

True SERVICE of Christ's Eternal Kingdom

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Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] We're going to turn to God's Word now, to the Bibles, and if you'd like to turn with me to Luke's Gospel and chapter 18. We're coming to the end of a little series that takes in this last section of Jesus' teaching before he enters Jerusalem, before he is going to be handed over to the authorities and flogged and spit upon and scorned and ill-treated and crucified.

And we come to the last part of that section, which begins at chapter 18 and verse 35. But I'm going to read from verse 34, which is very important.

And please note the contrast between verse 34 and the blindness that is there and what immediately follows on. Bible writers are very careful the way they arrange their material, aren't they?

And our Bibles sometimes make it harder for us because they stick these little headings in, like Jesus heals the blind beggar. If that wasn't there, and if the new paragraph wasn't there, it would all read a lot more easily.

So let's start at verse 34. But the disciples understood none of these things that Jesus had been saying about his coming suffering. This saying was hidden from them.

[1 : 15] They did not grasp what was said. As he drew near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. And hearing a crowd going by, he inquired what this meant.

They told him, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And he cried out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be quiet, silent.

But he cried out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him.

And when he came near, he asked him, what do you want me to do for you? He said, Lord, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, recover your sight.

Your faith has, literally, your faith has saved you. And immediately he recovered his sight. And followed Jesus, glorifying God.

[2 : 17] And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God too. He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector.

And he was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was. But on account of the crowd, he could not because he was of small stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him.

Because he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down. For I must stay at your house today.

So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He's gone in to be the guest of a man who's a sinner. Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I've defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, Since he also is a son of Abraham.

[3 : 30] For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost. 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. He said, Therefore a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.

Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas. That's, you'll see the footnote, a big sum of money, three months wages. He gave each of them ten minas and said, Engage in business until I come.

But his citizens hated him. And sent a delegation after him saying, We do not want this man to reign over us.

When he returned, having received the kingdom, He ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called before him that they might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him saying, Lord, your minas have made ten minas more.

[4 : 35] 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. And the second came saying, Lord, your minas have made five minas.

And he said to him, And you too are to be over five cities. Then another came saying, Lord, here is your minas, which I have kept, laid away in a handkerchief.

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. And he said to him, I'll 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. Why then did you not put my money in the bank? And am I coming? I might have collected it with interest.

And he said to those who stood by, Take the minas from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas. They said to him, Lord, he has ten minas.

[5 : 41] 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.

But now, as for these enemies of mine, who do not want me to reign over them, bring them here, and slaughter them before me.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. I'll turn with me, please, if you would, to the passage we read there, at the end of Luke chapter 18, and to chapter 19.

And we've been looking at this little series, in these chapters, for a few weeks, under the title, Are You Preparing for Eternity? In other words, we're looking at, what real Christian faith means. And in this last section, we're focusing really, on what is true service, of Christ's eternal kingdom.

You remember that, the first time we looked at these chapters, I quoted to you from, a conversation between, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Elvis Presley. Jerry Lee Lewis, that wild man of rock and roll.

[6 : 56] And yet he confessed. He said, you worry, you worry when you breathe your last. Where are you going to go?

I think it's interesting, isn't it, how wrong we can be about people. It probably surprises us, that hip and, I suppose, quite wild rockers in their day, Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, these sort of people, that they should have such serious discussions, between themselves, about matters of eternity, heaven and hell.

There you are. I suppose it surprises us, doesn't it, to think of their other nerdy, Michael Gove, snorting cocaine. But there you are, so it seems. Perhaps you'd have thought of Boris Johnson.

Apparently he said that, when he was offered some unidentified white powder, he made sure none of it went up his nose. It's rather like Bill Clinton, isn't it, saying, well I smoke marijuana, but I didn't inhale.

Our leaders have a great way with words, don't they? But I go back to Jerry Lee Lewis's question. I suspect, actually, many, many people, even those that we, we least expect, many people, do find themselves, pondering these great matters.

[8 : 04] The great questions, of life and death, the questions of heaven and hell, eternity. Much more than we realize. When people face, a crisis in their life, when people, are faced, with illness, faced with their own mortality, mortality.

