

# Service and the Coming Kingdom (Part II)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good, well let's turn to our reading this morning and Luke, not Luke, Josh is going to be preaching to us from Luke. And we're looking at the second half of the passage that we read last week.

So Luke chapter 18, if you have a visitor Bible that's page 878. So Luke 18 and we're picking it up at verse 35.

Through to chapter 19, verse 27. So Luke 18 and verse 35. As Jesus drew near to 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.

And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be 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.

[ 1 : 15 ] 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 made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.

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

For 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.

[ 2 : 17 ] So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled.

He has gotten to be the guest of a man who's a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I have 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.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell them a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, 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 minors and said to them, Engage in business until I come.

[ 3 : 28 ] 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 to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business.

The first came before him, saying, Lord, your miner has made ten miners more. 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 miner has made five miners. And he said to him, You are to be over five cities. Then another came, saying, Lord, here is your miner, which I 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. He said to them, 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. Why then did you not put my money in the bank? And at my coming, I might collect interest.  
[ 4 : 45 ] And he said to those who stood by, Take the miner from him and give it to the one who has the ten miners. And they said to him, Lord, he has ten miners. 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 as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me. Amen. May God bless his word to us this morning. Amen. We'll do you open once again to Luke's gospel.

What will you spend the rest of your life doing? What do you want it to be for? What would it look like for your life to be some sort of success?

What would bring you satisfaction? What will you spend the rest of your life doing? Now, add eternity onto your life.

[ 6 : 00 ] And what will you spend the rest of your life, not just here on this earth, doing, but also what will you spend eternity doing? What will you spend eternity doing? Jesus wants us to be very clear that what we will spend the rest of our lives doing and what we will spend eternity doing will have a very, very strong connection and a very clear continuity between one and the other.

The realities of eternal life have their roots firmly established in this world. And that's really the idea at the climax of Jesus teaching about his coming kingdom.

The ultimate end of history will be the day when Jesus returns to establish his complete rule over this world. His will be a glorious rule and a resistible rule.

It will be the arrival of all that we could ever long for and dream of. The day when all sorrows will cease. The day when death with its horrid tentacles will be destroyed forever so that there's no more pain or sadness or frustration or loss or sin.

And of course, this will only come about as Jesus does judge all evil. And as Jesus does that, his throne will be seen to be established over this whole world and at that point, his people will be joined to him on that day, gathered to reign with him.

[ 7 : 29 ] And so that glorious future will see Jesus reigning, his throne established and his people sharing the reign with him in the ultimate and fulfilled service of his kingdom.

but that service begins here and now. That service begins when faith has given birth in the souls of men.

Remember, we saw last week that such faith is actually impossible for man. That's what Jesus said in 1827. Jesus has been asked the question, who then can be saved if it's harder for a rich man to enter Jesus' kingdom than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle?

Who on earth can be saved? How can it be that sometimes in this world that someone in this world might give up all of their earthly treasures, give up everything in order to follow Jesus above all else to serve him here, to serve him wholeheartedly?

How is that possible? Well, Jesus says it isn't. It's impossible with man. But he does say it's possible with God. And that's what we see illustrated with these first two incidents.

[ 8 : 35 ] We see the birthing of impossible faith. Verses 35 through to 1910. The birthing of impossible faith. God can rise real faith in anyone.

And when he does, he never leaves them unchanged. The impossible faith that will enable us to follow Jesus to glory can be birthed in the lives of anyone. God really can turn a life totally around. And Luke gives two illustrations of this. Two genuine responses of faith in a blind beggar and in the chief tax collector. Well, firstly, the blind beggar in which we see that impossible faith is able to see things as they really are and not as they appear in this world.

Now, we often see in the Gospels the mention of the poor. Jesus says he's come to proclaim good news to the poor. Chapter 4 and chapter 6 he says, blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of God.

But we mustn't get all this confused. There isn't some sort of inherent virtue in being poor. And Jesus focusing and ministering to the poor is not to alleviate financial poverty as such, but very often wanting to alleviate the poverty of a spirit that knows that one has no hope on their own.

[ 9 : 58 ] And so here as Luke and Jesus are illustrating for us the impossible work that God makes possible the very first instances of a poor man, a beggar. But notice it isn't simply by being poor that he's saved.

