

Faithfulness

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[0 : 00] Today's scripture reading comes from Luke, chapter 19, verses 10 to 27. Please follow along in your bulletin as I read. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable. Because he was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. So he said, So that he might know what business they had done.

The first appeared, saying, Master, your mina has made ten minas more. And he said to him, Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing. You are to be in authority over ten cities.

The second came, saying, Your mina, master, has made five minas. And he said to him also, And you are to be over five cities. Another came, saying, Master, here is your mina, Which I kept put away in a handkerchief, For I was afraid of you, Because you are an exacting man.

You take up what you did not lay down, And reap what you did not sow. He said to him, By your own words I will judge you, You worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, Taking up what I did not lay down, And reaping what I did not sow?

[1 : 45] Then why did you not put my money in the bank? And having come, I would have collected it with interest. Then he said to the bystanders, Take the mina away from him, And give it to the one who has the ten minas.

And they said to him, Master, he has ten minas already. I tell you that to everyone who has, More shall be given. But from the one who does not have, Even what he does have shall be taken away. But these enemies of mine, And who did not want me to reign over them, Bring them here, And slay them in my presence. This is the reading of God's word. Thank you, Taylor.

That was excellent reading Of the passage today. How are you guys doing? Oh, come on. That's terrible.

I've been gone for four weeks, And that's all I get is good. How are you guys doing? Good? Great. Great. Great. That's good. You know, it's great to be back.

[2 : 54] And as you can tell, We stayed out a little in the sun in the States. It was very hot where we were. For my Australian friends, Yes, I wore sunscreen. I get nagged about that all the time.

But then I was informed that anything below 50 is just suntanning oil. So it has to be a 50 or above for it to count in Australia. So I wasn't near the 50 mark, But we had sunscreen on.

We had a great time. And so it's good to be back. And, But when I looked at the passage that I have to preach on today, I was like, Whoa! Wow, what a fun passage to come back to.

But that's one of the things we love about as we go through the gospel of Luke. We don't, Can't skip passages. We have to follow them the way that God spoke them to the authors.

And so we're going to kind of attempt to look at this and see what God can teach us today. As I come up here, If you hadn't seen me in four weeks, You've never seen me before.

[3 : 57] My name is Tobin. I'm one of the pastors here. And I just want to start off by saying that I will probably offend you in this sermon. Okay? So I just, And I'll probably bother you in this sermon.

Because I, I've bothered myself. Reading this sermon and thinking about it. And so we're on this journey in the gospel of Luke for the last two years. Some of you are wondering when this is going to end.

Today, We are in the last week of Jesus' life. Okay? So he is heading towards Jerusalem. And it's going to end one week from now. And so as we look at what he has to tell us in this journey, I think that there's a lot of things we can, Can apply to our life.

And a lot of questions. And so what, What my intentions are is, We're going to look at this passage really quickly. I'm going to draw out some points that I have been struggling with in my life. I'm going to ask you some questions. And then we're going to lead right into a communion time.

I'm going to lead you in communion. We're going to pray. And then we're going to dismiss everybody. There's going to be no announcements. There's no, If you want to stay here and spend some time praying, That the worship team will be up here and they'll play some music.

[5 : 06] If you need somebody to pray with you, There'll be elders and leaders and small group leaders around. Grab us. If you're ready just to go and go eat, Please be mindful of the people who are staying here.

And they're going to be praying. And just walk out quietly and gather out back and get a Diet Coke. If you need to. But that's kind of where we're heading here. Okay. Is that good? So we're going to try something new here.

So Jesus is in Jericho. Last time we talked, We looked at this story of Zacchaeus, Who was a tax collector. He was a chief tax collector. And salvation came to his house.

And then we get to this passage in Luke 19, 10 and 11 to 27. And we see right away why Jesus puts it there. It's in verse 11. If you follow it.

So Jericho is about 17 miles east of Jerusalem. The Passover is coming. Jesus is being followed by about 500 people. Some of the authors, Extra Biblical authors, Josephus and other people say that it's like a rock concert.

[6 : 08] They're all following Jesus. They're going to Jerusalem. Because they believe that at the Passover time, The king, who is Jesus, Is going to make himself known. And everything will be made right.

When we talk about the Bible, We talk in segments of time. We talk about there's a creation, Where God creates everything. There's a fall, Where our ancestors made poor choices. They only had to obey one rule.

They couldn't do that. And because of their disobedience, Corruption spread throughout the whole creation. Then we have this story of redemption, Where the king comes back, And he buys back his people.

He buys back creation. And he makes all things new. And then we have this story of restoration, Where things are made new when the king comes. And in the Jewish mind, Redemption and restoration were one. And so they're thinking, If Jesus is going to come back, He's going to make himself known king.

He's going to, It's going to be like apocalypse, Or it's going to be like opening the sacred cradle, And God's wrath is going to come out, And all the enemies are going to melt, And all of God's people are going to be there, And they're going to rule, And it's going to be amen, And that's the end of time.

