

I.N.I.

25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Nov. 18, 2012  
Luke 19:11-27

In Christ Jesus, the King of Heaven and Earth, who will return to judge all people, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

It is customary to close out the old church year with Scripture readings on such topics as the End Times, Judgment, the Resurrection, Christ's return, etc. Last Sunday we asked the question **IS THERE LIFE AFTER DEATH?**

We answered by saying, "Yes, Jesus describes it and the Scriptures clearly teach it." The Resurrection of the dead is a very important teaching of Christianity, based upon the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday. Since Jesus rose, so shall all who sleep in the grave. The believers in Christ will be resurrected to eternal life and the unbelievers to eternal damnation.

This morning we focus our hearts and minds upon the thought of Judgment Day. Only this time from this point of view: **WHAT SHOULD WE CHRISTIANS BE DOING NOW, AS WE PATIENTLY WAIT FOR OUR LORD'S RETURN AND THE JUDGMENT?**

In the first verse of our text we are told that the people **THOUGHT THE KINGDOM OF GOD WOULD APPEAR IMMEDIATELY**. In the Gospel of Matthew there are 40 references to the Kingdom of God or Christ's Kingship. The people knew the Kingdom of God was coming and many were now believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the One who would usher in that Kingdom. But most of the people and even the disciples found it hard to understand that Jesus was talking about a spiritual kingdom. He was talking about His rule in the hearts and lives of His people here on earth and then His rule with them forever in heaven. Jesus was not an earthly King. He did not teach about a physical rule where He would defeat the Romans, live in Jerusalem and sit on a throne.

Because of their misconception of His Kingdom, when Jesus said the Kingdom of God is at hand, they became quite excited and eagerly anticipated Jesus to start to take control and overthrow the Roman rule. To correct these false ideas about His Kingdom Jesus told this parable. This was one of Jesus' favorite methods of instruction. He used common, everyday language and simple, familiar pictures of everyday life to bring home important spiritual truths.

This parable was one of a certain nobleman who went away to a far country to be crowned as king. Before he left he took 10 minas and gave 1 mina to 10 of his servants and said to each of them, **DO BUSINESS TILL I COME**. In other words, "put this money to work until I come back." A mina was 100 days wages--that is a little more than payment for 3 months of work. Unfortunately we are told in the parable that many of this nobleman's own citizens hated him and did not want him as their king.

In order to understand a parable we must first identify the meaning of the pictures. Jesus is the nobleman. He has visibly left this earth and ascended on high to be crowned as King of kings and Lord of lords. He now sits at the Father's right hand, meaning He rules all things and some day will return.

The 10 servants or slaves are all of those who profess to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior, in other words the visible church here on earth. Before Jesus left He gave to His believers, His servants the Great Commission to go out into all the world and proclaim the Good News, the Gospel of forgiveness and peace in His name. Therefore the mina is the Means of Grace, the Gospel in Word and Sacrament.

The citizens are not only the unbelieving Jews but all of the unbelievers of this world. They hate Jesus and do not want Him to be their king.

What a privilege has been given to us servants of Christ; to be entrusted with our Master's most precious riches, His Word, the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation. This command by our King to use His Word, to proclaim and preach, to spread and speak His Good News to all people is very serious business. That is why we have entitled our theme this morning:

**CHRISTIANITY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!**

**I: EVERY CHRISTIAN IS EXPECTED TO WORK WITH THE GOSPEL DURING HIS TIME OF GRACE.**

Being a Christian means being a servant, a slave for Christ. That means being more than someone who simply says, "I believe in Jesus." It means being one who works and lives for Jesus. Jesus has

given to each of us our mina, the Gospel. It has been put into our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit and it has been put into our hands in the form of the Bible. This is not something that any of us deserved in any way. It is alone by His undeserved love and mercy that He has entrusted us with such a serious responsibility and privilege to go out and **DO BUSINESS** for Him--that is proclaim His Word, reach out to lost souls with the Good News. He expects each of us as faithful slaves to be busy during His absence, during our time of grace here on earth to work with His Gospel.

Let's go back to our parable. We are told that the nobleman, now as King returns. The Greek word suggests a sudden return. He calls his ten servants to give an account of how they have used his money. Have they done well in their business, have they made more money for him and his Kingdom?

The first servant has been very faithful in his use of his master's money, but note where he places the emphasis. He says, **MASTER, YOUR MINA HAS EARNED TEN MINAS.** The second likewise has been faithful and says, **MASTER, YOUR MINA HAS EARNED FIVE MINAS.** Both servants give credit where credit is due---to the Lord. What is the picture here?

In our use of the Gospel it is not we who produce fruits of success, it is not we who make the Gospel grow and multiply in the hearts of people and create faith. That is the work of the Holy Spirit through the powerful Gospel. We must put it to use—that is, proclaim it, preach it, teach it, tell it to others as a pastor in church, as a teacher in Sunday School or Christian Day School, as parents in the home and as individuals wherever we may be. **THIS IS NOT AN OPTION!** It is our Lord and Master's **COMMAND TO US!**

As we come to the end of another church year of God's grace, another year where the Lord has so richly blessed us here at Peace Thru Christ in so many, many ways each of us **NEEDS TO**, each of us **MUST** evaluate our use of the Word. Are we making use of our time, of our talents, of our energies, of our money to see to it that this Gospel message is being put to work, is doing its business, the business of saving souls?