He doesn't get a buy, a free pass because he's poor. No, we've seen that God welcomes the newbies, that his kingdom is free from partiality when it comes to the credentials of this world. But what Jesus doesn't mean is that somehow the poor belonged to him by default. No, Jesus shows no partiality and the only way for anyone to be welcomed into his kingdom is the same way for everybody to be welcomed into his kingdom, namely the response of real and living faith. But notice, we've just been told that what Jesus was speaking of was hidden from his disciples, verse 34. They couldn't understand it at all. They couldn't see it.

And yet, verse 35, here comes a beggar, a blind beggar, who can see so very clearly. He asks, what's going on as the crowd passes? And he's told, verse 37, Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. [11:11] And look at his crystal clear sight, look at his eyes of faith. Verse 30, he cries out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

Here was a man who couldn't see. He was poor, he was marginalized, told to shut up by the crowds. In our world, he'd be the last sort of person we'd ever go to for clarity, for reality, for truth. Last person we'd go to expecting them to have the expert view on things. But look, he sees Jesus as he is, son of David.

He sees in Jesus God's long-promised king. Not because he can see some sort of halo in Jesus' head, not because Jesus was walking past in great royal robes and wearing a grand crown. No, we've seen that. Actually, Jesus' appearance as ministry was left to Pharisees and others unimpressed, left them looking elsewhere for a glorious kingdom. But not this man.

[12:14] He could see that here was the one through whom all of God's promises are made, yes and amen. Here is the one through whom salvation has come. Here is the one who can bear the burden of providing all that I have not and need.

But notice, his profession about Jesus is accompanied with a plea to Jesus. He sees reality and because of that he says, have mercy on me.

Jesus, don't just be the savior of the world out there. Be a savior to me right here, now, in my own personal need. Verse 38, he cries out. The same word used with a persistent widow back in verse 7.

He cries out persistently just like that widow. He's told to shut up but he cries out all the more. And actually, isn't that something that ought to encourage us?

Crowds may shout us down, may put pressure on us, but when we realize our desperate need, when we realize our need for mercy, and when we realize what's true about Jesus, it isn't really the crowd's conclusion that ought to matter, is it?

[13:23] This world doesn't see clearly. This blind man can tell you that. Maybe there are some of us here right now who are facing pressure from the world, from the crowds telling us to hush.

But real faith, the faith that God is able to rise within anyone who sees things, not with this world's eyes, but with the eye of faith, the faith that even a blind man can have.

Don't let the crowds keep you from the cross and so the crown. And so look at how marvelously Jesus responds. Verse 40, he stops and asks, what do you want me to do for you?

And his cry of mercy, his cry for mercy is met with unbelievable mercy, receiving more than just sight. Jesus says, your faith has saved you. That's the word there.

Now, as he received his sight, what would he have seen? He would have looked at Jesus and seen little more than what the crowds were seeing.

[14:26] A man traveling on a journey, a journey to Jerusalem, a journey that would see him mocked, treated shamefully, spit upon, flogged and killed. But that didn't change his mind, did it?

Because real faith cuts through this world's expectations. And so this blind beggar written off by the world is able to see reality. That is real faith. Seeing things as they really are with the ultimate perspective and not just settling for this world says and sees.

And that's what then helps us to be given in wholehearted service to Jesus because our perspective changes to see real reality. The beggar could see that here before him was someone worthy.

verse 43 of following, worshipping, leaving his old life behind for. And so impossible faith is roused and this man leaves behind all that he was before for a life now given to following Jesus, to glorifying him, to serving him, given a new purpose, a purpose that sees others, verse 43, praising God.

And we see similar in the second illustration with Zacchaeus where we see that Jesus' touch enables us to treasure him far more than this world's riches.

[15:50] Verse 2, Zacchaeus was not just a tax collector, he was the chief tax collector. He was an important man and verse 2, he was a rich man. The total opposite of the blind beggar.

Except, notice what we were told in verse 3, that whilst he wants to see Jesus, he too is unable to see him on account of his height. Height blinded, as it were.

Not a problem that I have. And so we're given these curious little details about him being small and about climbing a tree. Well, why these details?

Why does Luke tell us slightly obscure details he wouldn't really find anywhere else? Why the focus on that? Well, remember, we've seen in our time in Luke's gospel a thread that has run throughout it, a thread that began all the way back in the songs in chapter 1.

