



Life Group Sermon Study Notes

“Reaching the City: Church, and The Destiny of Cities”

Pastor Jim Laffoon – October 6, 2019

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What are some talents, skills, or gifts that you have?
- What is a situation in which you have been rewarded, or praised, and why?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Jesus often taught in parables to provoke his audience, drawing them in to think deeply about their relationship with God, and their neighbors. The parable of the talents is found in both Matthew 25 and Luke 19. While each telling of this parable is slightly different, they both explain for us one aspect of life God will judge us on. As we consider our city, and begin to confront the wounds, and pains of our nation, we must ask ourselves how we can use the resources God has given us to advance the kingdom.

Destroy, O Lord, divide their tongues; for I see violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace. (Psalms 55:9-11 ESV) The psalmist wrote this line about their city. We can only imagine what events and circumstances caused the psalmist to write this line. What is the answer to the pain, and hopelessness we encounter in our lives, and our city?

In Matthew 25 Jesus tells a parable with regards to final judgment to come. He likens it to a master who has servants whom he has given talents. A talent was the equivalent of 100 denarii, a form of currency used in the region. To one servant he gives five talents, to another two, and another still one. When the master leaves each servant goes and doubles the number of talents, he receives except for one.

As we continue to read the parable of the talents, we see in Luke 19 that God’s response to a little faithfulness is extravagant reward. *“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 mina has made ten***

minas 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.’ (Luke 19:15-17 ESV)

Ten cities are worth hundreds of thousands of times more than a mere ten minas. God continues to reward the second servant similarly by appointing him over five cities. When it was time to address the third servant the master found himself accused of impropriety and cruelty. Instead of faithfully stewarding the master’s gifts the third servant buried the minas and did not faithfully conduct business as the master instructed. *“Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, 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.’”*(Luke 19:20-21 ESV) The third servant missed the heart of the master and did not recognize the character of nobleman who had entrusted him with his wealth. The master responded by saying *“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 have collected it with interest?”* And he said to those who stood by, *“Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas”* And they said to him, *‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ ‘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. For to him who has more will be given.* (Luke 19:22-25 ESV) Matthew 25:30 says that this servant was cast into outer darkness.

God is a good master. The answer to a hurting broken world is the good news of Jesus Christ and a church that acts as His hands and feet. God has entrusted us with resources and talents to go and conduct business. In this case, our business is advancing the kingdom. Where do you find yourself in this parable? Which servant do you identify with the most? The talents and the minas represent the time, talents, and wealth that God has blessed us with. As we continue to read in Matthew 25 Jesus further expands on the purpose of telling this parable. Are we using what we have, to advance the kingdom and serve God’s people? If you are faithful with the little you have when Christ receives His kingdom the promise is that He will reward those who faithfully served extravagantly. Hebrews 11:6 says *“And without faith, it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”*

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- How can you use your time, talents, and wealth to be a part of reaching the city to advance God’s Kingdom?
- What does it mean to double your talents?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.

- Thank God, for the talents he has given us.
- Ask God for wisdom about what our talents are and how to use them for the kingdom.
- Ask God for conviction to reach the city.