

The King is Coming! Are We Using Our God-Given Gifts!?

Luke 19:11-27 (text)

8 September 2019, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 am

(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

About six years ago, while Annette & I still lived in Foxton, there was a short time when she was sick. So, our oldest daughter, Renda, had arranged with us that she would come visit us. Renda would fly from Auckland into Palmerston North on a Monday, and I had to drive from Foxton to go pick her up at the Palmerston North airport.

So, that Monday morning, I woke up with great plans to spring-clean the spare room: wash & dry the bedsheets & duvet cover, vacuum the floor, clean the windows, and make everything ready for Renda.

Well, I was still eating my breakfast when suddenly Renda rang to ask where I then was.

It soon became clear that I had made a mistake with Renda's arrival time. I thought she was arriving at 7.30 p.m., meanwhile she had already arrived at 7.30 a.m. and was already looking for me outside the airport!

Well, I was shocked!

Part of the reasons for my shock was that *I was not ready* for my own precious daughter! I still wanted to get her room ready, but now I had to straightaway drive the 40 minutes to the airport!

My brother & sister, why am I telling you this story?

Well, to try & have you share in my shock when I discovered that I was absolutely not ready *when I was supposed to be ready!*

And here's the point: Being not ready to receive one's precious daughter is already something, but imagine what utter shock – what angst – if you & I are not ready for the Lord of Lords and King of Kings when He returns!!

You ask, "But, pastor, *how* will we be ready for Jesus' return?"

Well, by receiving Jesus, the Son of God, as your Saviour & Lord – by loving Him, and by using your God-given talents to build His kingdom there where God has placed you on this earth!

Look, is that not the main message of our text: **If you say you love King Jesus, then show that love by using your God-given talents for the furtherance of His kingdom, for look, His return is at hand!?**

Here are the three points of this sermon...

- Already but Not Yet
- Reaction to the King
- Ready for the Return of the King

Already but Not Yet

Gauging by the previous passage, Jesus is still at Jericho, and still in Zacchaeus' house.

And, of course, Jericho is near Jerusalem (only 27 km),¹ and Jesus is on His way there!

What's more, it's almost Passover – that feast which reminded the Jews of that *very first Passover*, i.e. the time when Moses led them out of slavery, out of Egypt!!

¹ Cf. among other, Hendriksen, W. 2004. Exposition of the Gospel according to Luke (In: Hendriksen, W. ed. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Book House. p.859). Google Maps puts it at 25.6km, <https://www.google.com/search?q=google+maps+distance+between+jericho+and+jerusalem&oq=google+maps+distance+between+jericho+and+jerusalem&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64.19586j0j0&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

So, the Jews' minds were spinning! I mean, has Jesus not all along said that He is the *Messiah*? And is Messiah Jesus not on His way to *Jerusalem* – city of the temple of God, city of the *Passover celebration*, city of *Roman rule* which needs to be overthrown?

So, here are some questions that were going through Jewish minds: “Is Jesus, going to bring in God’s glorious kingdom during next week’s Passover? Yes, are we, the Jews, within a few days from now, going to see how *Jesus* frees us from *slavery to the Romans* just as with that very first Passover when *Moses* freed us from *slavery to Egypt*? And is Jesus then going to make Israel strong? Is He then also going to bring about the end of the world which will mean eternal salvation for all Israel?”

Even Jesus’ *disciples* had similar thoughts! Look, is this not why the sons of Zebedee (John & James) once vied for seats on either side of King Jesus in His glory?² And is this not also why, even after our Lord’s resurrection (on the day of His ascension), His disciples were still thinking that on that very day King Jesus would *restore the kingdom to Israel*?³

Wow! My brother & sister, so many things were wrong in the minds of those Jews!

You see, Messiah Jesus is not (was never) going to save only Israel – and never only in a political sense! Instead, He was always going to be a blessing to all nations! He was always going to save all His people (of all nations) *from their sins*⁴ – not politically!!!