As Mary sings of Jesus that he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humblest to it. He's filled the hungry with good things and the rich he's sent away empty.

[16:56] And Simeon, likewise, said of Jesus that he is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel. And Luke helps us then to see this thread at play in his gospel by using language of going up and coming down so that people's physical movements mirror something of their posture.

And so Zacchaeus' height has him up a tree which means that Jesus can come to him and look up and say, come down. Come down. Come down from your tree.

Come down from your throne. Come down from your riches. And so Luke with these details is helping us to see in a textured way that Jesus is able to bring down the mighty to him that they may be lifted up truly.

And so here Jesus has sought out one for him it would be impossible to enter the kingdom. One for him it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for him to enter Jesus' kingdom.

So Jesus says, hurry, come down for I must come to your house today. There's an urgency to Jesus' summons.

[18:10] And notice it isn't an impossibility. Jesus says, I must come to your house. This is no chance encounter. Jesus can rise impossible faith in people because it isn't something left to chance.

Because God in his infinite wisdom has made a plan in eternity past. Ephesians 1 would tell us that behind these simple words as Jesus says, I must come to your house today.

Behind those are the truth that God has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Those who he will make holy and blameless before him. What is impossible with man is not just possible with God.

It's planned. So that he is in the business of personally seeking out those who will be given to him. given to him completely in service of his kingdom.

And so here we have a rich man, an important man, a man who had to come down in all manner of ways, not just from a tree. And were that merely to do with the will and work of man, it would be impossible.

[19:13] Jesus has said that. But here, this summons to come down comes with the same summons that was given to the rich ruler as we saw last week. The summons to hold lightly all of your silver in order to hold tightly to the Savior.

And here, look at what happens. This is what the gospel can do in any life, in your life, in my life, if we let it. Here was an important man, a rich man, stooping down at Jesus' summons to welcome him and notice to welcome him joyfully.

chapter 18, verse 17, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And here we have the most unlikely of man receiving Jesus joyfully.

Not earned or deserved, but because Jesus came knocking, because Jesus demanded to meet with him. Jesus' touch had its full effect. Zacchaeus joyfully received Jesus.

Thus, Jesus could say, verse 9, today salvation has come to this house. And more than that, he says, verse 9, he is also a son of Abraham. Back in chapter 3, John the Baptist had been preparing the way for Jesus and confronting the presumption of some who would look to their heritage as a security from the judgment to come.

[20:41] They would say things like, we have Abraham as our father, we'll be fine. But John's response was that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. And here, in the

most unlikely of place, we see a stone turned into a son.

We see a rich man pass through the eye of a needle. We see a tax collector, the most detested of people in Israel. We see not just a tax collector, but the chief tax collector adopted into the family line of God.

Impossible in so many ways, but possible with God. And then look at the response. Look at what Zacchaeus does in response to the touch of Jesus.

He pours out his riches to others, half of it given to the poor and with the rest of it, restitution for all of his pilfering, restitution that goes far above what the law even requires, paid back fourfold.

Is it possible to follow Jesus on the path to his kingdom? Is that possible? We can find ourselves asking such questions. Is the cost too much?

[ 21 : 50 ] Is the ask too hard? Mockery, harm, death, shame, giving up all of my riches. Is that possible? Will I be able to do that? Can I possibly persevere on the path to glory, following Jesus in costly ways, in difficult footsteps?

I'm weak. Maybe that's how you feel. Maybe you see the tide of this world building up into a massive wave that you just think will knock you over. You won't be able to withstand the pressure from the crowds.

You won't be able to overcome all the allure of cash and comfort. Maybe you think, I want to walk with Jesus. I want to follow him. I love the look of him, the sound of him, but I'm just not sure I'll be able to.

I don't know if I'll be able to hold on loosely to this world. Well, Jesus is illustrating here that his touch upon our lives does the impossible.

When we cry out to him for mercy, when we come down from our perches and joyfully receive him, he can work powerfully in us so that we can be given wholly to his service, money and all.

[ 23 : 01 ] And it's right at this point to think about our money. As a church, we do have much to encourage us in this whole area. There's been remarkable generosity just over the last few weeks for our sister church in Kilmores.

And the reality is here that ministry is cherished and provided for. There is evidence right here in our midst of God rising in possible faith in people. But, it is possible to hide as individuals in this collective generosity, isn't it?

