

Ten Talents (Minas)

The Parable of the Ten Talents or Minas is interesting. It appears in Matthew chapter 25 and in Luke chapter 19. The monetary or money system used by the Hebrews is different from the one used by the Greeks. It is very different from the one we use today. We use dollars and coins. Back then they used talents, denari and shekels. They also used the weight of the money to determine its value. Talents of gold have different values from those of silver. A gold talent at the time of Christ was worth about \$840,000 of today's dollars. The silver talent was worth about \$16,960.00. Wow! That's big money.

It takes 60 minas to equal on talent. So, using simple math, we can determine that in Luke 19 the ten workers were each given \$140,000 of today's dollars. Using math; \$840,000 divided by 60 = \$14,000. So, one mina equals \$14,000 of today's dollars. If each of the ten servants received ten minas, then they received \$14,000 x 10 = \$140,000. For students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades this is basic math. For younger students the best way to say this is that the wealthy man in the story gave them each a lot of money.

Why did he do this? He wanted to see what they would do with the money. Upon his return he found that some of the men invested the money wisely and provided him with a profit. One servant according to Matthew 25 buried the money and in Luke 19 he wrapped it in a cloth and hid it. They did nothing with that which was entrusted to them.

God has placed each one of us on this earth for the express purpose of using our talents...not for ourselves but for the glory of God and this frequently includes helping others financially. Since a talent is considered the wages earned in a 20-year period, it is like He is saying that we have been given time and money to use to accomplish His will. A servant does not use his talent only for himself.

“He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So, also he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.”

The first two servants used their talents, thus multiplying them, but the one who had a talent did not use it but simply buried it or hide it. It could be said that he or she hide it from the world and from the Master but the point is that it wasn't really his or her talent but it was “his master's money.”

“Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”

The first two servants used their talents and when a person uses their talents, God gives them more to use. What you don't use you lose and these servants used their talents for the Kingdom and that is why their master says to both of them “Well done, good and faithful servant...I will set you over much and now enter into the joy of your master.” They will be given much responsibility in the Kingdom because the Master could trust them.

“He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus will have words of terror for them at His return: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

One thing for sure is that this servant buried his or her talent and didn't use what God gifted them. They hid it which means that they didn't use it or they hid the fact that they were Christians from the world and were ashamed of their faith and didn't publicly proclaim that Christ is their Lord and Savior. Take warning for those who do this because Jesus said that **“everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven”** (Matt 10:32-33).

Conclusion

Which are you; a faithful servant or one that hides their talent and their profession of faith in Christ? Have you buried your talents or are you using them? Are you a servant of Christ or a self-seeking servant that is only interested in meeting your own needs? Only you know and the Lord knows.

The interpretation of this parable is this. If God gives you the gift of the gospel, go out and share it. Read His Word and learn how to grow in faith. Invest your life in Christ. Don't bury your faith or hide it because you will have a very unhappy result.

The scripture in Luke 19 tells the following story;

¹² He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas.^a 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

¹⁴ "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'

¹⁵ "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.

¹⁶ "The 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.'

¹⁸ "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'

¹⁹ "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

²⁰ "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. ²¹ I 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.'

²² "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 what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? ²³ Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'

²⁴ "Then 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!'

²⁶ "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. ²⁷ 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.'"

The Explanation

The nobleman = Jesus Christ our Lord

His going into the far country = he joined God in heaven

His receiving of a kingdom = reigning over the church

His citizens refusing him = secular (the world) Israel's rejection

The delegation they sent = "We have no king but Caesar." Caesar is the emperor of Rome.

The ten servants = all of the servants of Christ

"Trade ye or put the money to work... till I come" = the faithful work of Christians

The ten mina = the trust God gives to every man

The one who gained ten = the faithful Christian

The one who gained five = the faithful Christian of less ability

The one who hid his pound = the wicked and unfaithful Christian

Ten cities and five cities = different kinds of employment in heaven

Taking away the mina = punishment of unfaithful servants

The return of the nobleman = the Second Coming of Christ

Extended absence of nobleman = the long period of time before the Second Coming

The Problem

God has given us the task of sharing the gospel with others. If we do not do as he has asked us to do, we may not receive the reward in heaven. The final call is up to God.

Scripture: Luke 19: 12 - 27

Questions:

1. Who is the king or nobleman?
2. What does the mina represent?
3. Should we live our lives and not talk about Christ to others?
4. If we do our Lord's work, will there be a reward in heaven?

Next Steps: Think about ways you can share Jesus Christ with others. Make a list.