

The Parable of the Ten Minas and the Triumphal Entry
Luke 19:11–45

Turn to Luke 19 please. We are covering the Triumphal Entry one week before Palm Sunday. We're doing that because it felt lopsided to me celebrate the triumphal entry one Sunday, and then celebrate the resurrection the next Sunday, and pay so little attention to the hard things that happened to Jesus in between. So next Sunday, the Sunday in between, will be like a Good Friday service, only on Sunday. On Easter Sunday we'll celebrate his resurrection as we should!

Today we include the parable of the ten minas with the triumphal entry because Jesus told this parable specifically to keep the triumphal entry in right perspective. At the time, the parable did not have much effect. But it tells us what Jesus was thinking.

Our text today is an important window into the mind of Jesus. The Gospels are written to tell us about our Lord, and Luke 19 shows us how he was thinking about different things leading up to his death and resurrection. We have a chance here to learn more about Jesus.

Let's read the parable:

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. He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' " "Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' " "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.' "

Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out where you did not put in, and reap where you did not sow.' "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out where I did not put in, and reaping where I did not sow? Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' " "Sir," they said, 'he already has ten!' "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.' " After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

The Parable of the Ten Minas, the Parable of the Delayed Kingdom (Luke 19:11–27)

Luke tells us why Jesus told the parable of the minas. He told it “*because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once.*”

Earlier, Peter had declared to Jesus, “You are the Christ!” Jesus warned the twelve not to tell anyone. But they did. Jesus had a larger group of followers, not just the twelve, but perhaps 200 other devoted followers of Jesus. These people including the twelve believed that Jesus was the Christ, and they all thought that once Jesus got to Jerusalem, the kingdom of God would begin.

To correct this, Jesus told the story of a man of noble birth who went to a distant country to be declared king, and then return. Before this man left, he gave his servants work to do, and then he left to receive his kingdom, and then he came back.

Luke has a particular concern. Non-Christians could say that Jesus did want to become king in Jerusalem, and he went to Jerusalem to become king, but he failed, and that’s why he was crucified. No, says Luke, Jesus did **not** go to Jerusalem to become king. He was the Christ, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to quietly declare that he was the king, the Christ. The parable of the minas tells us that Jesus was not going there to receive his kingdom.

After Jesus ascended, the Father seated him at his right hand. *Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.* Ps. 110. That is when Jesus became king, in a distant country. Jesus did not go into Jerusalem to receive his kingdom. That’s what his followers thought, and they were wrong. Jesus was actually a complete success in Jerusalem.

Jesus Striding Ahead (Luke 19:28)

After Jesus had said this [parable], he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. Jesus is not walking beside his followers. Jesus is walking out in front, and he is not ambling. He’s going on head. His followers are strung out behind him, trying not to get too far behind. This is like Jesus setting his face like flint to go to Jerusalem, which we read ten chapters earlier. He’s striding ahead, facing Jerusalem.

Jesus Announces that He’s the Coming King (Luke 19:28-34; Gen 49:10–11; Zech 9:9–10)

*As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt **tied** there, which no one has ever ridden. **Untie** it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you **untying** it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were **untying** the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you **untying** the colt?” They replied, “The Lord needs it.”*

Luke here keeps talking about untying a donkey that's tied up. He mentions "tied up" or "untying" the donkey five times. Who cares? Somehow, it is important to Luke that the donkey is tied up, and that Jesus wants a donkey that's tied up, so untie it. Jesus tells his disciples, "that's my donkey tied up there, untie him and bring him here."

Listen to this from Gen 49: *He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch. Here is the whole verse: The scepter will not depart from Judah, until he to whom it belongs shall come. The obedience of the nations shall be his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch.*

In Genesis 49, Old Jacob blessed his son Judah and told him that the tethered donkey belongs to the ruler of nations that will come from Judah. Jesus is saying, "That ruler is me, untie my donkey and bring it." Luke assumes that we know old Jacob's prophecy to Judah, and we will put this together if Luke says "untie the tied up donkey" enough times.

This story also fulfills the better known prophecy in Zechariah 9. *Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.... He will bring peace to the nations, and his rule will extend from sea to sea.*

Zechariah had one eye on Jacob's Genesis prophecy 1000 years earlier about the ruler tying up his donkey. Jacob mentions "donkey" and then "colt" as well. Zechariah picks this up: "on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." By using "donkey" and also "colt," Zechariah tells us that he's quoting Jacob in Genesis 49.

We know that Jesus fulfills Zechariah 9 because Matthew and John quote Zechariah 9. Luke does not quote Zechariah 9, just as Luke does not quote Jacob's Genesis prophecy about tying up the donkey. Luke assumes his readers know the Bible and will figure it out. John tells us that the disciples did not make the Old Testament connections on that day, but they did later.

Jesus staged his entrance to Jerusalem, that's what we need to see here: Jesus deliberately fulfilled the Old Testament donkey predictions about the Messiah, acting out the role of the coming king that Jacob and Zechariah predicted, but no one caught that. Jesus knew they wouldn't. They did think Jesus was the coming king, and they treated him like a king, but they didn't understand the Old Testament significance of what Jesus did until later.

So Jesus declared himself the coming Messiah, but without ever saying it. He did it with his actions. And his followers praised him, but did not understand the importance of his actions. So why did he do it? Because he knew he was the coming king, and this is how he was supposed to enter Jerusalem. Whether or not anyone was paying attention, he was giving them a message about himself, telling Jerusalem that he was the one these prophecies had were about.