But with Jesus, our money is inescapable. We can't say to him that that's a topic that's off the table, that I won't let him have his say about my money.

Jesus won't let us say to him that it's my money, it's none of your business. Throughout Luke, again and again, repentance affects our riches. the deep fruit of repentance, the deep fruit of receiving Jesus joyfully as evidenced and seen through a heart whose affections have been won to something new so that we can pour out our money to bless others, to see others rejoice in Jesus. To this world, that just seems crazy. But that's the power of Jesus' touch. He wants to repurpose our lives for something that will truly last forever.

[ 24 : 21 ] He wants us to see not as this world sees. I was at a dinner just this past week and was sat beside a man whose boss has been very successful in business, employing over 800 people worldwide, massive company, and attached to his business is a foundation that seeks to give money to worthy Christian causes.

They're giving significant amounts of money to see men trained for ministry. And his boss's goal is to leave all of his wealth to his foundation in order to fund for generations various kingdom endeavors.

What can do that to a man? What can so impact someone that what seems impossible, the giving away of immense wealth in this world in order to bless others and serve Jesus' kingdom, what can do that?

If you think that is too unbelievable, too much, too far, well, Jesus agrees. For man, it's impossible. But it is possible for God.

What can cause a man of immense wealth to pour it all out not for his own legacy, but for Jesus? What can cause you to reshape your priorities away from wealth and instead to witness to Jesus and to worship him?

[ 25 : 37 ] What can cause a heart to see money as a means of blessing others for eternity? What can cause a life to be reshaped, priorities reset, away from the big house, to successful career, and instead focusing on serving Jesus by longing for our friends and colleagues and neighbors to hear

about and to hope in Jesus?

Or allow us to prioritize above all else for our children their nourishment in the faith. Jesus' touch can do that. When he is received joyfully as the one who does bestow more mercy than we could ever ask for.

It isn't just that Jesus can do this. He wants to do it. He wants people to know the true fulfillment of satisfied service as opposed to the terrible frustration of seeking ever more silver.

Verse 10, the Son of Man came to seek and to see of the lost. It's worth pondering here that the lost must be those who are rich.

It's the context, isn't it? Jesus wants to rescue us from the enslaving power of this world's riches and set us free to enjoy the promise of reigning in the world to come.

[ 26 : 56 ] And so, will we follow Jesus? Will we tread his path? Will we trust him that the service of his kingdom is that which is of eternal worth?

Well then, he promises to us that we will know joy and service not just now but forever. And that's what we see in this final incident with the parable of the 10 minas verse 11 to 27.

We see the beginning of incessant fruitfulness. The beginning of incessant fruitfulness. Real faith prepares for Jesus' glorious coming kingdom by seeking to prosper that kingdom here and now. Our lives here and now are a means of preparing for what our lives will look like in eternity. The wonderful service of Jesus' coming kingdom will be enjoyed by those who are given to serving Jesus' kingdom in their earthly lives.

Verse 11. This parable is told because it was supposed that God's kingdom was to appear immediately. And so, Jesus wants his followers to be clear about the future, about when his kingdom is coming and what it'll be like, to be clear about the future and to be clear about here and now.

[ 28 : 14 ] Which means being clear about who and what we serve. So, verse 13. Notice 10 servants are given a task. But before we see what these servants get up to, notice verse 14.

We could almost skip over this, not really notice it. A noble man representing Jesus is going away and will come back to claim his kingdom. But verse 14, his citizens hated him.

Sent a delegation to say that we do not want this man to rule over us. We do not want to serve this man. And so, the context of serving Jesus is a context of hostility.

Jesus is always very plain about that. Our loyalty to Jesus is always going to need to be proven under pressure. So hostility is to be expected. That's not a surprise to us.

But this verse is here as a challenge to those who won't accept Jesus. The ultimate end of this world will be Jesus enthroned clearly and visibly before all.

[ 29 : 20 ] And he will be worshipped and served as the wonderful king that he is. And his rule will be all that we could long for and want.

The answer to every ill and evil in this world. But those who won't serve him now won't serve him then. You see, our lives here and now are preparing for what we will spend eternity doing.

And so Jesus in this parable doesn't just address his followers. He addressed those who might be listening in, those who, verse 7, grumble at his grace, grumble that he'd meet with Zacchaeus.