That happens, doesn't it, just as you, as you get older. Those of you like me, on the other side of 50, you'll know that the NHS, won't let us forget our mortality, will they? Every two years, on your birthday, you get a present from them, a bowel screening kit.

Not exactly conducive, to many happy returns, is it? But, they won't let you forget, you're getting old. And the Lord Jesus Christ, will never let us forget, matters of life and death, matters of eternity.

That's the question, he keeps pressing, in these chapters, Luke 17 to 19. In his last public teaching, before he comes to Jerusalem, and his betrayal, and his cross.

Are you preparing, for eternity? Are you preparing, for the coming, of my glorious kingdom? That's the question, he's asking. And the answer, that he gives to that question, about how to be prepared, is equally plain.

[9 : 19] There is only one way, to prepare, for eternity. There is only one way, to be sure, that you will be saved, through the coming, certain judgment, at the hand of Jesus Christ.

And that is, if you truly see now, what the kingdom of Christ, is really all about. And therefore, you truly seek it now, above all other things, in this world, and in your life.

And that means, forsaking all other things, to come and worship, at the feet of Jesus Christ, alone. The Lord of glory.

The only Lord of glory. It means, becoming a true servant, of his eternal kingdom, now. And living, all your life, here on earth, the life of service, to him, as to the king, and to his heavenly kingdom.

Not for mere things, not for riches, not for gain, not for any of the, what he calls mammon, the things, of this passing world. All the things, that moth and rust, will ultimately destroy.

[10 : 22] And we've seen, that again and again, Jesus teaches, about salvation. And he says, salvation, is all about, something that is eternal, something that is everlasting. And it involves, an everlasting escape.

An escape, from the total destruction, the destruction, of utter separation, from his kingdom, and from himself. When he comes, to judge the whole world. That's what we saw, isn't it?

At the end of chapter 17, in those vivid pictures. It'll be like the days of Sodom. It'll be like the days of the flood. So will it be, he says, a great sweeping away, and separating from life, of those who have not, bowed the knee to him.

But of course, salvation is not just, about an everlasting escape, it's also, about a wonderful, everlasting entrance, even now, into our true destiny, as human beings.

And that is, the destiny, of everlasting service, to Christ our King. Because, to be truly saved, is, is to share, in his everlasting reign, as the King, of a whole new world.

[11 : 30] And that service, that, that true life, is, life in all its fullness, that Jesus came to explain, and to give. It's the life, of true human destinies, what we're made for.

And Jesus says, it begins now, whenever you come, to Jesus Christ, to receive the grace, of his kingdom. And we saw last time, didn't we?

Who are the recipients, of that wonderful kingdom grace? Who are the, the true servants, of Jesus, the servant king? And we saw it, didn't we? His kingdom, it's open to all.

It's open to the least, and to the greatest, and everyone in between. And it's open to all, because, it's a kingdom, that can only be received, by all. You can only receive it, humbly, with open hands.

But if you will receive it, if you do receive it, you've got to cherish it, above every other thing, that there is. You've got to truly embrace, the ways of his kingdom.

[12 : 33] You've got to show that, by responding wholeheartedly, in every way, to Jesus, his way, because you're becoming a servant, of the servant king. And so you respond, and come to him, as we saw last time, with a faith that's simple, like a little child, coming to him humbly, with empty hands, knowing, that above all else in life, you need the touch of Jesus.

And with faith, that's sincere, therefore, that gives up, and is willing to give up, everything else, to have this pearl, of great price. And because you know, the significance, of what he's giving, you'll therefore be ready, to suffer with Jesus, on his road to glory.

That's what, these verses, at the end of 31 to 34, in chapter 18, are about, aren't they? Jesus says, there'll be mockery, there'll be shame, there'll be spitting, in this world. And true servants, of Christ, must live, to serve his kingdom now.

That means, walking in his kingdom way, in this world. And that's the road, that the Lord Jesus walked. But you've got to be willing, to walk it with him, to be servants, of his kingdom.

