

Parable of the ten minas (talents) - Pete Greig

- What are your gifts? Natural (ie mechanic, cooking); Spiritual (ie prophecy, prayer); Material (ie time, money, spare room)

Luke 19v11-27 (cf Matt 25v14-30)

Jesus spoke in context of King Herod's son, Archelaus, going to Rome to be anointed King despite Judeans hating him. Their petition to Rome failed and Archelaus returned as King to Jericho where he built a palace and an aqueduct. Jesus had just engaged with Zacchaeus in Jericho, so it is likely that this was where he told the parable.

The crowd were anticipating the Kingdom of God but Jesus wanted to diffuse the hype despite being a King who was also hated by the people, would go away to heaven and one day return full of power, his kingdom having been contested and delayed.

How are his servants to live in between times? We are to be faithful, wise, intentional and not passive.

"We cannot flatten the story out or creep nervously round its sharp edges because Luke has made sure in the rest of the chapter that the meaning will stay with us. Jesus' tears over the city, his stern actions over the temple indicate that the judgement at the end of the parable was meant to be taken seriously." NT Wright.

Judgement is real - Jesus' return will result in wailing and rejoicing. But we live in between his two comings.

1. Live proactively not passively

The King expects his servants to be active with the talents he's given them: make the most of what you have. The idle servant was rebuked for his fear and anxiety. The enemy to our destiny is anxiety and fear of failure. God wants to partnership with us. *"Without God we cannot, without us God will not."* Augustine.

What are you doing with your gifts? Grow them for God. Too many Christians are passive. It's not "God doesn't need me." *"Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less."* CS Lewis. Gifts are from God, he's not a micro-manager so we need common sense. Acts 16v6-10 Paul's guidance.

2. Live contentedly not competitively

It is easy to resent others when they seem to have more or better than us. It's not how much do I have, but what have I done with what God has given to me?

"A calm and humble life will bring more happiness than the pursuit of success and the constant restlessness that comes with it." A note on a napkin given to a bell boy when A Einstein didn't have change to tip him (Subsequently sold for \$1.3m.... Not a bad tip!).

Accept our limitations - if we compare ourselves with others we either put ourselves down or become arrogant - that's our human psychosis. I might be in a small room, but how can I make it beautiful? Learn to live within our limitations and use them for God's glory.

My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have calmed and quietened myself, I am like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child I am content. Ps131

3. Conclusions

We can't soften the judgement; We live between Jesus' first and second comings; We are to be intentional, proactive servants; Unfairness can't paralyse us; Use the gifts God has given us; God is training us to rule.

For Reflection in Collective:

Pete posed 3 questions during his talk. They are below. Use them to promote discussion and encouragement

- What gifts, however small, has God given me?
- Are there any gifts I am currently burying?
- How might I invest one of my gifts more fruitfully for God's glory?