And here we see a hatred for Jesus, not just grumbling, a hatred, a refusal to have him as king, a refusal to be his servant.

And how will that end? Well, verse 27, the end is a very grim picture indeed, slaughter. Not easy words, are they?

[ 30 : 23 ] Refusing Jesus as king, refusing his rule, refusing to submit to him and serve him will mean that his glorious reign won't be for you. Now, there are limits to how much we're able to try to sanitize the language around that reality.

Slaughter is a grim term, a grim idea. Listen to Ralph Davis on this. He says, it is simply impossible to describe final judgment pleasantly and attractively.

It is intended to be awful, to scare you, even offend you, if in that way it can get your attention.

If we won't have Jesus as our king now, he won't be our king at the last day, and it will be a grim thing indeed. But then Jesus does go on to address those who do serve him as king.

Verse 13, the ten servants are each given a minor. And the details here differ to Matthew's version of this parable. In Matthew's version they are given different amounts, but here the servants are all entrusted with the same thing.

[ 31 : 33 ] Jesus' followers are all entrusted with the gospel. And the servants are to engage in business until the nobleman comes back to claim his throne. And when he does, verse 15, he gathers the servants together to inquire as to how they have used the investment.

And so verse 16, one servant had generated ten more miners, one servant had generated five more, and one had done nothing with it other than to wrap it up and store it away. And so the first servant, he receives a commendation.

Well done, good servant. And then more than that, a reward. Because you've been faithful over a little, you shall have authority over ten cities.

The next servant is a reward, five miners, five cities. And so notice, the reward is to be placed over cities.

That might seem strange. Why is that the glory of Jesus' kingdom? Is that really glorious? To be a servant still? To have responsibility over cities forevermore?

[ 32 : 41 ] But let's take a step back for a moment and see where the Bible begins and ends. Right back at the very beginning, in Genesis, man's purpose at creation was to work. Placed into the garden as image bearers of God, as little kings under the supreme king.

And the work of the garden was to fill and subdue, to have dominion. A dominion that was to start in the garden, the paradise, the original temple, the place where God himself dwelt, and a dominion that was to spread that garden paradise to the whole world, to fill and subdue, to have dominion over the whole world.

And so our very purpose from the beginning is bound up in reigning, in serving, in working. That is a picture, according to Genesis, of the life, the glorious, fulfilled life that enjoys God's world presence. That is the life that enjoys the wonders of all that God gifts to humanity. And then also think of the book of Revelation, right at the end, where history is headed. And we get great visions of multitudes being gathered around Jesus' glorious throne.

And alongside that, throughout Revelation, we are told again and again that the saints will also reign with Jesus. And so that gives a picture of what it will be like to be placed over cities.

[ 34 : 09 ] That's what Jesus is talking about. And the reality is that sharing Jesus' reign will be no hardship. It will be a glorious reign and a glorious service.

Listen to John speaking of the saints on that day. Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, and he who sits in the throne will shelter them with his presence.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. The sun will not strike them nor any scorching heat, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

Friends, our life here and now is a preparation for what is to come. Jesus' kingdom is coming. His earthly ministry has given glimpses and glimmers of that. His miraculous ministry was a kind of first fruit of sorts.

It served as a harbinger of what was to come. He has displayed the awesomeness of his kingly power, pictured in the character of his kingdom. And he invites us to share in it, to serve it.

[ 35 : 13 ] But that begins now. Faithful and fruitful service now, followed by glorious and satisfying service to come. So our service here, those hours of practicing the piano, of tending to infants, of whatever it is, serving the Lord in small ways, unseen, that is preparing to reign gloriously with Jesus, to serve him more abundantly in his kingdom.

But then notice also how faithfulness is determined in this passage. The picture of faithfulness here is the picture of fruitfulness. Do you see the servant who produced ten minas is given ten cities. He has been fruitful with the gospel and so is called verse 17 faithful. It's worth noticing that. We can sometimes be a bit allergic to such an idea, perhaps, where we're used to the day of small things.

It can be tempting to think that what matters most is just to be faithful. And the fruits up to God. Now, of course, there is truth in that. God is sovereign in salvation.

I can't turn a heart of stone to a heart of flesh. You can't bring life from death. But Jesus does equate faithfulness here with being fruitful.