[7 : 14] So that's what they're thinking here. And Jesus tells them that it's not like that. We hear a lot in the Bible, Where it says stuff like, There's a king, And there's a kingdom, But it's now, But it's not yet.

There's this hope, And there's grace, And it's now, But it's not fully seen. That we still walk in darkness, Even though we see glimpses of these things. But to the people on Jesus' day, They didn't see that.

They just thought that when Jesus came, Everything, Messiah came, Everything was going to be made right. And so they just kind of listened to Him. I mean, the story we're going to look at today, He said over and over and over.

And the people still don't understand it. They still kind of just nod their head, Go, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. Great, go Jesus. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, yeah, yeah. And they don't understand anything that He's saying. Because in their worldview, In their grid, They just can't comprehend That there's not going to be a king Who comes and makes everything right immediately.

And so they just nod and go, Okay, yeah, yeah, okay. Wives, Your husbands do that sometimes, right? I'm guilty of that. I was on Skype last night with Christina, And she was using her 45,000 words that day To catch me up on what was going on in our family.

[8 : 30] And most guys' brains can only handle about 5,000 words. And there got to a point in the Skype session Where I'm like, Yeah, yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And if she had said, And so my mother-in-law is going to come live with us for five years, I would be like, Yeah,

yeah, yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh.

So just realize that there's something in guys' brains, But there's something in every one of our brains that does that. There was a famous president in America, FDR, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He felt like that. He felt like that whatever he said, No one really listened. And he felt like all these state dinners were worthless and useless Because he would have these deep conversations And no one would ever listen to what he was going to say.

So he devised a plan. His next heads of state dinner, In the line, As people gave and repected him and asked him, How are you doing, Mr. President? He was going to say with a big smile, I'm doing very good.

I killed my mother-in-law last night. And he was going to see what people's reactions were. And so the people started coming up there, And they said, How are you doing, Mr. President? He goes, I'm doing very good. I killed my mother-in-law last night.

[9 : 34] And the reactions were as he expected. Oh, that's really good. We're so proud of you. We're praying for you. We think you're doing a great job. You're doing absolutely fine.

Just keep it in there. Keep going. Person after person. How are you doing, Mr. President? I did very well. I killed my mother-in-law last night. The story goes that finally, The Bolivian president came up there.

And he shook his hand. He said, How are you doing, Mr. President? And he goes, I'm doing very well. I killed my mother-in-law last night. And the Bolivian president was in shock. And it was clear to FDR that he heard for the first time what 40 people did not hear.

And the Bolivian president looked at him up and down, kind of nervous. And he said, Well, Mr. President, I suppose she deserved it. It's a true story.

Sometimes we talk and we do things and we don't listen to what we're saying. And it's true with the story today. We're going to talk about a story that you've heard over and over and over again.

[10 : 38] We talk about it all the time at Watermark. There's nothing new under the sun. And for most of us, we just kind of nod and go, Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, yeah. That's great. Good, good. And we don't let it sink in.

But my prayer is that today as we spend time in communion and think about why this is the last parable Jesus told his disciples. What is so important about this parable?

That this is the last thing he's going to tell them before they go to Jerusalem. This is the last major teaching point for them. Why is he teaching this thing to them? And what do we need to learn from it?

And again, I think that you, my prayer is that you will be challenged. I have been challenged. My prayer is that you would be offended. If you come to church and the things that we say from God's word don't challenge you or offend you or make you angry at us or the teachers or at God, then you're not listening to what God's word says.

Because there are some very hard things in it. And most of us just kind of go, uh-huh, yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh, yeah, okay, okay, let's go eat. Me included.

[11 : 50] Verse 11. They were listening to these things and Jesus went on to tell them a story. They're going to Jerusalem. So he tells the story because they're going to Jerusalem and they suppose, they think, that the kingdom of God is going to come.

And it's going to appear immediately. So they think that when Jesus comes, he's going to be the Messiah. And he is the Messiah. And he's going to change everything but what he wants to try to tell them that it's not like that. It's going to be different.

That my kingdom is going to be now but it's not fully now. It's going to be later too. And that I'm going to be the king and I'm always the king but one day I'm going to come back and receive this kingdom. He goes on and he says, there was a noble man who went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then return.

So there's this rich, noble, aristocratic man and he has been given a kingship and he needs to go away to this other place to receive the scepter.

And then he'll return to rule. And in verse 13 when he does that, he calls ten of his slaves. The word there, slave, is doulos. It's a special word for slaves. It means someone who's a slave voluntarily.

[12 : 51] I mean slaves are not like what we think today. A lot of times he became a slave because your city got captured. A lot of times he became a slave because you owed a debt to somebody. And then after five years you paid that debt off.

If your master was so good to you, you could become a doulos. You would go to your master and say, you are kind and you are gentle and I want to be your servant forever. And the master would take your ear to the doorpost of the house.