And that's why, the next two stories here, immediately show us, what that real response, of kingdom faith, looks like. What we see here, is a poor man, and then a rich man, both saved, to follow and serve, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[14 : 02] And then Luke, rounds off the teaching, of Jesus with this parable, that reminds all, his would-be followers, of what the real rewards, of his kingdom are, for those who will share, in his service forever.

So look first, at verses, 35 there, to chapter 19, and verse 10, because here, he shows us, the real response, of true kingdom faith.

He just illustrates, for us so vividly, don't they, the real response, that does prepare, for that coming in glory, of our Lord Jesus Christ. It shows so clearly, that what Jesus said, is impossible for man, is not impossible, with God.

God makes it possible, he can bring about, that response, of saving faith, in anyone. And here we have, both a very poor man, a beggar, and then a very rich man, and both, are truly saved, aren't they?

And both of them, show that that faith, is real, because it's evident, in their response. They leave, their old lives behind, they change totally, and they follow, Jesus Christ.

[15 : 06] One of them, leaves a demeaning, life of begging, he leaves very little. The other one, leaves an equally, demeaning life, of dishonesty, amid great, great wealth.

But both of them, find salvation, entering the service, of the Lord Jesus, and his kingdom, and his people. So look at verse 35, first of all, we have a poor man, a blind beggar.

Now notice, first of all, the poor, are not given, special treatment, and they're not, saved automatically, by Jesus. God shows no partiality, it's not one thing, for the great, and the good, and another for the small, no.

He needs salvation, from Jesus Christ, as much as anybody else. But you see the irony, verse 34, three times, we're told there, aren't we, that even Jesus' disciples, are still totally blind, to the truth about him.

They understood, none of these things, the saying was hidden, from them. They did not grasp, what was said. But here we have, a blind man, who sees absolutely everything, that none of them could see.

[16 : 13] He hears, who's coming? Jesus of Nazareth. A man, from Nazareth. And so immediately, he cries out, verse 38, do you see, son of David, have mercy on me.

Son of David, Messiah. You are the Messiah, he's saying. You're the son of David, who fulfills, all the promises, of God's prophets, to bring salvation at last.

That's what he's saying, isn't it? All the people tell him, to shut up. But he cries out, we're told, all the more. It's the same word, by the way, as used in chapter 18, verse 6, of the widow, the persistent widow, who cried out, for justice.

So here we are, he is just, as persistent, as she was. And he's answered. In fact, he's answered more wonderfully, than he knew. He asks for his sight, and he gets his sight.

But Jesus' words there, mean much, much more, don't they, in verse 42. Jesus said to him, recover your sight, your faith has, literally, your faith has saved you. The same thing Jesus said, to the lepers, in chapter 17, the same thing, he speaks about, down here, in chapter 19, verse 9, salvation.

[17 : 26] salvation. And notice, when this, when this beggar, receives his physical sight, what does he see? Does he see, a glorious Messiah king, coming to bring in his kingdom, right now, and take over the whole world?

No, he doesn't. He just sees, Jesus of Nazareth, a man on a dusty road, to Jerusalem, to be met with suffering, and spitting, and scorn, and death.

He doesn't see, a glorious king, come to reign, does he? The people in Nazareth, in the synagogue, when Jesus, stood up before them, back in Luke chapter 4, they saw just, a man from Nazareth, whose family we know, with nothing special.

They didn't see anything else, did they? Jesus stood before them, and he opened the scriptures, in a way with authority, they'd never heard. He proclaimed himself, to be, the fulfillment, of all God's promises, right in front, of their very eyes, they were utterly blind, and saw none of it.

Just saw, what he seemed to be. But this blind man, even before he had, had his eyes opened, he saw in his heart, truly, who Jesus was, the Messiah, the son of David.

[18 : 41] And his faith saved him, said Jesus. And because it was, true saving faith, even though Jesus, didn't look like, a great king, he followed him anyway, praising God.

He followed in the path, of the servant king. Isn't that striking? The rich ruler, had everything, and yet he saw nothing.

And even the disciples, didn't yet grasp it properly, despite all their teaching. But this blind beggar, sees, that Jesus Christ, is the son of David, the Messiah, and he follows him.

