the age of the Church during which the people of God are to do the business of the Kingdom of God until Jesus returns. More specifically this is the age in which you and I live and die. It is this time that we have to accomplish the purposes of God for which we are created.

Open your Bibles to Luke 19:11. God's Word shows us how to live in such a way that when we die we don't have to be afraid. Instead we can leave this life with the knowledge that we have done what we are supposed to do with our lives for the time that we have lived on this earth. Jesus taught in many ways, but one of his favorite teaching devices was the parable ... life stories that help us to understand the truth He was teaching. In Luke 19 we have another one of the life stories of Jesus. First I want to take a little time here for explanation. Then at the end I have four points of application to leave with you. Read Luke 19:11.

Luke 19:11 - 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.

Jesus is moving closer to the time when He would be crucified. As he makes his way toward Jerusalem His followers have a faulty understanding of what He was about to do. Many were convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who would immediately stage a revolution, set up His earthly kingdom, overthrow the Roman oppressors and bring in a new golden age for Israel. But what they didn't know was that the Messiah was going to be rejected and killed. And for a period of time the Messiah would be absent. But one day He will come back to establish His Kingdom for eternity. And to drive home this truth Jesus tells another one of His life stories. Now let's read on:

Luke 19:12 - He said: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return.

Luke 19:14 - “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’

Luke 19:15a - “He was made king, however, and returned home.

This life story Jesus tells is based upon actual events that occurred about thirty years before ... events that they all were aware of. All Jesus had to say was “a man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king,” and the Jews knew immediately what He was talking about. Herod the Great was the king of Palestine when Jesus was born. When Herod died he willed that his son Archelaus would be made king of Judea. Well, this couldn’t happen without the approval of Caesar Augustus in Rome. So Archelaus went on a journey to Rome to be appointed as king of Judea. The Jews, however, hated Archelaus because of his cruelty. So they sent a delegation to Rome as well to argue to Caesar that Archelaus didn’t deserve to be king. Well Caesar made Archelaus king. As you can imagine, when he returned to Jerusalem he was plenty mad that his subjects, the Jews, had tried to sabotage his promotion to king, and his retribution was swift and brutal.

Well it is this actual historical event that Jesus uses as the basis for this parable. So the noble man is about to go off on this journey anticipating that he will return as the king. When he returns he will want to have reliable, trustworthy people around him. And here’s how he goes about finding them :

Luke 19:13 - So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’

ILLUSTRATION – We not sure whether the mina was a single coin, or the weight of several silver coins. But for the sake of imagination picture them as a bag of coins. A bag of money that weighed a mina was equal to about three month’s wages. It’s not a particularly large amount of money, but it’s nothing to sneeze at. What better way to find out if they are reliable than to entrust them with a smaller responsibility first. So the master made an investment in each of these ten servants. He gives them a sum of money that they were to leverage ... to invest, to trade, to start a business with ... anything that would make the master a profit. And then there would be a time of accounting.

Luke 19:15b - “Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

Luke 19:16 - “The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’

The first servant put his master’s money to work and earned a 1000% return ... ten times what he had been given. This servant is *immensely profitable*.

Luke 19:17 - “‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’

“You have been trustworthy in a very small matter...” It’s the little things that God watches. Little things matter to God.

ILLUSTRATION – Years ago I read about a young man who was being groomed for a high position in the company where he worked. One day the owner asked the young man to go to lunch at the company cafeteria. The owner was planning to inform the young man that he was being tapped for greater responsibilities in the company. As they were going through the line the young man slipped a pat of butter under his napkin so he wouldn't have to pay for it. The owner who was going through the line behind him noticed what the young man did. When they got seated at their table, the owner said to the young man: "I came to lunch with you today with the intent of telling you that you were being promoted to a higher position in the company. However, I observed that as you went through the serving line you slid a pat of butter under you napkin and didn't pay for it. I know it seems like a small matter, but actually it revealed more to me about your character than anything you could have done. So you're not getting a promotion; you're getting fired!"

Luke 19:18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

So the second servant brings in a 500% return ... 5 times what his master had given him. This servant is *considerably profitable*.

Luke 19:19 - "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

Luke 19:20 - "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.'

The third servant in the story brings back the one bag or coin and nothing else. He was *totally unprofitable*. And the servant goes on to justify why he was unprofitable.

Luke 19:21 - 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.'

You see, the servant hadn't squandered the money. He hadn't carelessly lost the money or failed to protect it. But he didn't *use* the money to earn a profit for his master.