He'd put an earring in it. And that basically signified that you are his servant and you have done it. You've chosen to do it. You've become a special servant because you love your master so much. And so this guy calls his ten servants and he gives each of them a mina, as Taylor said so well. It's basically the equivalent of three months salary. And he says in the passage when he gives it to them, he basically says to them, do business with this.

And in Greek it says, I will return. So he calls his ten servants together. He gives them three months of salary. And he says, do business with this. The Greek word is very specific.

[13:54] It says pragmitsa. And it basically means to make known, to bring forth fruit, to set up a shingle, to occupy. And so he's calling his servants there. He's given these mina, this talent, this resource.

And he says, I'm going away to get a kingdom. I want you to take this and use it to make my name great. I want you to take it. I want you to take it and use it to expend and extend my kingdom and bear fruit.

And when I come back, I'll ask you how you did. Verse 14. Verse 14. But the citizens of that land hated him. And they sent a delegation after him saying, we do not want this man to reign over us. So you have a master. You have the doulos who love him. And you have the citizens who hate him. Now, the minute Jesus told this story, everyone in the audience would have known exactly what he was talking about.

Because this is actually a true story. It happened twice in Jesus' lifetime. Well, once before Jesus' lifetime and once during Jesus' lifetime. In 40 BC, Herod the Great, who's the Edomite, an enemy of the Israeli people, the Jewish people.

[15:04] He became king. And to receive his kingship, he had to go to Rome and get his official title put on him. Then when Herod the Great died, his son Archelaus in 4 BC did the same thing.

Now, Archelaus was an incredibly, and Herod was also incredibly cruel, incredibly bad. He was a tyrant. And no one wanted him to be king. And so historians tell us that when he went to Rome to receive his kingship, the Jewish people sent 50 of their leaders after him to plead before Caesar not to make this man their king.

So everybody hearing Jesus' parable would have automatically associated it with what had happened historically. Well, it didn't happen for Archelaus. Caesar listened to the people, and so he only got one-fourth of the kingship.

His brothers got the rest of the kingship. And so he comes back, and he's angry with everybody. So he says the citizens hated him, and after the delegation, they said, what shall we do?

So what do we know? There's a king. He's about to receive a kingship. He gives money or stewardship or resources to his helpers and says, make my name great, put up shot, expand my world, expand the kingdom so everybody knows it.

[16:20] And everybody around him, all the other citizens of the land, hated him. You got that? Okay. Question. Why did the king give the resources to the stewards?

Think about it. He's going to be king. Everything is going to be his. When he comes back, he can do anything he wants.

Why did God give you and I resources? Why did he give us talents? Why did he give us money? Why did he give us knowledge? Why did he give us families? Why did he give us spouses? Why did he give us friends? Why did he give us all these things? Why did the ruler give all of these things to his servants?

Because it was going to be his anyway when he came back. What's the answer? Anyone? It's a test.

[17:42] It's a test. The ruler, God, the rich man, the noble man, he gave his servants these minas, these talents, all of these things to test them.

To see if they would pragmitsai. To see if they would trust him. To see if they believed in him. To see if they believed that he was good and that he was going to come back and that everything he had was theirs. To see if they were willing to sacrifice everything.

Because one day the king was going to come back and when the king came back, he was going to make everything right. I mean, he was going to see if they really believed what he said. Did they

really believe that when he came back that they would rule with him?
Did they really believe that everything that he was giving them right now was nothing? Compared to what they were going to get when the king returned?

He's testing them. He wants to see if they're going to do business. He wants to see if they're going to be faithful. He wants to see if they're going to believe that God is good. And that he gave us all these things so that we can make his name great.

[18:57] And bring forth spiritual fruit. Jesus says there's three types of people who receive the gifts. There's three reactions to the people. There's three ways that we, you and I, respond. The first way is found in verses 15 through 19.

And there are these two servants. These two servants, he calls them faithful servants. In Greek he actually says they're generous. They're generous, they're good, and they're faithful. And these first two servants come and they basically, and you notice what they say?

Look at what they said. Verse 16. It first appeared and he said, Master, your mina, your mina has made ten more.

He doesn't say, I've been so talented. I was so good. I was able to use all these things. I was so skillful. I was able to make this, make it to a profit of a thousand percent. He says, your mina has made it.

Where does the power come from? Does it come from our ability? It comes from God's gift.

[20:02] God's gift. So he said to that first one, well done, good slave, good doulos, because you have been faithful in a very little thing. Very little thing.

All the resources, everything that he's given them, all the things that we have now, our money, our houses, our skills, our jobs, our families, all of these things are minas to us, the Bible says.

And the master says that they're very little compared to what he wants to give us. But he's only going to give faithful servants.

And so he goes on and he says, because you've been faithful in a little thing, verse 17, I will give you authority over ten cities. Think about that. So he goes from being a slave to a ruler.