And look at verse 43, he causes others, to be praising him too. He followed him, glorifying God, and the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God too. And often it is, the unlikely people, the unimportant people, the ordinary people, the little people.

Often it's them, who see, isn't it? Because by a miracle of God, they get, an insight, that escapes the wise, escapes the powerful, escapes those of noble birth.

[19 : 53] It's what Paul says, to the Corinthian church, in 1 Corinthians 1, isn't it? Why? So that, he says, no one can boast, no one can boast. Because it's all, by God's sovereign, saving grace.

Often it is, isn't it? Those in the most humble circumstances, who are most receptive, to the gospel, because, they know their need. They've already been humbled. They're ready to receive. Those with a great deal in life, often don't see their need, do they?

Until it's too late. That's why, Jesus says, it's so hard, for those who have much, in this world's turn, to enter the kingdom of heaven. That's why, it's not, our Scottish contemporaries, I'm afraid, who are flooding, our Christianity, explored courses.

Who is it? It's asylum seekers. It's people from, from nations, where they fled, hardship, misery, suffering, persecution. They can see, what so many of our, contemporaries can't see.

Their need. Praise God though, it's not, it's not that Paul said, it's not any wise, not any wise, or of noble birth, who can be saved.

[21 : 07] He just said, it's not many, remember the Countess of Huntington, George Whitfield's great patron, who said, I was saved by an M, the M of the many, not the any. It's not that not any, who are great ones, could be saved.

But it does seem to be true, that it's not many. But Jesus does save, not only the poor, and the helpless, not only those at the bottom.

He does save those at the top. Jesus, unlike Mr. Corbin, is for the few, as well as for the many. Look at verses 1 to 10, of chapter 19, that shows us so vividly, doesn't it, the story of Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector.

Notice verse 2, he was a chief tax collector, he was right at the top, of a very wealthy pile. He was a big man, in that sense. But notice the irony again, in verse 3.

He wants to see Jesus, but he can't see, because although, well he's a big man, in some ways, he's a man of small stature, he's a little man. Maybe he had small man syndrome.

[22 : 13] Sometimes, I think that, of some of these great ones. Every time I see Vladimir Putin, I wonder that. He's a tiny, tiny little chap, isn't he? Maybe that's why he's always, on horseback, with his bare chest, and shooting guns, and wrestling tigers, and things.

Maybe that was Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus certainly had great wealth. He'd got his wealth, hadn't he? But, with his wealth, he found himself hated.

He found himself demonized. Well, no wonder he had enriched himself, hadn't he, at the hands of the hated Roman conquerors. Think about somebody in occupied France, during the last war, who was doing business, and making a load of money, by collaborating with the Nazis.

That's the sort of man he was. And, in fact, he was lost, wasn't he? He was ostracized. He was desperately, in need, of rescue. But, Jesus, is on a rescue mission.

Look at verse 10. He's on a rescue mission, to seek, and to save, those who are lost. Including, lost, like Zacchaeus. He's on a long journey, to Jerusalem.

[23 : 19] He has come to accomplish, all that the prophets promised. He's come to bring, ultimate judgment, on sin. He's come to bring, the ultimate rescue, of God's salvation, to his own.

By giving himself, as a servant king, for his people. And, on the road to Jerusalem, he's showing, that great mercy, at work, in the lives, of individuals, that he meets.

And Zacchaeus, who is lost, who can't see, what he needs to see, and who knows it, he discovers, that in fact, it's Jesus, who's actually found him, not the other way around, verse 5.

Even knows his name. And here he is, perched in his tree, and he hears that, that Jesus has planned, to come to his house, that very day. I must stay, at your house today, he says.

One of Luke's musts, all the way through his gospel, one of these, sovereign necessities. And notice the urgency, it's today. It's now or never, when Jesus, puts his finger on you.

[24 : 19] Jesus was never going to, go that way again, was he? And no one can delay, when Jesus fixes them, with his call. It's got to be that day. And Zacchaeus didn't delay.

And his whole life, was changed immediately. His was a real response. It's a real saving faith. He received Jesus, we're told, joyfully.

Just like a little child, in chapter 18. And we can see evidence, of that change, in his immediate transformation. Immediately, he changed, from being a man, who was a getter, for himself, to a man, who was a giver, to other people.