So, that’s why Messiah Jesus, right here in Zacchaeus’ house, is now urgently correcting the Jews’ wrong expectations re the coming of His Kingdom! And He uses a parable to tell them that the glorious coming of His Kingdom was not going to happen soon – not at that Passover, because He, Messiah, was first going to go to a far country (and stay away long)⁵ to get crowned as King. *Then* He would return, and only *then* He would bring in that glorious Kingdom!

In other words, what Jesus is telling them there in Zacchaeus’ house is that the Kingdom of God has an already-but-not-yet nature!

So, yes, on the one hand, what John the Baptist and our Lord Jesus Himself had so often preached is true, i.e. “**Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is near (at hand, has come)**!”⁶ However, on the other hand, the Kingdom of Heaven has not yet fully come, for there’s an interim period in which King Jesus is going to first get His kingdom *officially conferred upon Him*. Yes, first in line was Jesus’ love-death on the cross, then His resurrection and ascension, and then His crowning & sitting at the right hand of God the Father! Only *then* will be the return of King Jesus!

And the Jews would have understood this parable perfectly well, for it often happened in their day that a king-elect first had to travel to Rome so that the Roman Caesar would confer the kingship over Israel upon him. This happened e.g. with Herod the Great (in 40 BC) and also with his son Archelaus (in 4 BC)!⁷

So, our Lord’s parable is clear: His kingdom was not going to come in full, straight after His Jericho visit. No, there would first be a long interim period in which Messiah Jesus would go to a far “country” to have the kingship conferred upon Him.

You & I? Where do we fit into this timeframe?

Well, we’re still in that long interim period. We’re waiting for the return of King Jesus, just as He has promised!

Meanwhile, here’s a very important question: What is your relationship with the King!?

Are you (am I) like those in Jesus’ parable who rejected His rule?

What’s your/my relationship with Jesus?

² Cf. Mk 10:35-45

³ Cf. Acts 1:6 So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ;).

⁴ Cf. Mt 1:21 where the angel of the Lord says to Joseph, “**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins**” (Emphasis mine).

⁵ Mt 25:19, **Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them** (ESV).

Greek text: **μετὰ δὲ πολὺν χρόνον** ἔρχεται ὁ κύριος τῶν δούλων ἐκείνων καὶ συναίρει λόγον μετ’ αὐτῶν.

⁶ Cf. Mt 3:2 and also Mt 4:17 and Mark 1:15

⁷ Cf. e.g. Hendriksen (ibid:860), and also Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke](#) (pp. 484–490). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Well, that brings us to point 2...

Reaction to the King

My brother & sister, according to the parable of our text, there were two negative reactions to our Lord Jesus.

Firstly, there was the group which *straightaway* rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Of course, to this group belonged most of the Jewish leaders (the Sanhedrin) and most of the Jewish people! In Jesus' parable, they are the ones described by v.14, "***But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'***"

So, just as in the days when the son of Herod the Great (a son by the name Archelaus) went to Rome so that the Roman Caesar could confer onto him the kingship over the Jews – and just as many Jews travelled behind Archelaus to go tell the Caesar that they did not want him to become their king – so the majority of the Jews were now saying, "We do not want this Jesus to be our Messiah King!"

Now, whereas the Jews had good reasons as to why they didn't want *Archelaus* as their king (for he was a murderer),⁸ they had no reason at all to reject *righteous* Jesus, the Son of God, Messiah! No wonder that, about sixty years later, remembering this wholesale rejection of our Lord, the elderly Apostle John wrote (in Jn 1:11), "***He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.***"

Well, that was the first of two groups who reacted negatively to our Lord Jesus!

Here's the second group – a scary group, for they were part of our Lord Jesus' inner circle; yes, they were His servants who were close to Him!

And, in the parable, they are represented by that one servant who did not love Jesus. In fact (as v.21 says) he was *afraid*⁹ of Jesus, i.e. he did not reverence Jesus (did not have a *godly fear* of Jesus), but was *afraid* of Him; thought of Him as a harsh, strict and unfair – in other words, a total misconception of Jesus!

Yet, at least *outwardly* (as far as the human eye could see) this man was part of our Lord's inner circle!