He goes from having a little things to having the wealth of ten cities. He goes from getting three months' salary. And actually it says that he keeps the three-month salary and he keeps the profit.

[21:03] The master doesn't take that away from him. The master just goes, wow, great job. And he gives them more. In the same way the Bible says that you and I will have that same thing happen to us.

That if God comes again as a ruler and he sees that we've been faithful with everything that he's given us, if he sees that we've been responsible, if he sees that we've been generous, if he sees that we've been good, that what we have now is nothing compared to what he wants to give us.

Do you understand that? I don't. I have a hard time sometimes. Because sometimes I just think here and now is all there really is. What the passage says is that here and now is a test.

To see if we're going to believe that God is good and if we can trust him. And if we believe that he's good and that we can trust him, that he's going to come back and that one day we're going to rule with him, then no matter what we sacrifice here and now, it's nothing.

It's nothing. Compared to what the ruler wants to give us when he comes back. Then we have a second guy who's also faithful and he came and he said, your mina master has given five minas.

[22:21] And he said to him also, you are over five cities. Same reaction, same response. The mina did it. The guy basically just trusted God to be good.

Trusted God. Whatever he gave him, I'm going to give this to you and you're going to use it. You're going to make your name great. You're going to do great things in your kingdom. And I'm going to trust you. Whatever that is in my life, whatever those resources are, they're mine, but they're not mine.

They're yours and you gave me them so that I can use them. The passage says that the master is incredibly generous. I mean, he gives all these things to everybody.

They don't deserve it. They don't earn it. He doesn't watch over their shoulder to see how they're doing it. He just has one request. Whatever you do with it, pragmitsa. Make my name great. Expand the kingdom.

Show people Jesus. Do things that are going to open up people's ears to the gospel. It's this message, and the message is what changes people. Whatever you do with the resources, just do it, but make sure that people hear.

[23 : 19] And so the passage says over and over that the master is incredibly generous and incredibly good, and he's just bestowing all these things on his servants. Then the second type of servant comes.

Verse 20, it says, another came. In Greek, it's not a good word. It basically means another of a different type. A wicked one. A selfish one.

An evil one. And this other one came, and he basically said, Master, here is your mina, which I have kept away in a handkerchief. In Greek, the word actually is snot cloth or sweat cloth.

So the guy's been, and he's had this mina in it the whole time. And he's mina in it the whole time.

And then the master comes back, and he goes, here's your mina. He's a different type of servant.

He makes an excuse for himself. I was afraid of you because you weren't exactly a man. You take up what you did not lay down, and you reap what you did not sow. Does he know the master? Is the master like that?

[24 : 36] According to this passage, no. Because the master is incredibly generous. He's incredibly good. He gives us all of these things.

He allows us to use them the way he wants, and that when we come back, and if we trust him, and we believe in him, he's going to give us something so amazing. I don't know what you guys think about heaven. I mean, as a guy, what I hear about heaven in churches is not very attractive to me. Sitting on a cloud, playing harps, and just kind of doing that forever. I mean, I have a hard time singing anyway, but doing it forever? I just, but the Bible doesn't say that's what heaven's going to be like.

The Bible says heaven's going to be like a new heaven and a new earth. It's going to be, you're going to come. You're going to have responsibilities. You're going to rule with God over his creation. You're going to be judged by how faithful you are right now.

And, you know, I think of like, you know, it'd be like you do your job performance review this year, and the guy says, you've been amazing. You've been great. You've, you've been overseeing \$50 million, and that's, you've been our best employee.

[25 : 42] You are, it's incredible. Next year, we're going to give you 20. What would you think? You think, that's, that's not a reward.

That's a punishment. Next year, you can just rest. You can go on vacation. Well, sometimes that might be a reward for part of a time.

But he says here, that's not what heaven's going to be like. And so that when we're faithful and we do good, God, it comes back and he rewards us for those things. He gives us responsibilities. He doesn't necessarily give us a vacation, but he gives us more responsibility.

And this servant, this different type of servant, this servant who didn't know the master, this selfish servant, this one who hung out with Jesus in his crowd.

He was on the journey for three years. Whenever the two by two went out, he went out with them. He was actually the money counter of the disciples.

[26 : 46] So whenever I looked at him, they would say, surely he is a follower of Jesus. But when Jesus didn't give Judas what he wanted, the passage says that Judas betrayed Christ for 30 pieces of silver.

Because Judas hung around the master, but he didn't really know the master. He didn't have a relationship with the master. He just wanted to use the master. Jesus says that some of us are like that.

That we come to church. We're involved in activities. We are pastors and elders, small group leaders.

We count the money like Judas did. We're introducing people to the church. But when the master comes back, it's going to be clear that we didn't really know him.

We didn't have a relationship with him. We just wanted things from him. And the master's reaction is very, very, very strong to the servant here.

[28 : 05] He says in verse 22, by your own words, I will judge you. You are a worthless slave. Did you know that I'm an exacting man, taking up what I didn't lay down and reaping what I did not? So that's not true.

