

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*Behold the Kindness and Severity of God.*"ⁱ

We are working our way verse-by-verse through Luke's Gospel, and we find ourselves at **Luke 19:20**.

Before I became a Christian, I believed in God. I wasn't an atheist, but I hadn't heard the gospel, repented of my sins, and put my faith in Christ. At that time, if you asked me about God, I would have told you how good, gracious, loving, and kind he is. But I would not have told you how severe, holy, just, and righteous he is. When we describe God with some of His attributes but leave out others, we create a false god, or idol.

Instead, we should do as Romans 11:22 says...

Romans 11:22 Behold the kindness and severity of God.

Last week we began [the parable of the minas](#). This parable illustrates God's kindness and severity very well as we will see.

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Let's back up to Luke 19:16 to briefly review...

Luke 19:16 The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.'

In the parable of the talents, the talents represent the gifts God has given us, which is why the servants received different amounts: we have different abilities.

But in the parable of the minas each servant receives the same amount, one mina, because the mina represents the gospel, which we have all received in equal measure.

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The first servant multiplied the mina he was given so that it produced 10 more minas.

Maybe this means ten people came to Christ because of his preaching.

Luke 19:17 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.'

We talked last week about what it means that the servants were put over cities.

It should encourage us that the master was pleased with the servant even though he had been "faithful in a very little." If we thought we had to be faithful in very much to please the Lord, we might feel like failures. Instead, God is pleased with faithfulness over only a few things.

We have an example of how little something can be yet still be considered faithful...

Matthew 10:42 Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward."

Talk about being faithful over little! What's littler than giving someone a cup of water?

With God, even the smallest acts will be rewarded.

Luke 19:18 And the second came, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made five minas.'

Maybe this means five people were saved because of his preaching.

Luke 19:19 And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

The master was on a hot streak with the first two servants, but that came to an end with the third servant. Our new verse for this morning...

Luke 19:20 Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief;’ⁱⁱ

This was a common practice in Jesus’ day, just like in our day some people will keep money in drawers or safes.

The reason people do this is to keep money safe, and in a sense, that’s what this man was doing. He was “playing it safe.” He didn’t want to take any chances...and this brings us to lesson one...

Lesson One: We all fail, but the sin is not trying.

Proverbs 20:6 Most men will proclaim each his own goodness, but who can find a faithful man?

This verse makes two points:

1. First, it is easy to talk about being faithful.
2. Second, it is much harder to find faithful people...as the master would testify.

Consider these verses about falling and getting back up. I’m going to give you four, but there are others:

- **Proverbs 24:16a For the righteous falls seven times and rises again,**
- **Psalm 37:24 Though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the Lord upholds his hand.**
- **Psalm 145:14 The LORD upholds all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.**
- **Micah 7:8a Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise.**

I think there are so many verses about falling and getting back up, because God wants to encourage us that this is part of life. We don’t have to beat ourselves up about it.

But we should beat ourselves up if we’re like the third servant and we don’t try at all.

So, let me be clear about what the third servant’s sin was and wasn’t:

- His sin was not trying and failing.
- His sin was not trying at all.

We’re all afraid of failure, which is why it’s a credit to us when we step out in the first place. Because we’re risking experiencing failure, there’s an amount of courage involved, which makes it honorable...which is also why this man’s behavior is dishonorable: he never tried.

The third servant doesn’t represent people:

- Struggling to raise their kids well.
- Striving to be better spouses.
- Or taking on a ministry in the church.

Instead, he represents people who:

- Aren’t trying to raise their kids well.
- Aren’t trying to grow as a spouse.
- And aren’t trying to do anything in the church.

Be encouraged by this...

Maybe we try to:

- Fix something...
- Open a business...
- Begin a relationship...
- Cook, write, draw, you name it...

But it doesn't work out!

We don't always hit a home run or even get on base. Sometimes, we strike out.

But there doesn't have to be anything wrong with that. This is how we learn and grow.

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Assuming the minas represent the gospel, then this is fitting...

When the third servant kept his mina under the handkerchief:

- He kept the gospel to himself.
- He took something wonderful God gave him but wouldn't share it with others.

Consider how this applies to us..

The third servant was afraid of failure, so he played it safe.

Why do we avoid sharing the Gospel?

We're afraid of failure:

- We're afraid we won't know what to say.
- We're afraid people won't respond well.
- We're afraid we'll be rejected.

So, we play it safe!

Be encouraged that when we share the gospel, but people don't respond well, that's not the failure!

- The failure is not sharing at all.
- The failure is keeping the gospel under a handkerchief.

One of the great encouragements with evangelism is:

- God doesn't hold us responsible with people's responses.
- He only holds us responsible with being faithful in the first place.

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Now look at the third servant's excuse...

Luke 19:21 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.'

The master puts a huge hole in the man's logic...

Luke 19:22 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?'

This servant made two accusations. Let's look at each of them...

First, he said he knew the master was severe.ⁱⁱⁱ

Look how the master responds...

Luke 19:22 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?’