[ 36 : 41 ] And it carries, doesn't it? Being faithful with the gospel is not about protecting it by locking it away in a safe and a vault in a handkerchief. Being faithful with the gospel, actually guarding it, is done by proclaiming it, by passing it on, by being fruitful with it.

You see, it's possible to be so taken up with the idea of being faithful that we miss what the gospel is for. Jesus has entrusted the gospel to his followers not as a textbook to be memorized, to be used for examinations or inquisitions, but as the word of life, as the glorious offer of peace terms. The gospel is entrusted to his followers as something to be passed on and planted, that it might bear the glorious fruit of repentance and bring life. Jesus sends out his followers to the harvest field saying that the harvest is plentiful.

Jesus' expectation is that the gospel will bear fruit. To Jesus, the idea of faithfulness isn't separate from being fruitful. And so that does mean there are times where we might have to ask ourselves the question, if there's no tangible fruit in the ministry, in our lives, is there something that we're contributing to that may be hindering its fruitfulness?

Well, here we see one possible option for a lack of fruitfulness. Verse 20, we see the third servant who wraps the miner up in a handkerchief for safekeeping. Now, a few things I think are quite so alarming as when Christians or churches appear to have as their main goal the conversion of other Christians to their niche in particular doctrines or perhaps more concerningly to their niche practices.

[ 38 : 34 ] Where a quest for such purity of doctrine is so clung to that fewer and fewer people can be considered to really be Christians, to really be sound or reformed or whatever it might be.

To think of faithfulness as being about drawing harder and harder lines around the gospel, tucking it into a handkerchief for safekeeping, may just be betraying a skewed view of God as predominantly, verse 21, a severe man.

someone waiting, hoping to smite people for the slightest error of thought. That's what this third servant seems to be saying. He was afraid that the Lord is a severe man, taking what he hasn't sown or deposited.

Now, of course, at this point it is important to say that Jesus does give a mina to the servants and he expects the mina to be used. We cannot take lightly the clarity we must have with regards the gospel, but the goal is not to have our doctrine, our worship, our polity all tied up in a nice neat little boo.

The goal is that the gospel is bearing fruit. You see, it's possible to know the truth, to have taken hold of it in some way, but not to actually do it.

[ 39 : 55 ] To have correct doctrine, but actually despise the God of whom it speaks by not listening to him. It's possible to know that the gospel is to be passed on, but to not have any real desire to do so.

It's possible to know that God is sovereign, can be prayed to, but then never actually coming to him. It's possible to know, even, that there is nothing quite so important in this world as the gospel and as the kingdom of God, and yet to be taken up with any fleeting distraction possible.

It's possible to know that Jesus is king, but not want to serve him. And all this betrays that there's actually a faulty belief, a twistedness in our thinking about who God really is.

That was true with his servant, and look what happens. The unfruitful servant has even the little that he did have taken away from him, and his own skewed view of God is turned upon him.

He's condemned with his own words. For in Jesus' kingdom, verse 26, to everyone who has, more will be given. To those who fruitfully serve Jesus, more satisfying service will come.

[ 41 : 13 ] To those who are given to serve him as best they can, and that's all we can do, isn't it? As best we can. If we do, more will be given to us.

But, from the one who has not, for whatever reason, even what he has will be taken away. These words are to those who have received the gospel in some measure.

And so Jesus' words here are a real warning against complacency. If this life, here and now, is not filled with joyful service of Jesus, then that is preparing for an eternity that will not be filled with the supremely satisfying joy of serving Christ's glorious kingdom as it stretches out over this whole world in splendor.

The one who has not, even what he has, will be taken away from him. But Jesus really can, and really does, rouse within his followers the impossible faith that allows us to serve him in bafflingly sacrificial ways here and now.

He rouses the faith that will enable us to follow him all the way on his path to reign with him forever. And so really the question Jesus leaves us with is what will you do with the deposit entrusted to you?

[ 42 : 42 ] Will you embrace the touch of Jesus? Will you allow him to remake and remold your heart and your life? so that you long for and live for those precious words at the last day?

Well done, good servant. Will we? Will you? Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, grant us the eyes of faith that we would measure this world aright. Or perhaps more importantly, so that we would measure the world to come aright.

Oh, how we need your help. And so we ask for your grace to teach us the joy of serving you. and add to that joy by making us fruitful as a church and in our own lives.

For we ask these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.