But that's what the slave thinks. And so Jesus says, okay, let's play that game. If you think God is really like that, well, what if God is really like that? If you really believed that he was like that, the master was that hard, you would be working like a madman before he came back because you

knew that he would expect something of you.

So he says, by your own words, I'm going to judge you, you worthless slave. Did you not know that I'm an exacting man? Then why did you not put the money in the bank instead of your snot cloth? And having come, I would have collected interest. And then he said to the bystanders, take this mina away from him and give it to the one who has 10 minas. And they said to him, master, he already has 10 minas. And in verse 26, he says, I tell you to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does not have, shall be taken away. Now let's deal with these enemies, the third people. But these enemies of mine who did not want me to be lord over them, in Greek, to reign over them, bring them here, let me slay them in my presence.

[29 : 27] The end. What does this passage mean for us today? What does it mean for me?

What is Jesus trying to teach us? Because the Bible says the story is the same for these people as it is for you and me. We have a king who went far away to a kingdom.

He went as far as you could go. He went to heaven to receive his kingdom from the Lord. And when he left, he left his people gifts and talents and minas, the word of God, the gospel.

And he said to us, do business for me while I'm gone. Make my name great. Bear fruit. Do things that will make people look at the master and go, wow, he's amazing.

He's trusted us with family and relationships. He's trusted us with money. He's trusted us with jobs. He's trusted us with house.

[30 : 34] Everything, everything that we have, everything, you list out all your assets, everything that you are, everything that's about you, all of these, the Bible says, is a gift from God. And it's a gift to you because God loves you, but he also wants to test and see if you believe him.

Do you really believe that he's good? Do you really believe that he's coming back? All of these things are going to be seen by our hands, not necessarily by our words because sometimes our words are cheap, but our hands show these things.

So what does it mean to be faithful? To be faithful means you take everything that God's given us, our health, our mind, our body, our ability, our family, our time, our money, everything that he's given us, and we realize that it's a gift from him.

We realize that everything that he's given us, he calls us to bear fruit in it. So when God gave me Christina, when the king comes back, he's going to ask me, what did I do with Christina as a fellow follower of Christ?

Did I encourage her in her walk with the Lord? Was I good to her? Is she better off now than when I first met her? Am I serving her?

[31 : 58] Do people see from the relationship that we have together an amazing God who's full of grace and mercy and goodness in our life? Do people see that?

When God comes back, he's going to ask the wife, I've given you your husband. How have you treated him? Do you realize that it's this precious gift, this thing that you didn't deserve, you didn't work for, you don't earn it.

I gave it to you. And I ask you to use it, to help it flourish, to make it grow in the kingdom. Did you do that?

Were you responsible with those things? I gave you your kids. Were you a good parent? Did you point them to Christ?

Did people looking at your family realize that this is what the kingdom of God is like? I gave you your friends. Did you use your friends? Or did you serve your friends?

[33 : 04] Did you help them walk closer to God? Or did you hurt them? I gave you your money. It's not your money.

It's God's money. How did you use that money? When the king comes back and he looks at our bank books and he compares how we used our money to how he wanted us to use our money or how we could have used our money to make his name great, will we be embarrassed?

Or will we be happy and proud and glad? God. The faithful servant realizes that God is good and he's generous and he's given everything to us and we're in this journey together as a church learning what it means to use those things and to help those things flourish.

And we need each other. We need accountability. We need people speaking into our lives. We need people to look at our lives and say, hey, you need help here or you need help there or how are you doing there? You're doing amazing here. God's really honored by what's going on. But all of

these things, the faithful servant realizes that they're gifts from God and that one day he's going to return.

He's going to look at all those things and he's going to give us a reward compared to how we use those things. Then there's the unfaithful servant. They've come to church.

[34 : 21] They've been involved in the community. They've basically been connected to the church. The scripture's really clear. It's basically, they're talking about Judas and there's a lot of Old Testament stories.

And so the person who comes in, they like the fellowship. They like the community. They like to be a part of God's family. And so they sit here and they're a part of God's family. They do all these things. Most of the time, their focus is on themselves.

They don't want to really be responsible. They're just a different type of servant. If you really look at their heart, you see that their actions are focused more on themselves.

They don't really understand the master. And when you ask them, why aren't you doing some of these things because God's called us to do these things, they say, yeah, but you know, God is kind of, he's kind of tough. I mean, if God were nicer, he would let me do some of these things because I need to do these things because that's just how I'm made and it's what I need.

And the faithless servant doesn't realize God's graciousness and they call God harsh and they make excuses and they're more worried about their kingdom than God's kingdom.

[35 : 34] The passage says that when they come, they will be separated from the kingdom of God. Everything will be taken away and they'll be kind of pushed out.

