

Time of Grace Ministry
Now Is the Time: Love!

Luke 19:11-27

October 15, 2017

Pastor Jeremy Mattek

Hello, I'm Pastor Jeremy Mattek for Time of Grace. When I was younger, my family and I would spend every Fourth of July at a pool party that was hosted by some of our friends. It was a very large pool and there were a lot of people there. There was one Fourth of July pool party at which something, well, something happened. A four year old jumped into the pool - saw everyone else having fun; jumped into the pool - but didn't swim and nobody noticed. He had jumped into the deep end and he was splashing around just like everybody else, which is why nobody noticed. But eventually, he ran out of juice and he started sinking underneath the surface and still, nobody noticed. He went all the way down to the bottom of the pool before one person noticed that he was down there; that was one of my older brothers. He was about 12 years old at the time. He noticed this young man was down at the bottom of the pool, saw that nobody was doing anything about it, and he dove in and he pulled him out to safety. He lived. The young boy is now a pastor who's married and has, I think, six or seven children. And every time he sees my brother, do you know what he does? He says, "Thanks." He hasn't forgotten the act of love that saved him.

Today, on Time of Grace, Pastor Jeske is going to tell us about another act of love that saved us; an act of love by Jesus himself as he dove into this world and showed us the greatest love of all. Today, Pastor Jeske is going to teach us what it means to live with that love and also share it with those around us.

Pastor Mark Jeske

If you think that being God is fun because you always get everything you want, guess again. You do not want Jesus' job for he truly suffered. The story today happens in Jericho. While you're looking it up, let me tell you a little bit about Jericho. I'd like you to take your Bible and look it up – look up Luke 19 and Jesus' teaching ministry is almost over. He's in the last – literally, the last days of his public ministry. He will never leave Jerusalem alive, at least in his first life. He is walking to his doom on a cross. And it was in that city, the City of Palms, that Jesus had a life-changing conversation with a stubby little tax collecting guy who got his life turned around 180 by Jesus. And while he's still talking with Zacchaeus' friends—he was listening to their talk about the coming King and how little they were interested, at least some of them weren't. “While they were listening to this, Jesus went on to tell them a parable because he was near Jerusalem” – and now, head's up, here's a really important line – “and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.”

Everybody wants heaven on earth. Everybody wants God to do all kinds of stuff for me now. Everybody wants God to blow away all our troubles. Everybody wants to be happy and rich and good looking. Nobody wants to suffer anything at all. It's like we want to pretend that the fall of mankind into sin and inheriting all of the disasters, that that never happened. The kingdom of

God, indeed, comes right away but it comes in phases. There is a way in which it comes now but there is a way in which it will not become visible, fully visible, until Jesus returns. And I will admit that without a lot of warning, sometimes the Bible – when the Bible says, “the kingdom of God,” and uses that phrase, it might be a little confusing; I’ll grant that to you because God doesn’t always define which sense he’s intending it.

In one sense, the kingdom of God comes every time somebody like you becomes a believer, which changes everything. What that means is instead of saying no to God, “Not my king,” you say, “No, I guess you are! You are my king.” You start saying yes to God instead of no. That can be called conversion or regeneration; being born again. No matter what you call it, it’s that 180 that goes on in every lost soul. We’re all lost souls. Nobody’s born a believer. Nobody’s born on the way to heaven. Nobody’s born a child of God. We all – all of us; male, female, young and old alike, rich and poor, no matter where you live, no matter what you look like – all of us need a rescue. When that rescue happens, the kingdom of God comes, for King Jesus now begins to rule in your heart and you start finding the job of saying yes to him instead of no.

But that’s a pretty invisible thing. The Scripture says our lives are hidden in Christ. The openness will come when he returns but then it’s too late to decide if you’re going to be with the King or not because when he returns, you either is or you ain’t. You’re in or out. And at that point, that moment, it will be too late to reflect on where you’re going to go. So now would be the time.

So the kingdom of God coming now is the invisible, quiet kind where a word, just a word that’s spoken, tips your heart around. Or the splash of water powering up the word to touch your body changes a life dramatically, but it’s only dramatic to the angels; you and I can hardly see a thing. Jesus was sad that so many people were not interested in him. And so he told a story: “A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. And so he called ten of his servants and gave them each a mina,” ten in all. Now a mina – it’s called mina in English because there’s not enough vowels in the Greek coin, the coinage or currency unit that’s stated – it’s spelled m-n-a-; mna. That’s too hard to say so we put an “i” in there just to make it glide off our tongues better; a mina – was part of the Greek system, the Greek financial system. Most ordinary working people never saw a mina; it was just way too big a chunk of dough. It was like a working person’s salary for four months. You have never seen a currency bill with one piece of paper that would represent four months of your salary; you’ve never seen a bill that big, have you? Unless you went to visit the treasury and you see some of those crazy examples of their \$10,000 bills, you just have never seen that. A mina, at least a golden mina, had the buying power in our world today of like \$10,000; so this is a big wad of dough! And Jesus says a certain king had his top 10 staff come to him and he staked them each to \$10,000. But here’s the thing: He’s leaving, he’s trusting them. His authority over them will be invisible for a while. He doesn’t say when he’ll be back, but he reminds them it’s his money, and he wants his agenda to be carried out with that money. And he said, “Put it to work.” Why?

