

Bi123 The Gospels 2

Lesson Bi123-3 Parable of the Ten Minas

What does a person do while waiting for an important event, such as a wedding? For a wedding there are many preparations to be completed. In each culture both the groom and his family and the bride and her family have responsibilities to fulfill. What would happen if one or the other decided not to do their part? What would the family members think of such behavior? They probably would conclude that the couple was not ready for marriage. In this lesson, Jesus dealt with a similar situation that involved preparations for another important event.

Jesus was near Jerusalem. He told the people a parable, because they thought the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. It was a story about a man of noble birth who went to a distant country to have himself appointed king. He planned to return after that. So he called ten of his servants and gave each one a mina. "Put this money to work," he said, "until I come back."

But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, "We don't want this man to be our king." He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it (Luke 19:11-15).

This parable was given to correct the idea some had gotten at the time of Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem. Some of them expected Messiah to set up his kingdom immediately. Jesus wanted the disciples and the crowds to understand that there would be a time of delay between his departure and his return. The people who opposed the king in the story represent the Jews who opposed Jesus and his claim to be Messiah.

A similar incident had occurred in the Israel's recent history. Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, went to Rome to have himself made king by the Roman Emperor. His plan failed after Jewish leaders asked the emperor to refuse him. Instead of being made a king he was made a governor of only half his father's territory. This was a very different outcome than in the story Jesus told. Jesus represented the king who left in the parable. He would return after receiving all his Father's power and authority.

The parable had a second message. Before leaving, the future king gave responsibilities to the servants who awaited his return. When he returned, he would determine what the servants had done with what he had left them. In the parable this was in the form of earthly riches. The "mina" was a Greek coin, and if each servant received one of them that was equal to about three months' wages. This gift may represent the abilities that God has given every disciple. It also may represent the gospel message all believers have received.

Ask yourself: What question might the Master ask the servants about the money when he returned?

In the parable the master sent for the ten servants and asked what they had gained with the funds entrusted to them. The first one came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned ten more.”

“Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.”

A second servant came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’

“Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “You take charge of five cities.”

The first two servants proved that even though they had different abilities, both were faithful and responsible. Their rewards were greater authority and wealth based on their past performance. They received cities to rule, since their master was now a king. They shared with their new king what he himself had received.

Then another servant came and said, “Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.”

His master replied, “I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?”

The actions of the last servant illustrated his attitude. The master did not agree with the statement of the servant. He only repeated it as a question. If this was the servant’s opinion, he should have acted accordingly. Those words would be the very thing that would judge him. He acted out of fear of his master instead of seeing the opportunity he was given. The master believed this wicked servant should have been faithful with what had been given him. At the least he could have earned interest with a banker and shown some profit.

Then he said to those standing by, “Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.”

“Sir,” they said, “he already has ten!”

He replied, “I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given. But as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me” (Luke 19:16-27).

The judgment on the wicked servant was loss of his gift to the one found most faithful with what he had received. The people watching were surprised. Jesus used these words to say that those who faithfully seek spiritual gain for themselves and others will receive even more from God. Those who neglect or waste what has been given them by God will lose even what they have. The negligent servant suffered loss. The most severe judgment was on those who

rebelled and actively opposed the king. They were killed. Those who refused to accept Jesus as Messiah would suffer eternal loss, separated from God.

Matthew's Gospel records an account of Jesus teaching his disciples a similar lesson about the delay of his second coming and the need for doing his will. Instead of minas, the master entrusts bags of gold to three servants. One receives five bags, one gets two bags, and yet another one bag. One bag was worth about 20 years of a man's wages, so the amounts given were greater. The amount of gold given was "according to the servant's ability." The outcome when the master returned is also similar to Luke's account. Those who doubled their gold received commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness." The fearful wicked servant was thrown into darkness (Matt 25:14-30).

So what is the main difference in the two tellings of the same story? The account using minas had equal amounts being given to all, but the servants were not equally diligent in using the money. So they were not rewarded equally and one received eternal punishment. The account using the bags of gold, or talents of gold, had unequal amounts being given to the servants. But still, the two servants who were equally diligent were equally rewarded. The one who was fearful and wicked received eternal punishment. The emphasis is still on the need for faithful service during the master's absence. Whether a person has received many gifts or few, he or she is required to be faithful in working for Jesus until he returns. God holds people responsible for their use of his gifts. In another place Jesus teaches, "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48).

This story is **important** because it gave a teaching about the need for faithfulness to those who had expected Jesus to immediately set up a kingdom here on earth.

The **main truth** of this story is that Jesus will be gone for an unknown length of time. When he returns as king, he will reward his faithful servants.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. In the parable who did those who refused to have the king rule over them represent?
A. [Pause] If you said, "The people who opposed the king in the story represent the Jews who opposed Jesus," you are correct.
2. What did the king say to the two servants who were faithful and wisely used the king's money?
A. [Pause] If you said, "Well done, my good servant!" you are correct.
3. What did the wicked servant say to the king to justify his behavior?
A. [Pause] If you answered, "I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn the story so you can tell it from memory. After telling the story, ask this question, “What teaching is Jesus giving us today through this parable? The answer is that every believer has been given gifts by God. Each of us should be doing something today which will advance the purposes of our returning King Jesus.