Is Judas Iscariot an example of this man?

Yes!

And, of course, there were others like Judas who were also outwardly part of Jesus' followers, however, never inwardly or from the heart!¹⁰

Dear Wainui member, here's a scary thought: is there perhaps anyone here (among us) who also falls within this category – someone who, from the time he/she was little, has been worshipping with God's people within these four walls, yet never really belonged to Jesus – never really received Jesus as his/her Saviour & Lord? Yes, could it be that there's someone in this church who hardly ever seeks the company of Jesus – someone who hardly ever reads his/her own Bible, and hardly ever has his/her own personal devotions, and hardly ever (as 1 Cor 1:2 says) *calls upon the Name of Jesus*?¹¹

⁸ Cf. e.g. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Archelaus

⁹ ἐφοβούμεν, an Imperfect Deponent Indicative 1st Person Singular of the verb φοβέομαι, (derivative of φόβος 'fear,' 25.251) to be in a state of fearing—'to fear, to be afraid.' καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ μαθηταὶ ἔπεσαν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτῶν καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα 'when the disciples heard this, they fell face downward and were extremely afraid' Mt 17:6; καὶ μὴ φοβεῖσθε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα 'and do not fear those who are able to kill the body' Mt 10:28; ἐφοβοῦντο γὰρ τὸν λαόν, μὴ λιθασθῶσιν 'they were afraid that the people might stone them' Ac 5:26 (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 315). New York: United Bible Societies).

¹⁰ Cf. e.g. Jn 6:66, ***After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.***

¹¹ Cf. e.g. 1 Cor 1:2-3 (especially v.2) ***To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:***

³ ***Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*** (Emphasis mine).

Look, it's vitally important that you & I will have a personal relationship with Jesus – that we will receive Him with all our heart!

Why?

Well, for several reasons: first of all, how could anyone reject the love Jesus has shown for us?

How could anyone not be moved and cut to the heart when he/she hears how the Son of God suffered & was slaughtered for our sins? How could anyone not be moved to humble gratitude!?

Then, there's another reason why you & I want to be really on Jesus' side, i.e. rewards! You see, a time is coming when rewards will be given by King Jesus, and you want to be there to receive your good reward!

You ask, "When will that be?"

Well, that brings us to the last point...

The Return of the King (Rewarded by the King)

My brother & sister, within hours before our Lord Jesus' crucifixion, He promised His disciples that He was going to His Father's house to prepare a place for them; and that, when He has done that, *He will come again and will take them to Himself, that where He is they may be also.*¹²

And the parable of our text, too, tells us that, once Messiah Jesus has officially received the kingdom, He will return.

So, what good news! While Christians are going through hardship, oppression, or even persecution, they may know this one thing stands for sure: our Lord & King *will* return!

And Christ's parable describes to us what will happen at His return...

You see, whereas before that point in time, His Kingdom was in an already-but-not-yet state, then it will all be full-on – climax! Yes, then will be that moment that the disciples could not wait to see, because then not just Israel, but all God's people from all nations will then receive their King!

But at that moment, King Jesus will first be judge!

So, He will call all His servants to whom He has given talents/minas (God-given gifts) to see how they have used & multiplied these gifts in service of His kingdom!

Now, when we compare our text with its parallel in Mt 25,¹³ then we see that, whereas, in our text, the servants each got a gift of equal value (one mina),¹⁴ in the Mt 25 parable, they were given gifts of differing value – one received *five* talents, another *two*, and another *one* talent!¹⁵

Does this mean that Mt 25 and Lk 19 are at odds with one another?

No!

Because, each Christian gets at least one gift with which to do business – i.e. to evangelise (to, through their word & example, bring sinners to Jesus).¹⁶

But on top of this one gift which every Christian received, they also received different gifts, according to their personalities, to help them in the exact manner that they will further the coming of God's kingdom...