Alright, here’s another – here’s part two of Econ 101. What happens to a pile of cash if you do nothing with it and it just sits in a suitcase underneath your bed? Well, it’s not that nothing happens – worse than nothing! It loses value because of inflation. Every society, every financial system anywhere in the history of the world, suffers inflation. That means that it’s always going

to cost you a little more next year to buy the same thing. So if you have a \$100 in a suitcase under your bed and five years from now you try to go buy \$100 worth of a stuff, joke's on you; that now costs \$125 and you're saying, "What?" If you don't make your capital work, it loses value. That is a universal truth of all economies and this well-to-do, soon-to-be king, this crown prince, knew that.

However, his subjects hated him. Can you hear it starting now in their head? "Not my king!" Talk to the hand; not my king. They hated him. "They sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'" You know, the funny thing is, Jesus is taking a story that's really true and I've got a hunch a lot of his hearers knew the story. The Herod – there were four in the Bible – the Herod, Herod the Great, a nasty, violent, cunning, brilliant, educated, urbane pig of a man who's called "the great" not because he was good, but because he built stuff, himself was driven out of power by the Persians in about 40 B.C. What do you think he did? He went to Rome, sucked up to all the right people, got adopted as their boy, and with the force then of Roman legions at his back, went back to Israel, conquered Galilee, and became king of Galilee and then with the title he had been given in Rome, announced himself as king of Judea and besieged Jerusalem and forced the last of the kings of the Maccabees – they're sort of kinglets; like little mini-kings that gave them the illusion of independence – brushed them out of the way and was set up as king of Judea; the king of the Jews. That's why he got so paranoid when he heard that a baby was born to be king of the Jews; he thought that was a threat to his work and his dynasty.

But see, here's the point: He had to go away to receive the authority of his crown and then had to come back and basically announce, "I am king." But he was hated. A lot of the Jews didn't like him because he was not really Jewish; he was Idumean, he was like an Edomite from the south and he always had trouble with legitimacy.

Alright, so here back to our story: "He was made king, however, and he returned home and he sent for his servants to whom he had given the money." Whose money was it? It was his money. "In order to find out what they had gained." Let's see what he did because he had a two-fold goal here. He wanted his capital to earn him a return so he'd have more but he also wanted to evaluate his personnel. These are his chief reports, as we call them in the business world. These are his top reports.

Well, the first one came and had a smile on his face. "Sir, your mina has earned you ten more." Wow! Holy smokes, ten for one; that's knocking it out of the park. What a guy – and the king said, "What a good servant you are. Well done, good servant." The second guy said, "I've earned you five." He said, "Well done." Now to each of these two - now, pay attention - to each of these two he says, "You have done really well with a smallish thing." You're thinking small? Ten grand is not small; that's a wad of dough! He said, "I got – my goal was way bigger. I wanted to see what kind of talent and character you have. I'm impressed with both. You now are going to be administrators of regions." It's like, "I'm promoting you to governor." Whoa! Now suddenly they are overseeing a vastly bigger game. That little thing was a test; the ten grand, the mina, was a test to see what you would do.

And here's the four parts of this test. Number one, test number one: Can you obey instructions? Test number two: Do you think that's your money or do you respect the fact that it is the prince's money? Three: Are you willing to accept his agenda for what to do with it? And number four: Will you submit to accountability to him? If you can say yes and pass those tests, you are going to have a very good life and you are going to be a big man or woman in this new administration.

Well, two did very well and they were promoted, essentially, to governorships. However, the third guy came and said, "Sir, here is your mina." Now pay attention. If you get busted by your boss, here is how not to talk. Taking notes? Take some notes. "I've got your mina here. I've kept it laid away in a piece of cloth." Ooh, he didn't even walk it over to the bank for basic little bitty interest. It's like today, you know, I feel sorry for everybody who's under age 30; I really do feel sorry for you because there's hardly any incentive for you to learn how to save. I mean, what do you – we used to have a thing called passbook savings account. I bet nobody in this room has one of those anymore because you almost have to pay the bank for the courtesy of letting them have your money; your babysitting and your birthday money. There used to be a reason to save when interest rates would be, say, five percent. What they are now – which is chump change – what do you get for a CD right now? Who knows, one percent, maybe? Half a percent? You almost got to pay the bank for the privilege of letting you have one of their CDs and maybe they'll give you the same money back. Interest rates right now are so low, nobody knows how to save anymore because it seems like there's no incentive to even save; spend it, quick. So I'm admitting that.

