

What do you think of, when I say the word “gap”?

- Some might say, “fill the gap”; or
- Bridging the gap.
  
- Others might think of a child who's lost his front tooth;
  
- Some might think of “a gap year”... When did that become a thing??? *When I went to school, there was no such thing.*
  - *You finished school and you started work, or*
  - *some finished school and started University ...**No one would dare feel so “entitled” that they could go on an overseas holiday for a year before they even started work... How could they ever afford a house? (And as it turns out, apparently many can't...)*

Well, the parable we have today: Jesus told this parable, because most people did not understand, that there was going to be a gap.

Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem, and He's getting close. He is so close now, that the very next story in the Gospel of Luke, is what we call, “Palm Sunday” – it's when Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem, and they welcomed Him as their King (the long-awaited Messiah) (coronation)....

And Jesus told this parable, because He **knew** what was going to happen. **They** thought the Kingdom of God was going to appear “there and then”, and that Jesus entering into

Jerusalem, was the new King (Messiah) of the **new Kingdom** (the Kingdom of God), coming to take up His throne....

And so Jesus told this parable, to let them know, “It’s **not** going to happen that way – it’s not going to **be** immediate – there is going to be a gap”. ...

And the parable demonstrates, that what you and I do, in the time of the “gap”, is critical.

But, the people Jesus told the parable to, obviously didn’t get the point of the parable, because the very next scene, is them welcoming their King into Jerusalem.

So, let’s get into it: the Parable of the 10 Minas.

The key figure, “the Nobleman”, represents Jesus. And the Nobleman heads off to “a far country”, **to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.**

By the authority of God the Father, the kingdom has been bestowed upon the Son... But, the important point here, is it’s portrayed as he “**went into a far country** and **then** He returns.... And the fact that it’s a “far country”, is simply a way of saying, that this is not going to be a short absence.

There will be a “gap”, and it’s a **significant** gap. It is the gap from when Jesus ascended into Heaven, and until He returns.

And we're still waiting, aren't we... You and I, we are living in the gap.

And so, this Parable, is about "How Disciples of Jesus, faithfully live **for** Jesus, in the gap.

Alright, so Jesus is "the Nobleman". The other characters: Well, they fall into two broad categories. Citizens; and Servants.

The Citizens: Well, they hate the Nobleman. **'We do not want this man to reign over us.'**, they said.

*It's interesting, isn't it: today, the democracies of the world have become so divided. We just saw it with the United States Presidential election. There is a palpable **hatred** for **both** of the would-be presidents, where no matter who won the election, almost half the country would end up hating the president.*

*And we see it in our own country, too. There is an enormous political divide – and it is a divide that has become almost religious in a person's commitment to their cause. And they have an unreasonable hatred of those who are against their cause....*

*And in almost every election, the citizens cry out, "I wish there was someone decent, who was worth voting for." ...*

## Would Jesus be good enough???

When Jesus returns, He **is** going to be the King. And wow, what a king He will be.

Jesus is the one:

- of absolute truth/honesty.
- is completely trustworthy.
- will always do what's best; and
- kind; and merciful...
- He will be the perfect ruler... and
- full of justice...

If only Jesus could be our ruler now, then we would be a people united, under a leader who's worth having...

The only problem with that, is our world gives us, the evil leaders it does, because our leaders reflect the evil that society craves. And sadly, if our land were given a choice today, of choosing a leader who is as holy and righteous as Jesus,,, that person wouldn't get a look in.

Just as the majority reject Jesus today, as their Lord and Saviour, The majority would almost certainly reject Him at the Polling booth.

You see, becoming a Christian means receiving Jesus as Lord – it is to choose to have Jesus as Ruler/Master/King of my life (that's what "Lord" means)... And the majority of the world, do not want Jesus as their Lord.

So, that's the first category – Citizens: who hate Jesus, and do not want Him to rule over them.

The second category, is servants.

Before the Nobleman heads off, He calls 10 of his servants together. And He gives them a quantity of money, to use on His behalf (for His business interests), until He returns.

The amount was 1Mina (equated to ~ 100days basic wage for a labourer). It wasn't an enormous amount, but significant – 3 or 4 months of a subsistence level wage.

Alright, so the Citizens **hate** Jesus, and the **Servants** have been entrusted to carry on the business of the Nobleman (Jesus) in His absence. And, did you notice that **every one** of the servants were given resources? Not one, missed out.... And no **one** was given any more than the other.

So, the Nobleman entrusts his business to His servants, and then he heads off to be appointed king.

When He returns (which isn't quick), there is a reckoning.

∇ <sup>15</sup> **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.**

And this is the whole point of the Parable. When Jesus returns, He wants to know, “What have you done, in the gap”. Did you carry on, the business of Jesus? He’s given us the resources to do it. Are we doing it?

And the first servant comes in:

'Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.' <sup>17</sup> 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.'