We realize that they weren't really followers in the first place. They just kind of hung out and they thought it was cool and it was neat, but they didn't have a relationship with God. They didn't love Christ they didn't use the resources and all of these things God is looking at and seeing what do we do with our hands and how did we use the resources that he's given us.

The story says, the Bible says, that everything is from God. Everything that he's given us is a gift. He's graciously allowed us to use it. He doesn't ask hardly anything from us for it.

All he's saying is, I want you to do one thing. I want you to do pragmitsa. I want you to make my kingdom flourish. Whatever you're doing, I want you to make people see that I'm great. I want you to let people hear the gospel because it changes lives.

It's the power of salvation. So when people hear God's word being proclaimed, they're changed. And so whatever you do with all these resources I'm giving you, please make sure that you allow people to hear the gospel if you want to be faithful.

[36 : 49] It's not a fun message, is it? It's not a sexy message where you say, ooh, good, that's great.

God's going to give me a Rolex if I follow him and everything's great and it's going to be perfect. But the message is that you and I are sent out into a world and the world hates God.

And if the world hated Christ and they hated him so much that they crucified him, we shouldn't be surprised when people hate us. And the question is, what are we going to do?

Are we going to act out and serve amongst the hard and difficult times and be found faithful? Or are we going to say, no, this is not convenient, it's too difficult, I don't want to do it.

And surely God meant something else. Maybe I can pragmitsai another way instead of giving up these things that I like to cling to.

[37 : 50] Here's some questions I've been asking myself, so I'm not just asking you. What does it look like for us to be faithful to God? What does it look like for you to be faithful to God and do business for him right now?

Do you think about those things? Now, if you're not thinking about those things, I'm not saying that you're not a Christian. But I am saying, if you consider yourself a Christian and you're not thinking about those things, that should be like a massive red flag.

You should be asking yourself some questions, well, why doesn't that bother me that I'm not using any of these resources towards God's kingdom, but I'm using all these resources towards my kingdom? Because the Bible says really clearly that we are to make his name great, to be generous, to be kind, and to use everything that he's given us.

All the minas are for him. How do I react when I read a Bible passage like today where I hear a tough sermon? Do I honestly examine my life?

Or am I sitting there going, yeah, yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh, okay, yeah, mother-in-law, okay, yeah, great, yeah, uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. Do I really examine my life?

[39 : 13] Do I seek to live a holy life? Do I seek to live a life that's pleasing to God? Or do I say, yeah, yeah, I know that's, but you know, that's just church stuff, and God and I, we have this special agreement, and he just allows me to do whatever I want, and in the end, it's all gonna be okay because he's gonna come back, and we're really close, and you're laughing, but I've had people tell me that over and over and over.

Now, if you've said that, I'm not saying that you're not a Christian, but I am saying you need to be very careful because Scripture is really clear that when the Master comes back, he's going to expect certain things from his children, and if we're not about pragmitesizing, if we're not about making his name great, then we're being disobedient to what he's called us to do, and we're losing out on the reward that he wants to give us for eternity.

You ever thought that? I know it's gonna sound weird, but I do weird things sometimes, but I think, what if everything we have right now, if we're not good stewards of it, we get the exact opposite in heaven forever?

So what if we have this amazing house, but we never use it for God's kingdom, we never invite people into it, we never tell people about Christ, we never gather fellowship, we never do community, we just have this amazing house, and we like it because it's our amazing house. And then when the judge comes back, the king comes back, and he says, hey, you had your amazing house there, here's this little cubicle I'm gonna give you for eternity. What if that's reality? [40 : 54] The Bible says that is. You maybe never heard this message before, but if you're a child of God, God expects certain things of us as we walk with him.

And the biggest thing is to take that mina, that gospel, that message, that resource he's given us, and to use it for his glory, to bear fruit. Because if we don't, then he's going to take it away. Where do I focus mostly as I go through my day? Am I focused on myself? Or am I focused on God? Or other people?

Am I the hero of my story? I mean, every time I talk about things and things go on, is it me who comes to the rescue? Is it me who does the right things? Is it me who fixes everything? Is it me who knows how to get things done? Is it me who should be listened to? Is it me? Are we the heroes of our story? The Bible says that we're servants.

[42 : 05] And God's the hero of our story. Now I'm not saying if you're always the hero that you don't know God, but I am saying that if you're always the hero, that should be an amazing red flag that's sticking up before you because God is the only hero in Scripture.

And he's called us to be faithful. One last question. When I see my sin, am I sad? When I sin, and yes, as a pastor, I sin.

I probably sin more than all the rest of you in here. When I see that, does that make me sad? Do I understand how that affects God?

Or do I just go, well, yeah, you know, God and I have a special agreement. It's okay. It's not going to affect anybody. It's okay. Do I plan out sin? Okay, my boss is not going to be here, so if he's not here, I can do all these things and not worry about it.

No, I'm not supposed to do that, but that's okay. My wife's not going to be here or my husband's not going to be here. Well, they're not here. I can do all these things. I can plan these things out and I'll be okay in the end. Okay, no one's looking, so if no one's looking, I can do these things and it's okay.