However, you get a little bit; there's like a little teaser. At least you can hopefully, partially, keep up with inflation; at least put it in an index mutual fund somewhere online and skip the charges and fees. At least do that. But this guy didn't even do that. Why did he have it in a cloth? I'll tell you why. It's not in the Bible, but I know: Because he liked to take it out of the cloth and he liked to say, "Isn't it pretty?" He was holding his mina and he liked the feel of the gold. And I know what he said when he was touching it. Here's what he said: "My precious!" It made him feel good and secure and then he'd wrap it up again and hide it away.

Do you know why he didn't invest it? Because then there would be a paper trail. Right now, nobody knew he had it but the boss. And his gamble was he's never coming back, there is no accountability, and it's mine; it's all mine. Now he's busted. So first, he doesn't admit that this basically was a plan for embezzlement and theft. Second, he says, "I was afraid of you." Now if you were afraid of him, you should have followed what he said, so he really wasn't. What he means by "afraid of you," was the real meaning of what he was saying was, "I was betting that you were bluffing and you weren't ever going to come back." There would be no day of accountability.

Then he insults him. Besides, you're such a jerk. Can you believe he's surrounded by armed guards, he's giving answer to what he did with \$10,000, with that whole golden mina. "You're a hard man! You take what you didn't put in and you reap what you didn't sow." Basically, he's calling his boss a thief and an embezzler. "I don't want you as my king. You're a crook." So he's trying to argue and put the blame on the other – on his boss. His master said, "Well, I'm going to judge you by your own words, wicked servant!" Not just lazy, but you're wicked, too.

“You knew that I’m a hard man, taking what I didn’t put in, and reap what I didn’t sow. Then why didn’t you put my money on deposit? When I came back, I could have at least collected it with interest. You could have at least bought me a CD or had a no-load mutual fund or something. “Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten.’” And then they said, “Why the guy with ten? He’s got the most of anybody.” And Jesus said an interesting principle, which philanthropists often use, too, when foundations are deciding where to allocate their grants. They don’t give it to the most broken, dysfunctional organizations who maybe need it the most because they know that money will be wasted. In the philanthropic world, they talk about feeding the winners. That’s where you’re going to get the biggest bang for your philanthropic dollars and Jesus invented that concept. He said, “I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given. 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.”

Oh! Is that the Jesus you thought you like to worship? Do you have like a little buddy Jesus that you can control and who basically is harmless and tells you to just try to be nice to each other and who’s never going to mess with you and make you uncomfortable? Is that the Jesus you worship? Is Jesus basically your ATM machine that once a month you go over there and try to punch in the right formula and he’ll cough out something you want and then you ignore him for another month? Is that the Jesus you worship? Are you listening to him? This is a life and death matter. You blow him off at your peril. He is the king and the fact that he comes now in such a humble and indirect way should not fool us into thinking he’s not serious or that a day of accountability will not come. Today, my dear friends, a day of recognizing Christ as our King – you didn’t vote for him, there’s no democracy in the kingdom of heaven – he was crowned without your help and a reality now comes to you. You have a simple yes no decision to make: Am I with you or not? And there is no other question that really matters and there are no other answers; it’s either a yes or a no: Is he your king or not?

Here is what these people had a problem with: They had a problem with obedience, they had a problem with stuff. They wanted to say it’s “my” stuff; they didn’t want it to be his stuff. They had a problem with agendas. I want my agenda in life. What I want matters; I don’t care what you want. This is what I want. And they blew off any thought of accountability. I’m here to tell you and celebrate with you that the king who invites and even commands your obedience himself made him obedient to his Father. The one who says, “Come and follow me,” himself took pain and blood and death in order to give you forgiveness. The one who said, “Follow where I lead,” is leading you to heaven because he went through hell to show you the way to heaven. The one who says, “Take up my cross, take up,” - excuse me – “I took up my cross and I want you to take up your cross.” I want you to know that that is the pathway that leads behind him and leads to the open doors of paradise. And when he says you are accountable to me, do not give him the hand. You are accountable to him, whether you know it or not. Just as the people who were demonstrating in the streets, “Not my president,” are still going to have withholding taxes coming up on the next day. Whether you like it or not, know it or not, there is a president of our country. Whether people like it or know it or not, there is one king and he’s coming to see what we’ve done with his stuff, with his agenda, and with accountability to him.

