

INTRO: We are full today of the thought that Jesus is accountable to us. Somehow, he owes us an explanation of Himself on our own terms. He has to conform to our reason, or we'll call Him a fool. He has to accommodate our sin, or we'll call him a Scrooge. He has to fit our lifestyle, or we'll call Him inconvenient. And He has to make our lives better, easier, more manageable; or we'll call Him the worst of all modern epithets, irrelevant. In business terms, Jesus has to prove to us that He has a value-added proposition for us; otherwise, He's a raw deal, and we'll leave him on the shelf. After all, there are other attractive versions of Jesus on the market today.... The Jesus of modern imagination makes no demands and no distinctions. He is a chameleon – he'll match the shade of your own heart, and your own religious preferences. But what if we have the shoe on the wrong foot? What if Jesus is not accountable to us. What if we are accountable to Him? Please turn in your Bibles with me to Luke 19:11-48. **Jesus will hold us accountable for what we do with His gospel message.** We will meditate this morning on four aspects of our accountability to Jesus. In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus will hold us accountable despite His delay. In vv.28-40, He will hold us accountable because He is king. In vv.41-44, He will hold us accountable for culpable ignorance. And in vv.45-48, He'll hold us accountable for hypocritical worship. We'll spend most of our time on the parable.

1. JESUS WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE DESPITE HIS DELAY (LUKE 19:11-27)

The Context (v.11). Verse 11 begins with the phrase, *“As they heard these things...”* What things? It's the things that Jesus was talking about with Zacchaeus – repentance, restitution, obedience and discipleship to Jesus, salvation from the penalty of sin. So the parable of the minas is connected back to Zacchaeus. It's not just about using your unique spiritual gift. It's about stewarding the gospel, responding faithfully to its message. In v.11, the reason Jesus tells the parable is that *“they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately....”* Both Jesus' followers and his critics assumed that God's kingdom would appear immediately, in all its conquering power and glory, at the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus has indicated time and again that the kingdom arrives with His arrival, because He is the king and He brings the authority of the kingdom with Him. Yet that does not mean that the kingdom is to be consummated at the first arrival of the king. There would be an interval between coronation and consummation. So he tells them, both His disciples and His critics, the parable of the minas. The parable is multi-layered. One layer addresses Jesus' critics, and another layer addresses his disciples. One layer is the master's relationship with the citizens who hate him (v.14). The other layer is the master's relationship to his three servants. The accountability is different, depending on your relationship to the master. If you hate the master, there's one accountability coming, a judgment in v.27. For the master's servants, there is another accountability coming, an answering for the responsibility that the master has entrusted.

The story begins with a nobleman leaving to receive a kingdom. Before he leaves, he entrusts 10 servants with 1 mina each, about 3 months' wages. He gives them all the same amount, and tells them in v.13 to *“Engage in business,”* which is to say, turn a profit. He doesn't just want his money to be safe. He wants it to grow. Verse 14 interweaves another layer. *“But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’* These are the citizens of the kingdom in v.11 which He goes to receive. They reject his reign. But apparently it doesn't matter, because in v.15 he comes back *“having received the kingdom.”* It doesn't matter that the citizens hated Him. He was not receiving a democracy. He was not even receiving a constitutional monarchy. The citizens could hate him all they wanted, but it wasn't their decision whether or not to make Him king. He will reign over them whether they like it or not, no matter what they think of Him.

The wrinkle in v.14 about receiving a kingdom sounds random, but it was crystal clear to the Jews. When Herod the Great, king of Judea, died in 4BC, his son Archelaus was set to take the throne. But the Jews hated him, not least because he had massacred 3,000 Jews one year on Passover. The custom was for an aspiring king to go to Rome to petition Caesar for the right to reign over a region. When Archelaus went, the Jews sent a delegation of 50 men to protest his case before Caesar. Jesus' story is built on the Jews' history with Archelaus, and the point is clear. Just as the Jews hated Archelaus and rejected him as king, so the Jews now hated Jesus, and would soon reject Him as king (Bock, 2: 1,525). And by the end of the chapter, we read in v.47 *“The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Him.”* The parable predicts the reality.