The master told the servant he would use his own words against him, which he did. He said, “You knew I was a severe man, so why didn’t you put the money in the bank...versus under a handkerchief.”

If the servant knew the master was severe he should’ve taken his stewardship more seriously, not less seriously. Knowing this made the servant more accountable. And this brings us to lesson two...

Lesson Two: Knowing God is severe makes us more accountable.

There’s no getting around that God is severe...and guess what?

We don’t have to try to get around it! We don’t have to make excuses for God.

The master himself said he’s severe, picturing God who tells us he’s severe...

Romans 11:22 Note then the kindness and THE SEVERITY OF GOD

God tells us to take “note” that he’s severe.

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If you remember the last sermon I said unbelievers go before the Great White Throne Judgment. It is a sentencing more than a trial. But if an unbeliever could defend himself, imagine if he said something, “I didn’t serve you because I knew you were a God who judges people and sends them to hell.”

These arguments don’t work, because if people know God judges and sends people to hell, that’s even more reason they should repent and believe.

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Sometimes people say, “What kind of God would...” and then they list things that they think make God look bad:

- “What kind of God would judge people...”
- “What kind of God would send people to hell...”
- “What kind of God would punish people...”

The answer to this is, “The kind of God we should fear and serve!”

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Look at the second accusation the servant made: “You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.”

The servant didn’t like that the master tried to take what didn’t belong to him. In the servant’s estimation the master had no business claiming what he didn’t earn.

But the master replied, “You knew I [take] what I did not deposit and reap what I did not sow.”

The master didn’t feel bad about this either!

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And this is the main point of the parable: God expects a return on his investment.

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For a good comparison, think of investing our own money. We have the same expectation.

Imagine giving money to an investment manager, but he says, “You’re such a difficult investor I didn’t invest your money. Here! Take back what you gave me.”

You would be frustrated, and you might even say something like the master said: “You could have at least invested it in a savings account so that I would receive some interest!”

And this brings us to lesson three...

Lesson Three: God expects something.

Notice the master would’ve been satisfied with interest. There are two sides to this. Here’s the first side...

Because the previous servants returned tenfold and fivefold, it’s easy to think the master has high expectations:

- He’s only going to be pleased if people provide a huge return on investment.
- We better be super productive, or God will be displeased.

But the fact that he said he would be satisfied with interest shows his expectations aren’t that high.

That’s one side. The other side is, because he mentioned interest, it shows he expects something. The master’s expectations aren’t high, but he has expectations.

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The correct balance is:

- God might not expect a lot of us.
- But he expects something!

If you’re a Christian:

- You should be serving the Master, not to be saved, but because you are saved.
- If you claim to be a Christian, but you’re not doing anything for the Master – there’s no fruit or works in your life – according to James 2, your faith is dead.

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Because the servant didn’t produce anything, the master said he was wicked. I have always been surprised in this parable, and the parable of the talents, that the master says the third servant is wicked...and brings us to lesson four...

Lesson Four: People can be wicked because of what they don’t do.

Usually, we think people are wicked because of what they do. People are wicked because they:

- Murder
- Commit adultery
- Steal large amounts of money
- Ruin people’s lives

But the third servant was wicked because of what he didn’t do: he didn’t serve the master. He never used what he was given for the master’s glory.

This is an important place in Scripture showing that the sin of not doing what God wants us to do is as bad as committing sins we think make people wicked.

Here’s another way to say it:

- The third servant wasn’t wicked because of commission, or because of sins he committed.
- He was wicked because of omission, or because he omitted doing what he was supposed to do.

James 4:17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

And apparently if there are enough right things to do that we fail to do, God could even say we're wicked.

None of us do all the good God wants us to do, but if our lives are characterized by failing to do the good God wants, then we can be wicked in His eyes.

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Knowing the mina represents the gospel, I suspect one of the more common ways that we fail to do what God wants is regarding sharing it with others. We know God wants us to share the gospel, but we don't do it.

I'm not saying this is as bad as adultery, murder, drunkenness, or fornication, but in my own life this is one of the more common ways that I haven't done what God wants me to do. And maybe the same is true of you.

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Look what happens to the third servant as a result...

Luke 19:24 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!'

Reminds me of something kids would say, "They already have ten dollars!"

Well, they earned ten dollars and now they get your money for doing your job too.

Luke 19:26 '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.'

These verses teach a subtle, but important spiritual truth...and this brings us to lesson five...

Lesson Five: Use or possibly lose what God has given you.

You might recognize these words because Jesus said this, or something like it, in Matthew 13:12, Matthew 25:28-29, Luke 16:10-12, and now again in these verses. God does not waste words in Scripture. If he's going to take up space saying the same thing four times, it's for a reason.

He doesn't want us to miss the principle that we must use what he has given us, or it might be taken away. That is what happened with the unfaithful servant.

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When I was an elementary school teacher, at the beginning of each year I distributed a responsibility to each of my students: passing out papers, collecting papers, line leaders, opening the door, taking the lunch money to the office.