Well, the truth is, if your wallet, has never been opened, for God, then it's very, very unlikely, your heart, has ever been opened, for God. Notice verse 8. Jesus didn't here, didn't, make it a condition, for Zacchaeus, to give away his wealth, for entry to the kingdom.

He did that, for the rich young ruler, didn't he? But he didn't need, to do it for Zacchaeus here, because we're already told, he'd received Jesus, joyfully, unlike the ruler. And that had changed him, utterly, already.

[25 : 30] He was a new man, and that was obvious, to everybody. Jesus came into his life, Jesus came into his, his social isolation, as a rich man, but a despised man, a lonely man.

And he befriended him, just as he was, but, Jesus did not leave him, just as he was, did he? Because when Jesus, comes into your life, well look at verse 9, salvation comes, salvation comes, he's transformed.

Now you're a true son, of Abraham, Jesus says. Abraham, remember who left, all the riches, of his former life, in that great city, of Ur of the Chaldeans, go in the British Museum, and you'll see, the artifacts, from that great city.

And he went out, left it all behind, trusting God, following God, on the path, of everlasting life. And that's Zacchaeus. And his true response, to faith, is visible, verse 8, in his life.

He's repaying, four times, all his fraudulent taking. And he's giving, half of everything, to the poor. He's not just going back, and making a big donation, to the pension fund, of his employees, which has hit the rocks, because he sold his business.

[26 : 46] He's doing that, with knobs on, and he's setting up, a whole bunch, of charitable foundations, to help others, with half of his whole, substance. And you see, what Luke is showing us, by so carefully, putting this story, about this tax collector, alongside, the story of the penitent, tax collector, in chapter 18.

In fact, alongside the story, of the blind beggar too. He's showing us, isn't he, the whole truth, about real saving faith. What we saw in chapter 18, so clearly, in that story, of the Pharisee, and the tax collector, is that, we're saved, we're justified, only by God's mercy, only by receiving his mercy, in penitent faith.

But the faith, that saves, and truly saves, is never alone, is it? And that's what, we're being shown here. Grace always demands, a response.

Grace always enables, and makes a response. Living faith, always shows, living fruit. That's real repentance.

So the blind beggar, leaves a life of little, to follow Jesus, but he truly does, follow him. Despite all that his eyes, doesn't see, he doesn't see a great king. He follows Jesus, on a dusty road, to Jerusalem, to suffering.

[28 : 07] But he knows, that Jesus, is the king, over all things. Despite appearances. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, gives up a very great deal. But he gives, everything over, to serving, the kingdom, of the Lord Jesus, and his people.

See the gospel's call, is to everybody. It's to the great, and the small. It's to the rich, and the poor. It's to the old, and the young. And it's the same call, to everyone, isn't it?

Deny yourself, take up, your cross, and follow Jesus. Now, in this world. It's a call, to submit, isn't it?

To Christ alone, as the sole king, and master. Even now, even though he doesn't yet, look like it. He doesn't look like, a triumphant king. Does the Lord Jesus, look like a triumphant king, today to our world?

No. He looks like, a scorned, dead Jewish teacher. And it's a call, to serve him alone, and his kingdom, and his people, above all other things.

[29 : 09] Because, what did Jesus keep saying? You can't serve, two masters. You can't serve God, and, mammon, this world's game. In fact, the real joy, the real reward, of Jesus' kingdom, is to be given a share, in serving in the glory, of his kingdom, even now.

Even when it might not, look like very much. That's what salvation, meant for this blind man. Following Jesus, glorifying God, causing others, to glorify him too.

That's what it meant, for Zacchaeus, to rejoice, in serving Christ, by blessing, the people of Christ, now, in this world. It begins now. And it must begin now, mustn't it, in order to prepare, for the ultimate, reward of salvation, which is serving, forever, in Christ's, everlasting kingdom.

And that's why, we have this parable, isn't it? Rounding off the section, in verses 11 to 27. It just makes, a very simple point, about the real reward, of Christ's kingdom. You see, the true faith, that prepares, for the saviour's coming, glory, gives all, to prosper, that kingdom now, until, it will finally, at last, be revealed, at his coming.