[43 : 12] Do I plan out sin? 1 John 4 says, no one who's in the fellowship of God habitually sins. Am I habitually sinning?

Or do I just stumble into sin? It finds me as a lion's crashing out my door. There's a big difference there. Now, if you are planning out your sin, I'm not saying that you're not a children of God, but I am saying that you need to be really careful because God wants something from us and it's so much different than that and he expects something from us.

How are we doing? The passage says that there are no neutral people in God's kingdom. That each one of us, we're either the faithful, we're the worthless, or we're the hostile. Which one are you? Now, when I hear this and I think that I start going, well, I'm over here and I'm right on this line, so I'm kind of like 85% faithful and like 15% worthless, so I just want to stop that for a second.

What if we're all worthless? What if the king came back tomorrow and he looked down at our money and he said, worthless.

[44 : 41] What if the king came back tomorrow and he looked down at how we treated people in our lives and he said, worthless. What if the king looked at how we used our resources and our family and how we treated our husbands and our wives and he said, worthless.

The amazing thing about this story is the story doesn't end here because even though he says, get these people and slay them in my presence, it hasn't happened yet. I mean, if that had happened one day before I came to Christ and I would have been worthless and I would have been lost. But the passage says that the master continually seeks out his servants. He continually shows them how gracious he is. He continually shows them how kind he is. He continually shows them how much he loves them and he's begging us to trust him and to walk with him and allow him to be God in our life.

And so our action point for here today is I just want you to look at a couple things in your life. Whatever that is, as we pray, we're about to enter into communion now. As we enter into communion and the stewards come forward and the worship team comes up right now, I just want you to come before the Lord and spend a couple minutes thinking about your life and the meanness that God has given you and assume that you are worthless in every one of those areas and ask the Lord, what does it look like for me to change this year?

Now when I did that, I put out a list of 50 things because I needed to change 50 things, but maybe you just pick two things and you ask God, okay, my spouse, I've been a worthless spouse.

[46 : 31] How do I become better? The first thing you realize is it's not about doing and doing and doing because you will never do enough. The first thing you realize is that it's about being.

That Christ has already done everything for us on the cross. And for us as his children, it's understanding what that means in our life and surrendering those things to him.

All these resources that God's given us. I'm just going to pick something. My watch collection of five watches. How is that helping the kingdom of God being pushed out to all the world?

If God were to come back and go to the lake house and Christina's house and he found my comic book collection of 5,000 comic books that I've kept because I want to keep them because I want my sons to read them and I thought they were cool and my dad collected them.

And it might be a great thing and God might be okay with it. But the question I have to ask myself is, is that resource which God has given me being used for his kingdom?

[47 : 52] Or can I be using it a different way? I don't know what God's going to tell you to think about, but my prayer is as we go into communion that you would ask him, what are the things that he's given you as his child and how does he want you to use those going forward?

We talk a lot about on a journey. We're not saying we're all there, we're never going to be there until we get to heaven, but what this passage says is what is the next step? Because the master's going to come back and he's going to ask us how we do with the minas that he's given us.

My prayer is that you'd be uncomfortable. My prayer is I offended you. I don't know if I can pray that. I pray that you would be greatly disturbed by God's word and not by my mannerisms, my words.

And that you would use this time and this week to ask God, what does it mean to come before him? When we think about communion, we realize that in one week from now, Christ is going to go to Jerusalem.

He's going to be amongst the angry people. 500 people are following him right now. When he refuses to make the kingdom come, everyone will forsake him.

[49 : 14] He had a movement of 500 people and one week he's going to have a movement of nothing. He's going to be crucified and beaten and die on a cross all by himself. And the passage says that he does that because he's buying back a kingdom.

He's buying back his servants. And until we understand that, we're never going to be able to be the servants that he wants us to be.

We're never going to understand the gospel and the power of it to change our lives. It doesn't just save us from eternity. But every moment we walk, we realize, man, I am, I'm broken, but you know, God is amazing and God loves me so much that he gave his son for me.

And he gave me these resources that he wants me to use for his kingdom. How can I use those resources? Communion is a celebration of what God has done for us.

Communion is a memory that God has entrusted you with minas and resources to use and do business for his name. Communion is a reminder that we're in a hostile world, that we're drinking the blood and the body that was broken for us because the people all around him hated him.

[50 : 37] More importantly, communion is a reminder that if we're faithful and we serve and we trust that he's good and we realize that everything he's given us is really only a test for something so much greater and that he's going to come back and that we're going to rule with him.

And if we really trust him, if we really believe that, then we really believe that he's good, then we can do all these things even amongst the hardness of our office and in our family and wherever he puts us. And communion is a reminder that he's going to come back.