¹² Cf. Jn 14:1-3, "**Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**"

¹³ Cf. Mt 25:14-30

¹⁴ In Greek, *mina* (μνᾶ): a Greek monetary unit worth one hundred denarii—'a quantity of money, one hundred denarii.' καλέσας δὲ δέκα δούλους ἑαυτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς δέκα μνᾶς 'he called his ten servants and gave each of them one thousand denarii' Lk 19:13 (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 62). New York: United Bible Societies). Also cf. Hendriksen (ibid:860) who says, "...it amounted to the standard earnings which the ordinary laborer would receive for 100 days of actual work..."

¹⁵ In Greek, *talanton* (τάλαντον) a Greek monetary unit (also a unit of weight) with a value which fluctuated, depending upon the particular monetary system which prevailed at a particular period of time (a silver talent was worth approximately six thousand denarii with gold talents worth at least thirty times that much)—'talent'... (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 62). New York: United Bible Societies).

¹⁶ Cf. Hendriksen (ibid:860)

What are these?

Well, in quite a few places the Bible gives us examples of what these gifts could be. Here is the list given in Rm 12:6-8:¹⁷

- prophecy,
- practical service (diaconal),
- teaching,
- exhorting,
- contributing to the material needs of others,
- leadership (overseers or elders),
- and showing mercy with compassion and empathy, e.g. to the sick, or dying, or grieving – and to do this with cheerfulness!

My brother & sister, I think this list just about covers every congregation member from the pastor & elders and deacons, to the committee of administration, to the individual who is in a position to give with generosity, to the one who comforts or cares with a meal or shows hospitality or looks after the children in the creche!

Well, according to the parable of our text, this is what will happen at the return of King Jesus... He will call each of His servants/followers to see how they have used their gifts for the furtherance of His kingdom.

And blessed are you & I, when the Lord praises us and rewards us according to what we have done¹⁸ in/for His kingdom.

What do we mean with the word “reward”? Do we mean that Christians can earn their salvation? No, definitely not, for the Bible is clear on that!

So, what does “reward” then refer to?

Well, that, besides eternal salvation which each Christian will only have because of what Christ has done for us, each Christian will receive a reward for kingdom service done here on earth! And the reward he/she will get means more joyful service in heaven, in the eternal Kingdom of King Jesus.¹⁹

But woe to you & me if we have all our life faked our allegiance to Jesus and did absolutely nothing for His kingdom.

You see, then we will be like the servant who *did* receive a mina, but did nothing with that to further the Kingdom of God.

And you know what? After that person’s mina was taken off him and given to the servant who worked well, that servant received the same lot as those who never were of King Jesus²⁰ – those who, from the start, rejected Him and did not want Him to be their king! Verse 27 describes their lot: ***“But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.”***

Is this harsh... unfair?

No! Not when compared to the great love Sovereign King Jesus displayed on the cross – a love which these rejecters have despised & trampled upon!

¹⁷ Rm 12:6-8, ***Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; ⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness*** (Emphasis mine).

¹⁸ Cf. e.g. Mt 16:27, ***“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.”*** Also cf. Rv 22:12, ***“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.”***

¹⁹ Cf. Lk 19:17-19, ***“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 Cf. Lk 12:46, ***“...the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and put him with the unfaithful”*** (Emphasis mine).

Perhaps someone asks, “Pastor, are you using scare technique and panic to force us into serving Jesus?”

The answer is: “Not at all!” “You see, Jesus never *forces* anyone against his/her will, to use their talents/minas to serve Him!” “You see, if you were forced against your will, then you might end up *serving* King Jesus alright, but would your heart-attitude then be any different to that of the servant who hid his mina in a handkerchief!?”

So, rather, *here’s the way to serve – the only way; the way loved by King Jesus...* and that is: look at Jesus’ great love for you! Look how He willingly & self-sacrificially gave His life for you!

Then, being moved to bits (yes, cut to the heart), come and now willingly & humbly serve Him without even thinking of your reward!²¹

I pray that you & I will be ready for King Jesus’ return and that awe and thankful service will be your/my heart attitude!

AMEN (2695 words excluding footnotes)

²¹ Cf. Lk 17:7-10 (especially v.10), “***Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? ⁸ Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? ⁹ Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰ So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’*” (Emphasis mine).**