But there is no payoff for rejecting Jesus as king. In fact, there is only consequence. In v.27, the master of the parable says “but as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.” That’s 1st century war imagery, and it’s born out in the siege on Jerusalem that Jesus will predict later in vv.43-44. Rejection of Jesus does not end up in freedom from Jesus. Just because you reject Him doesn’t mean He’s not your king. The kingdom is not yours to give. It’s God’s, and Jesus has already inaugurated His reign. Rejection will only bring judgment on you in the end. Don’t let this be you. Don’t reject Jesus’ authority. Don’t hate Him. Don’t lobby against Him. It will do no good. He has already been installed.

Psalms 2 “*Why do the peoples plot in vain? ...the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, ‘Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.’*” And you know what God does when we act like that. **Ps 2:4** “*He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”* It’s already been done, and it was never up to you. So you had better submit to the king. **Ps 2:11** “*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.*” That’s the Jesus of the Bible, and there is no neutrality – you either love Him or you hate Him. What are you doing with Jesus, friend?

The master returns in v.15 “*that he might know what [his servants] had gained by doing business.*” There it is again, that expectation of gain. It’s not enough that his money isn’t lost. He expects a profit, and in vv.15-19 the reward for faithfully executing your responsibility, is more responsibility. There was an old Jewish proverb that said “The reward for a duty done, is a duty to be done” (K. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 522, quoting *m. ‘Abot* 4.2). The word in v.17 is ‘authority’ (εὐξουσίαν). You go from managing money to exercising authority over cities. And the reward seems disproportionate to the duty. Faithful management of 3 months’ wages is rewarded with authority over multiple cities! The reward exceeds the responsibility. The master is being gracious here.

But what the master refuses to reward is playing it safe. The worthless slave preserved the mina and gave it back. Jesus will not consider you faithful if you play it safe. He will consider Himself cheated. Faithfulness is not just preservation. It’s multiplication. The most faithful slave turned a 1,000% profit; another turned 500%. Jesus wants us to have an aggressive growth outlook on the gospel He’s entrusted to us. Don’t be content to be wholly invested in spiritual bonds – risk nothing, lose nothing. God wants us invested in spiritual stocks that are poised for aggressive spiritual growth. Risk nothing, gain nothing. This is where the third servant went wrong in v.21 “*I was afraid of you, because you are a severe (αὐσθροῦς) man.*” The Greek word for “severe” is where we get our word “austere.” This severity is described as being demanding in v.21, having high expectations. “*You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.*” That accusation is neither confirmed nor denied in the parable. What’s clear is that the slave is trying to turn the tables on his master, trying to blame the master for his own failure. “I failed as I did because you are who you are.” But Jesus says that logic will not fly with Him on Judgment Day. If you use that excuse with Jesus, He will hang you on your own noose. “If that’s who you thought I was, then you really should have done something more than you did. You should have at least put the gospel treasure in a CD, rather than under your mattress.” But the reward the master gives the other 2 servants indicates that the third is wrong about the master’s character. He’s not severe. He’s not harsh and demanding. He’s generous. He rewards faithfulness far beyond proportion. The third slave’s error was that he misjudged the character of the master, and so operated on abject fear rather than hope.

All this applies to our own convictions and character. Am I growing in my knowledge of God in Christ? Am I growing in my doctrinal convictions? There’s a whole slew of book recommendations on the new church website, and they’re all linked to the Amazon page where you can buy them. When’s the last time you read a good book about the gospel, or that helped you grow in your doctrinal convictions? What about your character? Are you growing in your Christian character, or are you happy to think that you’re better than most people who live on your street? How is the gospel growing in your heart?

All this applies to making disciples as well. To invest money, you have to let go of it. You have to give it away, put it somewhere that's not your own back pocket. Putting money under a mattress is not an investment strategy – neither is keeping your spiritual life all to yourself. You have to invest it, give it away, distribute it to others and pray that it would grow in them. Are you growing in your competence at discipling others? Have you multiplied yourself into anyone? Is your life ordered so that Christian discipleship of other people can be a recognizable priority for you? Who, outside your immediate or extended family, have you done spiritual good to in the last week? Jesus will not be satisfied to see that we just go to church every Sunday. Sunday morning should be the highlight of our week, and the local church should be the center of our discipleship to Jesus; but Sunday morning attendance should not exhaust our discipleship to Jesus. It should fuel it for profitable service.