Why? He was afraid. Actually, what the servant said about the master was true. But there's another way of looking at it. The master was just. It was the master's money to begin with. And the servant's job is to work for the master. The master had every right to expect that what he invested in his servants would bring him a profit. This servant just didn't take the master seriously.

Luke 19:22 - "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?'

Here's another way of putting it: The master said to the servant: "I didn't ask you to play it safe and just protect the money. I asked you to do something with what I entrusted to you. I said, 'Put this money to work until I come back.'"

Luke 19:23 - Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

Luke 19:24 - “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’

Luke 19:25 - “‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’

So the actions of the master are puzzling to the bystanders. The first servant already had the greatest amount of all. He had already received a great reward.

Luke 19:26 - “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.

ILLUSTRATION - This is true in the financial world. People tend to invest with those who have shown a track record of profitability. They invest in a business that will pay dividends. And when an investor realizes that a person or business they have invested in doesn't prove reliable, they will take it away and give it to one more reliable.

And this is true in the spiritual world with God. During our lifetime God invests in us. He gives us truth. He gives us opportunities. He gives us abilities. And He watches to see what we will do with the truth, the opportunities and the abilities that He gives to us. He gave us His Son to die for our sins and to give us new life. What will we do with Jesus? And when we're saved He gives us opportunities and abilities to serve Him. What will we do with them?

Now remember that there were some people who didn't want the noble man to be their king. And Jesus' story goes back to address them:

Luke 19:27 - 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.’ ”

So there are three kinds of people in this parable:

- People who do not want to submit to the rule of the king. In fact, this parable ends and the next thing Luke records is the Triumphal Entry of Jesus on Palm Sunday. As Jesus moves through the streets of the city the people cried, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord” (Luke 19:38). But that would soon change. The same people would later cry out for Jesus to be crucified. He would be mocked as “the king of the Jews.”
- People (servants) who do submit to the king, and invest their time and treasures for him.
- People (servants) who do not take the king seriously, and they do nothing with what he entrusted to them.

So one day King Jesus will return. He will deal severely with those who have rejected Him. And He will reward those who have received Him and served Him.

NEXT LET ME JUST GIVE YOU SOMETHING ABOUT THE APPLICATION.

1. THE TASK ASSIGNED TO EACH OF US

Now let me be clear here that we're not talking about working for your salvation. The Bible is clear about the order of things. You can serve God all day long, but if you aren't saved it doesn't matter. Your salvation is not based upon your service; it is based on your faith and trust in Jesus. But when you are saved you are like the servants who are given meaningful service to do for Christ until He comes. In the parable, the master said...

Luke 19:13b - 'Put this money to work ... until I come back.'

And the Bible says that when Jesus departed into heaven He sent His Holy Spirit by which He endowed His servants, His followers, with certain gifts that are to be employed with the expectation that one day the Lord will return.

Ephesians 4:7 - But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

So until Christ returns we are to patiently, faithfully serve with the grace gifts He has given us.

2. THE TRUST GIVEN TO EACH OF US

In the parable a sum of money is given to each of the servants. It is *entrusted* to them. The master made an investment in each of his servants. It was a matter of trust.

Luke 12:48b - From the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Every hour of every day, every encounter, every word we speak must be in the full realization that our moments and days are entrusted to us by our Father in heaven.

3. THE TIME ALLOTTED FOR EACH OF US

The master said, "Put this money to work until I come back..." So there's a set time for us to live and do the work that God has given us to do. It's not a time for us to be idle. And we live in an interim period between the departure of our Lord into heaven and His return one day when we least expect it. It's only as we are alive that we have the opportunity to do what we have been given to do.

Luke 12:40 - You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

There's one more point of application:

4. THE TEST COMING FOR EACH OF US

Luke 19:15b - "(The master) sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

The Bible says that one day Christ will return. And believers will stand before the Lord with the lives we have built through our service. Here's how Paul describes that day:

1 Corinthians 3:12 - If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

1 Corinthians 3:13 - his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

1 Corinthians 3:14 - If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

So one day we will stand before God with our lives. And the fires of His all-knowing gaze will penetrate all that we have done with our lives. The work of our life will be tested like metal is tested in a fire. The things that have been done for the glory of God and the good of His kingdom are like gold, silver and costly stones. The things that have been done for self and for worldly interests are like wood, hay and straw. So when the fires of God's evaluation pass over your life how will it be? What remains is the basis for our rewards in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

CONCLUSION

When you come to your last days will you be like Hugo Chavez? "I don't want to die. Don't let me die." Friend, don't waste your life by dying without Christ.

And when you receive Christ, don't waste your time, your money, your abilities. Live every day looking to your Savior and to your eternal reward.