Disciples Make him King with their Clothes (Luke 19:35–36; 2 Kings 9)

They brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

In the days of Elisha, 800 years before Jesus, a man named Jehu was the commander of the Israelite army. (Jehu was famous for driving his chariot like a wild man, which has nothing to do with today's sermon, but which I think deserves honourable mention.) Jehu was with the army and his officers, and Elisha came to him and anointed him king of Israel. God was fed up with the current king, and so God had Jehu anointed king.

The army officers immediately took their cloaks off and spread them out under him. They blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!" Why did they put their cloaks under him? So he could stand or sit on a soft place? No, the cloak represents the person. If I give you my coat to sit on, I am putting my entire self under you. My coat represents me, all of me, and I'm under you, you are over me. It is an act of submission.

It is a profound act, to me more significant than waving palm branches. *"They threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road."* They make him king with their clothes. I like this. I wish I was there to put my coat on the road to tell him he was my king.

[In the service I will stop here, and have everyone get their coat that's hanging at the back and make one big pile of coats at the front. That will be us making a throne for Jesus our King.]

Disciples Make him King with their Voices (Luke 19:37–38)

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

"Peace in heaven"? When Jesus was born, the angels sang "peace on earth, and glory in the highest." Why peace in heaven? Let's remember the parable of the ten minas. *A man of noble birth went to a far country to receive a kingdom.* Heaven is the far country where Jesus receives his kingdom. I don't know what those people were thinking when they sang, "peace in heaven." But they were right.

Jerusalem did not like the triumphal entry. The disciples praised God, but not Jerusalem. Jerusalem never did receive Jesus. But in heaven it was a great day. Jesus riding into the Holy City on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey, was wonderful. It was a day of joy and glory in heaven.

All Creation Behind the Disciples (Luke 19:39–40)

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!” “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” In the parable of the ten minas, Jesus spoke of citizens who did not want the noble man to be king over them.

Now we hear from these unhappy citizens: the Pharisees. They think the praise of the crowd is an insult to God, and they could not have been more wrong. Jesus probably meant just what he said, about the rocks crying out. Jesus the Christ, the Lord of all creation, is entering the city of God.

*Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountain sing together for joy.
Let all creation rejoice before the Lord.*

*Why? Why should all creation do this? For he comes, he comes to rule the earth.
He will rule the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness.*

So the Lord and Redeemer of all creation enters the city of God as her King. All creation understands this very well. If the disciples had kept quiet, says Jesus, the stones would cry out.

The Failed Mission of Jesus (Luke 9:41-44)

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

We do not think of Jesus having a significant sense of failure, but we should. For three years Jesus called the Jews to turn to God, to repent and receive God’s kingdom. They did not want it. Not only did they not want it, they killed him for trying! Jesus wanted to lead Judah back to God. They needed to receive his good news. He failed to persuade them.

Listen to Jesus in Matthew 23: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.*

Jesus wanted so badly to accomplish something that did not happen. He was faithful, but it did not work. What did happen has turned out for our great good, but don’t forget that in his ministry

he wanted to turn Judah to God, to turn Jerusalem to God, and it did not happen. He was a success in that he was faithful to God, but as far as what he often longed to accomplish, he failed. It is true that he gave his life a ransom for many, and that he lay down his life for his sheep. Don't forget the other side of this, though. Jesus worked very hard to turn the Jews toward God, he was patient with them, tireless, he sent out the 12 in pairs, and later the 70 in pairs. Their basic answer was "no, we don't want to hear about this."

Jesus told Jerusalem: *The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls.*

Remember how the parable ended? *Those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.* Forty years later the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and many terrible things happened, because they did not want Jesus to be their king.

Jesus went to the Temple (Luke 19:45)

When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. Jesus wiped away his tears, he went into the temple and was horrified at the commercial racket going on there. He drove out the merchants, and told them to treat the temple as God intended.

If Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to become king, he would have gone to a place of government, not a place of worship. And his followers would follow him to the place of government. They thought the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. But Jesus went to the place of worship.

Summary

Let's talk about Jesus: Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem, and the disciples praised God. This had to be exhilarating for Jesus. The scolding of the Pharisees discouraged him. The blindness of Jerusalem, and its doom, broke our Lord's heart. He wept, which did not happen often. The market clamor in the temple infuriated him. Where did it all end up? Jesus carried on. Every day he was teaching in the temple courts, until they couldn't stand it any more.

Let's talk about us: we are the people who want him to be king over us. In the parable, he was gone for a while, and then he came back, and rewarded those who were faithful with whatever he had given. Right now he's still gone, but he will return. Until then, we keep encouraging each other to be faithful with whatever he has given.

We are the ones who put their coats on the road so he can ride on them, because we want him to be our king. We don't have that chance, but today we did what we could. And we are the ones who every Sunday sing praise to God, thanking God for the Coming King. Amen.

PRAYER: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have scars in your hands and your feet, and you are King of kings and Lord of lords. And we are so fortunate to be your flock. Thank you for laying down your life for us your sheep. And now, Lord, we want to live like those who put their cloaks down for you to sit on and ride on. May our lives show that kind of submission to you. Bless us be leading us in your ways. Amen.

BENEDICTION: May the God who gives us endurance and encouragement also give us a spirit of unity among ourselves as we follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Go in God's peace to love and serve the Lord.

Appendix on the servant who gave back his mina.

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

The reason the noble man says “you wicked servant” is that the charge is so obviously false. The noble man gave each servant a mina, about three months wages. How can the servant say “*You take out where you did not put in, and reap where you did not sow.*” He has the mina in his hand which the owner put in, and which the owner planted. This servant seems to believe what he says, but his blindness about his master's character is staggering.