## **II: THE LORD EXPECTS TO FIND RESULTS WHEN HE RETURNS.**

The Lord Jesus will come and when He does return He expects to find results. He expects to find that we have been busy with the **ONE THING NEEDFUL**, His Word. He expects to find us busy and active as His servants in promoting His Word, in supporting His Word to the best, not the least, but to the best of our abilities.

And what will the result be? **A BLESSED REWARD!** Not a reward that has been earned by us and deserved. But a reward of His grace. Remember we are His slaves. We are expected to do as our Master commands. The reward that is **FREELY, UNDESERVEDLY GIVEN** to us slaves is the gift of everlasting life that our Master has already earned for us.

Jesus, our Master, was first a slave to His Heavenly Father in order to set us free from the slavery to sin, death, Satan and hell. Remember His words in Mark 10 when He said, **THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY.** Jesus perfectly obeyed His Father by serving us, even to the point of death on the cross!

The free gift of salvation and everlasting life will be bestowed upon all of those who by their actions show that in their hearts they believe in Jesus. This parable clearly sets forth the truth: **FAITH ALONE SAVES! BUT FAITH IS NEVER ALONE!** It is not saving faith to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ," and then to live only for self. That's what James calls "dead faith" which is no faith at all. It is deception. Let's see what happens to those who live that way.

Let's go back to our parable. We read vs. 20-21: **AND ANOTHER CAME, SAYING, MASTER, HERE IS YOUR MINA, WHICH I HAVE KEPT PUT AWAY IN A HANDKERCHIEF. FOR I FEARED YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE AN AUSTERE MAN. YOU COLLECT WHAT YOU DID NOT DEPOSIT, AND REAP WHAT YOU DID NOT SOW.**

This slave was lazy and selfish. He also was bitter and disrespectful to his master. He accused his master of being mean and a cheat, of not really having the right to demand anything of him. He didn't do anything with his mina. When confronted with his unfaithfulness he tried to make excuses and lay the blame back on his master.

## **III: FAITHFULNESS WILL RECEIVE ITS REWARD OF GRACE; BUT UNBELIEF WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED.**

This is the picture of the unfaithful Christian. The one who at one time believed, but did not use the Word enough to keep his own faith alive. It is a picture of one who comes to church and deceives

himself into thinking that he is saved, but trusts in his good works or thinks that all he needs to do is say a few words, sing a few hymns and all is well. He too has received the command to use the Word, to spread the Gospel, but in his preoccupation with the business of this life, or in his spiritual laziness he hides it away.

Unfortunately this is the sad story of Christ's visible church here on earth. Some professing Christians are entrusted with His Word, but do not use it as Christ commands. They neglect it first for themselves, and if you do not use it, you will lose it. They become too busy with the affairs of this life or were never really interested in the Gospel in the first place. They end up being hypocrites, within the outward church, but never really part of the Holy Christian Church and the Lord will reveal that on Judgment Day. What a terrible end for them. They will have the blessings of the Word taken away from them. They will have no eternal life, no peace, no joy.

### **THE BUSINESS OF CHRIST'S CHURCH IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!**

May each of us this morning examine his/her heart and life and see how faithful we have been in our use of our mina, the Gospel. The Bible declares: **“WHATEVER A MAN SOWS, THAT HE WILL ALSO REAP.”**

Praise God, if the Lord Jesus has led us to be faithful in our use of His Word and the spreading of it. We need to continually pray to Him for more strength, courage, confidence, power and grace to serve Him and spread His Word all of our days. To God alone be all glory!

If our heart and conscience convicts us because we have not been faithful servants in the past, it is not too late. We can throw ourselves with repentant hearts upon our Savior, acknowledging our sinful laziness, our selfish ambitions for the business of this world and freely receive forgiveness and the faith-strengthening power of His Word that will compel and move us to live as faithful servants.

We will then be moved to give of our time as individuals telling others about Jesus. We will be moved to sacrificial giving to support the preaching and teaching of His Word in our congregation and in our synod. We will gladly give of our time as Voting members and church officers. We will freely serve our Lord in any way we can in teaching His Word to our youth. We will ever be Mission minded planning and producing ways to get the Word out to others. We will use the Word at home in our families and in our personal devotions in order to keep this faith-filled desire alive in our own hearts and to instill it in the hearts and lives of our children. May God so grant this for Jesus' sake.

There is one last footnote to this text. The citizens of the master's kingdom who rejected him were brought before him and killed. They never became servants. These are the unbelievers who rejected Jesus as their Lord and Savior, who lived their own life as they pleased. Their end will be the same as the unfaithful slaves. Eternal damnation. During their life they rejected the blessings of the Gospel-- forgiveness of sins, eternal life, salvation and peace through Christ, so in death they will not enjoy them.

Our Christianity is serious business. Every Christian has been given the Good News of salvation alone through Jesus' perfect life, sacrificial death and resurrection. And every Christian has been given the Great Commission to proclaim that same Good News to the whole world.

May this Gospel message lead us all to be serious in our faith-life, rejoice in our redemption and be busy serving our Lord so that when He returns and expects to find results of our faith, **HE WILL**, to the glory and praise of His name.

Amen.