And we've got to have, a proper perspective, on our present life, but also, always, on that world, that is to come. And Jesus tells this story, to correct a misunderstanding, about that.

[30 : 38] Verse 11, you see, the full glory, of his kingdom, they thought, was about to appear, immediately. But Jesus says, no, no, not so. But nevertheless, you're never to take, your eye, off that day.

Because you are, living and preparing, for that glory, right now. And that day, will mean, everlasting life, for all, who are Christ's, true people.

But it will mean, more than that. What does Paul say to Timothy? That the glory, of the gospel, is that, if we have died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign, with him, forever.

You see, that responsibility, that will be received then, in his everlasting glory, that will be dependent on, and that will be, in proportion to, our submission, to Christ's rule now.

And our service, of his kingdom now. While we await, his return. And that's because, it will just be, the natural development, of that fruit. Fruit that's grown, out of lives, of glad service.

[31 : 42] Now, that is what's going to fit us, for greater service, forever and ever. And that's what, this vivid parable, is depicting, very simply. Glaringly obvious, isn't it, in the context, of everything, Jesus is saying here, about his return.

It's obvious, he is representing, himself here, as the king, who's gone away, to receive a kingdom, and is going to return. Actually, it was a very contemporary, story, for, his first heroes, because that is exactly, what happened actually, to, to King Herod's son, Archealus.

Archealus, went off to Rome, to be made king, they were puppet kings, really by the Romans. And exactly, this very thing happened to him. He was so unpopular, of the people, that, the people of Israel, sent off a delegation, saying, we don't want this guy, to be our king.

We don't want him, to reign over us. Verse 14. And Jesus is picking that up, and saying, that's exactly, what the world, is going to say about me. And many, in that day, just as many today, have echoed those words, haven't they?

We do not want, Jesus Christ, as ruler of our lives. We will not have this man, as king over us. But there are some, Jesus says, who are his servants.

[32 : 55] And to each of them, is given the same charge. Verse 13. It's a, a modest responsibility. Three months wages, a big responsibility, but it's not so overwhelming. Not too much for anybody.

And each one is told, engage in business, until I return. Seek to prosper my kingdom, in my absence. It's not rocket science, is it? The message of this parable.

It is a challenge, definitely, to Jesus' foes, his enemies. That's the Pharisees, who are attacking him then, and many others, since then, who have said, we don't want you ruling over us. Well, it is a challenge, Jesus is saying plainly, he is a king.

And kings demand, submission to their authority. And just because he's absent, from this world for a time, don't think, don't think you can rebel against him, because he will return. And when he does return, well, look at verse 27, right at the end there.

Make no mistake. The king demands, submission from all. There will be a judgment. But it's also a message, isn't it, to everyone, who would be a follower, of Jesus Christ.

[34 : 06] Jesus is a king, he says, who although he is going away, for a time, he requires, the service, to his kingdom now. And he expects, the servants of his kingdom, to exercise, a fruitful stewardship.

Because it's a great privilege, he's given to them. To receive a share, of his own wealth. To be granted a share, in that everlasting purpose, of his kingdom. And what Jesus is saying is, don't make a mistake, on this either.

I have given resources, to every single one, who follows me. And I will require a reckoning, from every single one. The point of this parable, is a bit different, to a similar parable, that you find in Matthew 25, the parable of the talents.

Remember the servants there, are given different talents. But here it's different. Every servant, is given the same. A minor. What differs here, in this parable, is the zeal, and the dedication, to the task.

So verse 16. One man has multiplied his, to make ten minas more. And he gets great praise, from his master. Well no doubt. Verse 18. Another makes five.

[35 : 17] He too, is greatly rewarded. Well just so, if some deposit, of the gospel, is given to every, Christian believer, every one of us, bear a responsibility, don't we?

For what's been entrusted, to us. And the reward, of that faithful trust, in what Jesus calls, very little. Back in chapter 17, he says, it's just our basic, Christian duty.

Well the reward, is to receive, a further trust, and further responsibility, and to go on, serving Jesus, more and more. To go on sharing, in his reign of glory, when he comes, over many cities, he puts it here.