I invite you to join me in repentance for all of my foolish disobediences of the past. But while we’re still living and breathing, is a great moment for not only sorrow for our failures to say yes

to him, but a rekindling of a new spirit and new attitude, thrilled by his gospel, thrilled by his invitation. Amazed to be considered to be princes and princesses with him, he says, “Come and follow me and you will sit on my throne with me.” You not only get to be in the cleanup, the sweep up brigade after the parades of heaven, you get to actually sit with Jesus on his throne.

This is our King. This is whom we worship. Today, right now, is the moment to say, “Yes, Lord, you are my king, King Jesus. Thank you for using me in your enterprises. Lord, my stuff is really your stuff and its highest and best use is your agenda, not my agenda. I’m accountable to you.” And just – and here’s this – here’s my little, here’s my little buzzer for your brain to be thinking about, too. In Jesus’ story, the first round of work with the minas was training for the next much bigger gig. Wouldn’t it be something if the Lord Jesus is watching you carefully to know how to use you most effectively in the next life where he’s got way bigger stuff for you to do?

Are you ready? Say it with me with all your heart: “Love you, King Jesus.” I do, too.

Pastor Jeremy Mattek

You may have heard of a man named Rick Rescorla. On September 11, 2001, he was working in the south tower when the airplane crashed into the building. As you can might imagine, those who were still inside the building and alive were going crazy; they were losing their minds not knowing what to do, panicking. Rick didn't panic. Instead, he gathered together as many people as he could who were panicked, who didn't know what to do, he gathered them in one of the stairwells and he told them to start breathing; just breathe to calm them down. And then he led them in the singing of God Bless America so that they were calm and then he led them safely out of the building. And once that entire group got out of the building, Rick went back in. He gathered together a group of people again, gathered them in the stairwell, got them to breathe, led them in singing, and led them safely out of the building. And he went back into the building and he kept doing this for the next 15 minutes or so, leading about 2,700 people safely out of those buildings on September 11th.

Rick went in the building one last time and he never came out. The building collapsed on top of him. But Rick illustrated a very important principle of what to - of how he lived. That he didn't consider his life as important as somebody else's.

Today, Pastor Jeske shows us that that's the same principle that Jesus himself lived with. King Jesus, sitting on the throne of heaven Jesus, whose life was pretty important. But as he hung on a cross with the option to leave, he didn't. He submitted himself to our needs because he considered your life just a little bit more important than his own. We get to live with that love every day; a God who is submissive to us on the cross continues to feed our needs every day.

Let's pray together.

Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you for showing us exactly what love is. We see it in so many ways in our lives but we see it most clearly as we look at the cross of our Savior Jesus where you showed the whole world how determined you are to stay by our side and love us and forgive us

through anything, even your own pain. Thank you for that love. Pour that love so abundantly into our own hearts that it overflows into the lives of those around us so that through our own acts of love, our own acts of service, our own submissiveness to the needs of those around us, more and more souls might find you, your love, and the precious comfort we have in knowing that you will never take it from us. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

I'm Pastor Jeremy Mattek with Time of Grace and it all starts now.



TIME OF GRACE®

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Now Is the Time: Love!

Luke 19:11-27: ¹¹“While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹²He said: ‘A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. “Put this money to work,” he said, “until I come back.” ¹⁴But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, “We don’t want this man to be our king.” ¹⁵He 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. ¹⁶The first one came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned ten more.” ¹⁷“Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.” ¹⁸The second came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned five more.” ¹⁹His master answered, “You take charge of five cities.” ²⁰Then another servant came and said, “Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. ²¹I 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.” ²²His 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? ²³Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?” ²⁴Then he said to those standing by, “Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.” ²⁵“Sir,” they said, “he already has ten!” ²⁶He 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. ²⁷But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.””

Points to Ponder

1. In what way does the kingdom of God come to each believer? Is it a visible thing?

2. When the third man with the minas said that he was afraid of the king and that's why he hid the mina, what was actually his plan or hope when he hid it? (Note: a mina was about four months' wages.)
3. How is that the same as people who think there will be no accountability for their actions when Jesus comes again?
4. What reality does this story hit you with in regards to whether Jesus is your King or not?
5. Claim Jesus as your King. Give him the love, worship, and praise he deserves. He will come again, and we will be held accountable. Who in your life can you love by sharing this truth with them?

Jesus is our King and deserves all of our worship. It is an absolute fact that he will come again, and we will be held accountable for our lives. If we stay close to God and believe in Jesus as our Savior, we will be rewarded with much—heaven. If we follow our own agendas and think we don't need Jesus, we will be punished in hell. Is Jesus the King of your life?

What else does God say?

John 5:27: He has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

Revelation 17:14: They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.