Where are the people who either believe in Jesus or who have at least been confronted with the gospel because of your verbal witness to them? Where are the Christians who are growing in Christ because of your love, your teaching, your example? Where is the return on Christ's investment in you? Christian Man, you've heard many things about the gospel. Did you not entrust them to any faithful men who would be able to teach others also? Christian woman, Jesus says, I commanded you to teach what is good, and train the young women to love their husbands and children, to teach them to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, submissive to their own husbands that God's word may not be reviled. Where are these young women? Is it just your own soul that you cared about all these years? Is it just your own immediate family you care to disciple? Where is the local body of Christ that has been built up in faith, holiness, hope, and sound doctrine because you were faithful to speak the truth in love? Where is the church that has reached mature manhood and risen to the stature of the fullness of Christ because you were working properly, equipped for the works of ministry and faithfully engaged in them? Or did you think I would be so long in returning that I would forget to hold you accountable for what I entrusted to you? I gave you spiritual life so that you would invest it, not just save it. Jesus will not be pleased if we simply keep from squandering our spiritual lives or keep from losing them. We must invest ourselves in the priorities of the king, or else even what we have will be taken from us and given to someone else.

Verses 24-25 Seem harsh, and Jesus knows it. He anticipates the objection. *"Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas." And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!'"* This seems unfair to everyone but Jesus, and Jesus knows it. But think about it from a managerial perspective. If a sales guy has one account, and he can't even make a go of that one, who do you think his manager is going to give that account to – an unproven sales rep? No. He's going to give it to his go-to guy, who is already busy with ten other accounts that are producing. That's why the manager keeps going to him. There's a reason the faithful slave already has ten minas. He was faithful! And if you give him one more, his track record says he'll be faithful with that one, too. That's not unfair. That's what verse 26 means in a spiritual sense. *"To everyone who has, more will be given."* In other words, to everyone who has produced a return on Christ's investment, Christ will give more to invest. *But to the one who doesn't have, even what he has will be taken away.* In other words, to the one who has produced no return on investment, Jesus will take away even what was entrusted to him.

Now some of us might say, 'well that's OK, because I don't really want a lot of responsibility in God's kingdom. I've seen what that looks like, and it's a hassle; so I'm content to coast. I'll just put it on cruise control and stay in the right lane 'til I see the signs for Heaven.' But if you love Jesus, then don't you want to please Him? And if you want to please Him, doesn't that mean producing a return on the gospel He has entrusted to you? If not, then I don't know what you mean when you say you love Jesus.

2. JESUS WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE BECAUSE HE IS KING (19:28-40)

Fulfillment of Prophecy (Zech 9:9; Ps 118:26). Here in vv.28-40 Luke shows us why it is that Jesus has authority to hold us accountable on the last day. He has that authority because He is king, which is proven in this paragraph in a few different ways. To begin, Jesus is king because He fulfills OT prophecy about the coming of God's promised King. The whole incident with the colt in vv.28-34 alludes to **Zech 9:9** *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout allowed, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you;*

righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” Most earthly kings came into their cities riding on warhorses as a symbol of military victory. The donkey was a symbol of peace, not war. And this, by the way, should have been a hint that Jesus was not going to set up his kingdom immediately with conquering power. He came not on a horse, but on a donkey. Jesus will one day come riding on a horse, but that’s not until the time of **Rev 19:11** where he will come sitting on the white horse, with *the armies of heaven following him on white horses of their own. He will draw the sword from His mouth and strike down the nations, and will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty;* but not yet. His first entry to Jerusalem is an entry of peace, on a donkey, and He arrives not to deal out God’s wrath on His enemies, but to endure it in His own body on the cross for the sins of all those who would ever repent and believe in Him. Here in Luke 19, he’s fulfilling Zechariah 9. He is the man of peace, the one greater than Solomon, who would rebuild the temple of His dead body after three days.

Sovereignty over Circumstances. And in this whole incident with the colt, Jesus proves Himself in control over all the circumstances. Scholars quibble over whether this is a display of divine foreknowledge, or if it’s simply a case where Jesus made arrangements with the owners of the donkey beforehand. I’m inclined to think it’s a display divine knowledge, because He doesn’t just say in v.31 “If the owner asks you...” He says, “*If anyone asks you....*” If he were relying on previous arrangements with the owners, He probably would have just said “If the owners ask you.” His instructions seem to assume that no previous arrangement has been made with any individual. And when the disciples go to carry out his orders in v.32 “*they found it just as he had told them.*” Jesus is sovereign. He’s King. He has the divine knowledge to hold us accountable. He knows all things. Nothing escapes his notice. Nothing can be hidden from God. He is uniquely qualified not only with divine authority but with divine knowledge to hold us accountable on the last day.