Father, we just thank you for this day and we thank you for your word that you cared about us so much that you put things in there that make us uncomfortable. How terrible would it be to follow a God who doesn't tell us all the story until the very, very end and then we are left lacking.

But we come before you now and we just realize that you've given us everything we need. You've given us your son. You've given us the gospel that changes our lives and doesn't just assure us eternity with you, but it assures us walking with you day by day and the power to change.

It's not a self-help thing. We're not called to go out and do five different things, but we're called to examine our lives to see what the power of the gospel means to us as we walk with you and to trust you as good and realize that no matter what happens today or tomorrow, that you're in control and all these resources that you've given us, even precious ones like our children or resources you've given us because you're so good and so gracious to us and that you have something even greater for us planned.

[52 : 31] And one day you're going to come back and you're going to ask us, Tobin, what do you do with your kids? I didn't give them just for you, but I gave them so that you would do something amazing for my kingdom that you would teach them and you would point them to Christ and you would love them and you would show them mercy and grace and you would show them they don't need a perfect parent because they have a perfect God.

Are you pointing them to a perfect God? For some of us, it's our relationships here. God has given us amazing connections and people and friendships and we typically we just use them like a piece of tissue.

We blow in them and when we're done we throw it away. Lord, I pray for us that we would not be caught and judged in that manner when you come back because it is going to be hard for many of us.

It's our money and our resources. It's our greatest idol. I wonder how many of us really feel like we're doing well with our resources to you. If we really feel like we're tithing what we should. If we really feel like we're using our time and our gifts and serving for your kingdom, I wonder if we really feel like we're involved in a community like you've called us to be.

I wonder if we knew that you were going to come back tomorrow. How many of us would be nervous and worried? Father, let's pray for these next moments now that we could come before you and we could just do business with you as you've asked us to do business for you.

[54 : 20] Lord, would you speak to us, show us areas that we're not very faithful and help us to confess those to you and come about a plan of what it looks like to be different.

Father, for some of us, I know that if statistics are right, some of us are in here and we are hostile and we hate you. We are not in the family.

We want to be God. We want to determine what is right in our lives. Our idol is ourselves. The passage says so. Lord, I pray for those of us in here like that that you would just show us your goodness and your mercy, that you would show us that you withheld nothing to bring us back, that you sacrificed even your son to pay for us, that your son was found faithful because he received the kingdom and that one day he'll come back.

And I pray for those who are hostile right now and that you would break their heart and melt their words and eyes and they would just feel your presence here. know that you are gracious and you're good.

Help us to repent of our blindedness because I realize that most of us are blinded to how blinded we are. I pray that this week, Lord, as we repent of that, of our self-sufficiency and what we think is faithfulness, that you would change us and that we would feel your mercy and your grace and we would be with you, the God of second chances and we'd realize just how precious we are to you and how much you desire for us.

[56 : 09] Help us to trust you, to believe that you're God, that you're coming back for us. And what I know that if statistics are true, if my life is true, that we've all been unfaithful and faithful and hostile in different areas at different times and we've all carried massive amounts of guilt and shame.

I know that. Sometimes I can't even look at myself in the mirror because I realize how much I've disappointed you. I pray for those of us in here who are the shame holders and the guilt keepers that we would release that to you and realize that you're not a God of shame and guilt but you're a God of forgiveness and love and mercy and grace.

Lord, I just pray that whenever we feel that over that we would release it to you now and just realize that you've already taken it at the cross. It's already been washed away and by the very fact of us trying to hold on to it we've basically said that we are God and that your forgiveness isn't good enough.

We need somebody else to forgive us and we need to forgive ourselves and we need them to apologize and Lord, you've already fixed all those things and so help us just to rest in that.

And what I realize there's some of us in here who probably don't need to get up right away and run out but they need to sit here and just spend another minute or two praying and thinking as the music goes and I pray that they would do that.

[58 : 03] They would meet you. They would spend time with you. They would do business with you. They would fall in love with you. For the rest of us as we leave Lord, I pray for us that we would remember just how merciful and gentle and good you are and help us not to think like the third servant but help us to realize that everything we have and everything we are and everything we do is a gift from you.

you do it because you love us but you do it because you want us to see if we are faithful or not. You already know that. You already know that. We can't hide anything from you.

So if we are we rejoice and we come before you because it's all because of you and if we're not we repent and we come before you because it's all because of you. We thank you that you are a good God.

we pray that the rest of this world and the rest of our world and Hong Kong would be different as they see servants who walk and struggle and who are broken but who strive to trust you and to live their lives for your glory and your kingdom and not our own.

Father thank you for friends around us who speak truth even when it hurts. thank you for your word that speaks truth even when it's not fun to hear.

[59 : 35] But we know that you give it to us because you love us and you want something so much more for us than what we have now. So much more. Help us to want you and help us to want your son.

Father we love you and we desperately need you. So we pray that we would not be the same when we leave here that we would be different and that you would continue to transform us as we walk with you.

We pray these things in your son Jesus holy name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.