As the year progressed, some students showed themselves to be unfaithful. No matter how many warnings they were given, the situation didn't improve. Finally, I had to take away their responsibility and give it to a faithful student who already had a responsibility. By the end of the year, I had two extremes in the classroom: some students with many responsibilities, and others with no responsibilities because they had been taken away.

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God is looking for faithful servants:

- Those who are faithful with what they have been given will be given more.
- Those who are unfaithful with what they have been given, what they have will be taken away.

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This very well might be what Jesus had in mind when he said to the church at Philadelphia...

Revelation 3:11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

Jesus wasn't talking to unbelievers. He was talking to believers who could lose their rewards through unfaithfulness.

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Here's an example of people in scripture losing what they were given because they didn't use it...

Hebrews 4:11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to TEACH YOU AGAIN the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food.

They were taught the basic principles, but because they didn't use them, they forgot them – or lost them – and had to be taught again.

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Think of the gifts or talents God has given you. Are you using them for God's glory?

- If you are, more might be given to you.
- If you're not, you might lose what you've been given.

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Last week we skipped Luke 19:14, but let's come back to it now because it relates to the end of the parable...

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

It says "his citizens" because it is referring to the Jews who largely rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

The phrase "sent a delegation" is imagery that would be familiar to the Jews because they sent delegations to Rome protesting the rulers over them. The idea is the Jews would protest Jesus's authority over them like they protested Roman rulers earlier.

Now look at verse 27 to see what happens to these people...

Luke 19:27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'"

Notice the master said, "bring them here and slaughter them before me."

This was the common practice in the ancient world when citizens didn't want someone to become their king. When he became their king against their wishes he would have them brought in and slaughtered before him.

Let me show you how Jesus was prophesying what would happen with him and his enemies.

Turn to the right to John 19:14. We won't turn back to Luke.

In Luke 19 Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem. John 19 is a few days later. He entered Jerusalem, was betrayed, arrested, and now he's before Pilate.

John 19:14 Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He (this is Pilate) said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

Even Pilate knew Jesus was supposed to be the king of the Jews. But look how they responded...

John 19:15 They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

This is shocking, but it's exactly what Jesus preached in the parable of the minas: they would reject him as king.

The Jews despised Rome, but they despised Jesus even more. They hated having Caesar as king, but they would rather have him if it meant they could reject Jesus.

Look at verse 19...

John 19:19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

Once again an effort to identify Jesus as king. Skip to verse 21...

John 19:21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”

Even when Jesus was being crucified they didn't pity him. They rejected him so much they were mad there was an inscription that made him sound like their king.

Take your minds back to the parable of the minas. What happens to the master's enemies who reject him from ruling over them?

They're slaughtered.

Listen to these verses about the Second Coming, which is followed by the Battle of Armageddon...

Revelation 19:11 I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war....16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. 17 [An angel] said, “Come, gather for the great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men.”

This is a slaughter, just like Jesus prophesied. And this brings us to our last lesson...

Lesson Six: Believers experience God's kindness and unbelievers experience his severity.

The reason I titled this sermon, “Behold the Kindness and Severity of God,” is we've seen God's kindness to the faithful servants, and his severity to the unfaithful servant and his enemies.

The faithful servants experience the master's kindness. They were commended, put in charge of cities, and will spend eternity in heaven.

The unfaithful servant was rebuked, called wicked, and his mina was taken from him and given to someone else. And this is nothing compared to what the master's enemies experienced: they were brought before him, slaughtered, and will spend eternity in hell.

Why was it so bad for them?

The answer is back in Luke 19:14...

Luke 19:14 [They said], “We do not want this man to reign over us.”

Some translations, such as the NKJV, NASB, and ESV say “we don't want this man to reign over us,” but other translations, such as the Amplified, say we don't want this man to be our king.

This teaches us something important...

Having Jesus as Messiah means having him as king. There is no such thing as wanting Jesus to be your Savior without also wanting to have him to be your Lord.

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Let me conclude this parable with this...

Thinking of God's kindness and all he has in store for us, what more reason could we have to be good stewards as the parable encourages?

We are faithful not to be saved, but because we are saved. We are faithful not out of obligation, but out of gratefulness.

I will be up front after service, and I would consider it a privilege to meet with you.

Let's pray.

ⁱ Done:

- [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Ten Minas? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- The Stewardship of Outreach – Part I
- The Stewardship of Outreach – Part II.
- God's Goodness and Severity
- Moody
- Nelson
-

ⁱⁱ The Greek word for another is *eteros* (pronounced heteross), related to our word heterosexual, and it means another of a completely different sort, versus another of the exact same kind. For example, let's say you are eating a chocolate chip cookie. You say, "Would you bring me another cookie?" It could be another cookie, but it might not be another chocolate chip cookie. There is another word for another that means another of the exact same kind, where you would get another chocolate chip cookie.

This servant was a servant, but he wasn't like the other servants. He did not invest the money.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ironically, the master doesn't look severe, at least up to this point. He looked gracious. He rewarded the first two servants generously.