Jesus also fulfills another OT prophecy here in this paragraph. In v.38, his own disciples and followers, having set him on a donkey, follow him into the city, shouting out “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” That’s a quote from Ps 118:26, except for the word ‘King’. The word king is not in either the Hebrew or the Greek version of Ps 118:26 (both are pronominal substantive participles; MT = **אב'ה;א**; LXX = ο` evrco,menoj). It’s just “*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*” They add the word “King” to clarify who they really think Jesus is. Psalm 118 is a corporate worship Psalm that involved a community response. It was a responsive song with parts sung by the Priests and people in response to the Messiah figure who would come to save them. For Jesus’ disciples to quote this part of this Psalm in this way, “*Blessed is the King who comes in the Name of the Lord,*” is to confess Jesus as the Messiah, the king who had come to save his people and usher them into the gates of the New Kingdom. And they were right...sort of. Jesus had come to inaugurate his kingdom; but He would do it first by dying, then by rising from the dead, ascending to the throne of heaven at God’s right hand, and only after an interval would he return and consummate his kingdom. And that interval is what requires the faithful stewardship of the parable. Jesus has the authority to hold us accountable because He is the king prophesied by both Zech 9 and Ps 118.

Acceptance of Worship (19:35-40). What frustrates the Pharisees is that they know Jesus’ disciples are using Ps 118 to worship Jesus as the Messianic King, and He’s not doing anything about it. That’s why they say in v.39 “*Teacher, rebuke your disciples.*” But Jesus will not refuse their worship, because He knows who He is. They’re right to hail Him as King. And if they didn’t do it, then creation itself would. The stones would cry out. Even inanimate stones would recognize their King if no one else would, which brings us to our third point.

3. JESUS WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE FOR WILLFUL IGNORANCE (19:41-44)

The form that accountability takes in v.43 is judgment, condemnation, the brutal siege and destruction of Jerusalem and its citizens. “*For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone up on another in you....*” And the reason for that destruction

is given in vv.42 and 44. “Would that you...had known the things that make for peace,” Jesus says in v.42 And again, “But now they are hidden from your eyes....” And again in v.44, the destruction of Jerusalem will happen “...because you did not know.” This is a prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem that happened in 70AD. And Jesus weeps over it. This is the very city he knows will crucify Him, yet He weeps over its destruction. We should worship Jesus for that kind of love and compassion. Would you weep over the judgment anyone who would crucify you? You can’t manufacture that. It has to be the Spirit of Christ in us, causing us to weep for them.

Yet at first blush this might seem unfair to the city itself. How can God judge a whole city based on something it doesn’t know? But there are two kinds of ignorance, aren’t there? There’s innocent ignorance, and there’s culpable ignorance. There is the ignorance of someone who could not have known better, and there is the ignorance of someone who should have known better. The destruction of Jerusalem is due to the culpable ignorance of its citizens. They should have and could have known better, but they would not know better, because they did not want to know better, or did not care to know better. It is blameworthy ignorance, ignorance due to negligence. It’s shutting off the spigot of the knowledge of God because you don’t like what’s coming out. And notice the kind of people who are culpably ignorant here. It’s not pagans. It’s religious people, people who think of themselves as God’s people. Church people can be the most culpably ignorant people of all.

There’s a biblical phrase for that. It’s called suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Rom 1:18) – ignoring what our conscience knows to be true. And if we do this for too long, God gives us over to our own ignorance, and he begins hiding His truth from us. The verb “*hidden*” in v.42 is passive. “...*now they are hidden from your eyes,*” which raises the question, who did the hiding? God did it. When people hide themselves from the clear truth of God, God Himself will eventually hide His truth from people so that they become hemmed in and condemned by their own culpable ignorance. They would not know, and so God eventually makes it so that they cannot know. And they have no one to blame but themselves. Oh dear friend, don’t let that happen to you. Stop suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. You know the truth. You know God is holy. You know from your own conscience that you are sinful and that you deserve damnation. And now, by the preaching God’s word, you know that Jesus Christ is the appointed sacrifice for sin, to atone for your soul, so that if you repent and believe in Jesus, He will save you from the everlasting fire of hell. You know the “things that make for peace” – turning from your sin and self-justification, and trusting in Jesus Christ. That’s what makes for peace with God –not works of righteousness that we have done to impress God or to outweigh our sins.

