

Sunday, August 11, 2024 | The Road to Redemption

Week 36 | Luke 19:11-27 | "ROI"

Last week, Pastor Bob did a fantastic job of unpacking the story of Zacchaeus. And I hope you took to heart his admonition to seek the lost, even if they are the “worst” sinner you know, and introduce them to Jesus. After all, as we’ll see today, all of us will have to give an account of how we stewarded the gifts that God has given us. And I, for one, want to go before the Lord on that last day with proof that I tried to multiply his Kingdom rather than squander and waste the talents he entrusted to my care.

Today’s message will not only cover the *last parable* in the journey portion of Luke’s narrative (9:51-19:27), but it is also the *last sermon* in *The Road to Redemption*. Next week, we’ll start a new sermon series called *Holy Week*, which will take us to the end of the book. And as the name implies, we’ll be unpacking the *last week* of Jesus’ earthly ministry, which begins with the titular ‘Triumphal Entry,’ where the Lord entered Jerusalem astride a donkey and ends with the Lord’s ascension where after his resurrection, he returned to God the Father in heaven.

ROI (Return On Investment) is a measurement tool used to gauge the profitability of an investment. For instance, say you invested \$1k in Ben’s Lemonade and his competitor, Bob’s Lemonade. A year later, the total shares for the first might be \$1,200 (ROI of 20%) and \$1k for the second (ROI of 0%). Investing in Bob might not have lost anything, but you did not gain anything. Which, in the investment world, is a loss. After all, think of how much money you would've made had you put all your eggs in Ben’s basket.

In the Kingdom of God, the Lord is watching his investment portfolio. He's looking to see if the talents, time, and treasures he's gifted his followers are being used well. He has no doubt that his assets are profitable. The problem, and why he doesn't always get a return, is that while his stewards may be eternally secure in the Kingdom—full citizens in their own right—they do not always use their gifts wisely. Though they have every reason to be enterprising and entrepreneurial, some stewards would rather hide their gifts than use them for gospel gains.

There are **four** takeaways in this passage:

- i. **The Lord expects a return on his investment.**

READ: Luke 19:11-14 (ESV)

¹¹ As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear **immediately**. ¹² He said therefore, "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. ¹³ Calling **ten of his servants**, he gave them **ten minas**, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

This parable is tied closely to the scene with Zacchaeus.

A "mina" was a unit of **weight** rather than **currency**.¹ One mina was about 18 oz, or over a pound, during the first century.² It was equivalent to over 100 drachmae, roughly 3 months' wages.³ Financially speaking, it wasn't the smallest sum, nor was it considered significant.

The phrase "engage in business" is, more literally, to make a profit. God expects a profit from us, and we'll all have to account for how we used the life He gave us (cf. Rom. 14:12).

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is **due** for what he has done in the body, whether **good** or **evil**.

ii. An **enterprising** steward will be rewarded with **authority**.

READ: Luke 19:15-19 (ESV)

¹⁵ When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had **gained** by doing business. ¹⁶ The first came before him, saying, 'Lord, your mina has made **ten minas more**.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over **ten cities**.' 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**.'

The first servant took 1 mina and turned it into 10 = 33 months wages (1,000% ROI). This remarkable feat was amply rewarded. The ruler made the steward a ruler himself, overseeing 10 cities.

¹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "mina," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 26 Apr. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/science/mina-unit-of-weight>, [accessed 9 August 2024].

² Youngblood, Ronald F., *Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, New and Enhanced Edition, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2014), p. 1184.

³ Bock, p. 1533.

The second servant took 1 mina and turned it into 5 = 16 months' wages (500% ROI). Though not as great as his predecessor, this was still an admirable accomplishment. Just as his predecessor was rewarded a lordship over ten cities, this servant was given authority over five cities.

But do not miss this: *both servants' accomplishments were relatively small compared to their rewards*. I am reminded of Luke 18:29, where in response to Peter's insistence that they left all to follow the Lord, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

You simply cannot outgive God.

iii. An **apathetic** steward will be rewarded with **poverty**.

READ: Luke 19:20-26 (ESV)

²⁰ Then another came, saying, 'Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; ²¹ for I was **afraid** of you, because you are a **severe** man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²² He said to him, 'I will condemn you with your own words, you **wicked** servant! You knew that I was a **severe** man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?' ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

²⁴ And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the **ten** minas.' ²⁵ And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten minas!' ²⁶ 'I tell you that to everyone who **has, more** will be given, but from the one who **has not**, even what he has will be **taken away**.'

The last servant took 1 mina and hid it. And while nothing was lost from his perspective, it was a loss from the ruler's perspective. Had he given that talent to either of the first two servants, he would've gotten a return on his investment. But as it was, he lost all potential gains by entrusting his money to this last servant.

Admittedly, the last amount pales in comparison to the others. Given that his funds were limited, it makes sense why the last servant would fear losing what little he was given and so hide it rather than use it. However, the servant wasn't afraid of his prospects but of the king. He thought of his ruler as a "**severe man**," which means the servant characterized him as unbearably strict and uncompromising. This seems at odds with who the king is. After all, he appointed the first two servants to rule over multiple cities for doing nothing more than

multiplying his financial holdings. That is a rather generous monarch. And the servant would've avoided condemnation if he had simply put the mina in the bank! The ruler would've been satisfied with the barest of returns. But he rightly earned condemnation because the servant hid it, doing the worst possible thing with the money. This wicked servant utterly disregarded his Lord's commands. Disobedience is deserving of judgment.

What's more, had the servant really thought of the king as a "severe man," would he not have done everything he could to avoid upsetting him? Hiding the mina in a "handkerchief" betrays a lack of respect rather than fear. This is why the king says, "I will condemn you with your own words." By his own admission, he revealed how little he respected the king.

READ: 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (ESV)

¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation [a.k.a., Jesus Christ] with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

iv. A **defiant** people will be rewarded with **brutality**.

READ: Luke 19:27 (ESV)

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

Video Description:

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SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

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