Serving, serving multitudes, of his people. The reward, for serving some, of his people here, is to serve, even more of his people, forever and ever. And if loving, and serving the Lord's people, has been your joy in life, has been your, your crown in life, then what greater reward, could God give you, what greater crown, could he give you, than to multiply that joy, and make it go on, and on, and on, forever and ever.

And if salvation now, has meant, entering a life, of joyful service, to Christ here, then, then what would, full salvation be, but entering into that life, of everlasting service, with abundant joy.

[36 : 43] But what about verse 20? Who is this person, who wrapped up his mind, in a handkerchief? Can you wrap up the gospel, to be as fruitless as that?

What sort of servant of Jesus, could that possibly be? Here's what someone's written, on this chapter. It's the man, who's so concerned, about purity of doctrine, that he creates, a closed loop of fellowship, like a secret society.

It's the man, who so cuts himself off, from the outside world, and evangelical huddles, that he has no opportunity, to witness to others, and trade with his pound. It's the man, who hides his light, under a bushel, at the office, or in the factory, so that no one, can suspect him, of being a Christian.

It's the man, who knows the truth, and knows what he should be doing, and does not do it, for fear of repercussions, it's going to have, when he dares to do it. It's the man, who includes in his belief, the truth that prayer, changes things, but won't sacrifice, his Wednesday evening's pleasure, to actually come and pray, for God's work, with the church.

It's the man, who pays lip service, to the truth, that the gospel matters, supremely, and yet trifles, with every conceivable, distraction, rather than take the gospel, seriously, and commit himself, irrevocably, wholeheartedly, to promoting it.

[38 : 07] What kind of servant, to Jesus, could that really be, with so fruitless a faith? With such a false view, such a warped view, of the master, he seems to think, he's a hard man, out to defraud his people, out to abuse, his own servants.

Well, if you read the books, the scholars argue endlessly, about whether this servant, is meant to be a real believer, distinguished from the enemies, in verse 27, so that their punishment, will be a loss, but not the loss of salvation.

Or whether in fact, like in the parable, in Matthew 25, he's actually really, an enemy in disguise. But I don't think, Jesus told this parable, so scholars could write pages, and pages, and argue about that.

Do you? I think Jesus wrote this parable, so that we would ask ourselves, the real question, where am I in that story? Where are you in that story, and where am I?

Because however we take that, there's only one good outcome, here in this parable, isn't there? There's no neutrality either, we're found gladly, fruitfully aligned, to Christ and his kingdom, and his service, on the day he comes, or, or we will face, a word of terrible rebuke, from the Lord Jesus himself, whether it's for outright rebellion, faithlessness, or just total fruitlessness.

[39 : 27] And we see that again and again, in Jesus teaching, don't we? He says, there will be, there will be shame, on the day of his coming, not just for those, who have rejected, Jesus purposefully, but for those, who have rejected him, presumptuously, taking it lightly.

So that's the question, that I find myself, needing to ask myself, what is my life today? What is my zeal, and my joy, in service for Christ's kingdom, or the lack of it? What is that saying, about how I really think, of my Lord, and my master?

Jesus is clear, the son of man, is coming back, in power and glory, having received his kingdom. And here's the thing friends, that day is much closer now, than when Luke first wrote these words, in his gospel, isn't it?

So are you, preparing now, am I preparing now, for entry, into everlasting service? Will Jesus know, on that day, when he comes, that he can, entrust you and me, with his precious cities, full of his precious people?

Well it's a big question, are we preparing, for eternity, for eternity? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you, that the Lord Jesus Christ, is so clear, that there's nothing hidden, in his gospel word to us.

[41 : 09] Everything is, straightforward, and simple, not easy, but simple. And so we pray, Lord, that you would help us, to be those, who on that day, will hear, these marvelous words, well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy, of your master.

So help us, to help one another, Lord, to be, every day, preparing for that last day, living now, in time, but for eternity.

That on that day, we together, will not only, glorify God, but many others, through the witness, of our lives, will join us, in praising him, forever and ever.

For we ask it, in Jesus name, Amen.