The judgment of Jerusalem in 70AD is a warning about the judgment to come when Jesus returns. The reason for Jerusalem’s judgment was that they did not know the time of their visitation. They refused to know that God had visited them in the person of Jesus. They suppressed the truth of God as it came to them in the person of Jesus. And what about you, friend? Do you know the time of your visitation? If you’re an unbeliever listening to this sermon this morning, let me speak with you for just a moment. You are within earshot of the gospel right now. What will you do with it? You are being visited by God’s Word. And if that message makes sense, if you understand that God is holy, you are sinful and deserving of hell, that Christ is the sacrifice for sins, and that you must repent and believe in Him, then now is the time of your visitation. Pleading ignorance on the Day of Judgment will hold little weight in God’s court. The evidence of your own ignorance will be ruled inadmissible, because that evidence was gained illegally. You got it by suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. If this gospel message makes sense to you, repent now, because the day will come when your time with God will run out, and He will begin to hide this message from your eyes. And then it will be too late. Respond now, friend.

4. JESUS WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE FOR HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP (19:45-48)

When we get to vv.45-46, we often assume that the point is about commercializing worship. So in some circles you might hear that we shouldn’t sell books or coffee in church because of these verses. In other circles you might hear contemporary worship denounced as a consumer-oriented ministry philosophy that has uncomfortable links to buying and selling in the temple. But those applications miss the point of the passage.

The point is actually bigger, which is evident from the OT context of the verses Jesus quotes.

The first quote is from **Isa 56:7** *“The foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants...these I will bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”* The implication there is that one day, Gentiles themselves would become priests. *“Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar.”* The whole temple would one day be filled with Gentiles, *a house of prayer for all peoples* (cf. Isa 66:18-21). Isaiah 56 is about the end-times in-gathering of the Gentiles – and Jesus is announcing its arrival.

The second quote **Jer 7:11** *“Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the Lord.”* That verse comes in a context where Jeremiah is denouncing Israel’s false security in the temple as a guarantee of God’s presence with them. Just before v.11, God says through Jeremiah in v.9 *“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’ – only to go on doing all these abominations?”* And then in v.12, right after the verse Jesus quotes, He says *“Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.”* Jesus is evoking that whole passage. It’s about God’s judgment on hypocritical worship – and Jesus is announcing its arrival.

This is not just about commercialized worship; it’s about hypocritical worship. The context of Luke 19 bears this out, Verses 45-46 follow Jesus’ prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction. Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 interpret Jesus’ driving out the merchants. It’s an acted parable that teaches the same truths as Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11 in their own contexts. The hypocritical worship of 1st century Judaism is coming to an end, because God is about to destroy their temple, just like He destroyed Solomon’s, and just like he destroyed his place in Shiloh before that, and for the same reason, which is summed up in Isa 1:13 *“I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.”* Hypocritical worship. And so Jesus is saying to his contemporaries the same thing God said to Jeremiahs in Jer 7:13 *“And now, because you have done all these things, declares the lord, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen.”* (Carson & Beale, CNTUOT, pp.356-360).

The way we worship today can be just as hypocritical. We can gather together, sing the songs, listen to the prayers, hear the sermon, evaluate the service, even say we liked it. All the while, we can be indulging some secret sin, worshiping our reputations, idolizing our families, trusting in our morality and our money instead of our Maker, confusing the American Dream with the Kingdom of God, preferring leisure and convenience to serving Christ and His church – hypocritical worship. We can come to worship with the body of Christ after disobeying His teaching all last week, and with no intention of growth in obedience next week. The 1st century Jewish leaders went through the motions in the temple; yet when the One greater than the temple comes, He teaches daily in the temple, and the leaders hated Him. *“The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him.”* Oh friend, just because you’re a religious person doesn’t mean that you’ll welcome Jesus when He appears again. These men were formalists. They were culturally religious. They liked the respectability of religious leadership and conservatism. But they did not know what their religion was really about, because when the King came, they wanted nothing to do with Him. *“His citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us’”* (v.14).

CONCLUSION

Friend, do you really know Jesus? Do you know this Jesus? The Jesus of the Bible will hold us accountable despite His delay, and He is looking for a return on His investment that can only be produced by His Spirit living in us, motivating us by His grace. He will hold us accountable because He is king. And He will hold us

accountable both for culpable ignorance and hypocritical worship. Don't assume you know Jesus if you don't think you're accountable to Him. Is this the Jesus you know? Or have you mistaken Him for someone else?