The second servant:

'Lord, your mina has made five minas.' <sup>19</sup> And he said to him, 'And you are to be over five cities.'

Alright, so the first two servants, faithfully did what the Master required. They carried on the business of the master, in the gap.

And when Jesus returns, He is going to want to know, “How have you used (what Jesus has entrusted to you) to carry on the business of Jesus, while He’s away?”

Well, that raises the question, “What is the business of Jesus?” It’s the advancement of the Gospel. This story comes immediately after the story of Zacchaeus. And it’s **tied** to the story of Zacchaeus. The very first words of the Bible Reading

today, were <sup>11</sup> As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable...

As they heard what things? The story of Zacchaeus. And the final words that they heard, were: <sup>10</sup> **For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**

- What is the business of Jesus?  
**There's** the business of Jesus right there: To seek and save the lost.
- What is the business, that Jesus wants us to be continuing on, in the gap?  
Seeking and saving the lost.
- How does Jesus want us to use the resources He has given us?  
He wants us to use every resource we have, to seek and save the lost.

He wants us to use our:

- time;
- money;
- words;
- actions;
- faith;
- be praying;
- every resource that He has equipped us with,

to seek and save the lost, because **that** (my friends), is the business of Jesus...

When Jesus returns, He doesn't want to know:

- how much money we got in the bank;
- how nice the house is that we live in;
  
- what holidays we've enjoyed the most; or
- our sporting awards; or
- our academic achievements.
  
- how popular we are; or
- how many friends on FaceBook we have...

The one thing Jesus wants to know, is "Have we been carrying on His business of seeking and saving the lost,,,, And who else, has been saved to His Kingdom because the business of Jesus was diligently continued by His servants.

Righto:

So, when He returned as the King, the faithful servants were rewarded.

Did you notice, the reward isn't rest or riches. The reward, is to share in the inheritance of the King. How good is that?

When Jesus returns, His faithful servants, share in His Kingdom...

Now, I can't tell you, exactly what that's going to look like, but in Romans 8:17, Christians are described as "co-heirs with Christ". And that's the very image that **Jesus** is giving



us here. The reward for faithful service, is we are co-heirs of the Kingdom, with Christ.

**But** not all the servants have been faithful.

The third servant steps up to give account. 'Lord, here is your mina,. I wrapped it up in a hankie and didn't do anything with it...

Why did he do that? Because he was afraid. Maybe he feared failure.,,, but ultimately, he was afraid of the Nobleman...

And because the Nobleman represents Jesus, we quickly realise, this servant doesn't even know Jesus... He said: **I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man.**

And yes, Jesus can be severe. And we see that in this parable too.

- He is severe to those who hate Him – who reject Him – who will not let Him reign over them...; and
- He is severe to servants-by-name, who do not serve.

He didn't know Jesus. He didn't know the gracious **mercy** of Jesus; and he didn't know the **method of operation** of Jesus.

He saw Jesus as a severe man: You might be filled with fear:

- What happens if I seek and save the lost, and muck it up?
- What happens if I fail?
- What happens if I'm not successful in bringing anyone to Jesus????

Is Jesus going to be severe with me? No. Because He is gracious and merciful, and you have been a good, faithful servant by inviting people to Jesus...

The third servant failed, because he was **afraid** of failing. He didn't have faith. In faith, we obediently serve our Lord.

He has entrusted to us – to you and I – to every one of us, the same thing: the message of the Gospel. And all He wants us to do (in His absence), is to share what we **do** have with those who do not yet believe.

You may not have a university degree in theology. That's OK. God doesn't want you to use what you don't have. He wants you to use what you **do** have. And if that is but a simple faith, that's enough.

And the second reason he failed, is because he didn't understand the way Jesus works. He said: **you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.**

I think what he's saying is, "You'll just make it happen anyway."

Someone else will do it...

And how often have **we** used that excuse? It doesn't matter if I don't do it... Someone else will step up. God'll get it done... What's in it for me anyway? I'll leave it for the experts...

That isn't the way that Jesus works. Jesus is calling you **and** I, to carry on His business of seeking and saving the lost. It's not about the experts. It's about the multitude of servants of Jesus (including you and I), being faithful, in the gap. That's the way Jesus does it.

So, what was the outcome, for the fearful, faithless servant??? He was stripped of his heavenly reward.

If he had valued at all, the investment that Jesus had made, that would have been enough... In the story, he didn't even put the money in a bank where it could at least earn interest. He just wrapped it up in a hankie...

He hid it... Didn't use/express it...

And I think the message we're being given, is: If I am not expressing my faith – if I am not living my faith, and sharing my faith (seeking and saving the lost),,, – if I have a hidden faith, do I even have real faith at all???

The first servant, is faithful. The third servant: Far from being "faithful", he's described as being a wicked servant... And he receives no reward; And even what he had, was taken away from him...

Does that mean he lost his salvation? Well, it doesn't explicitly say so, but it certainly indicates it.

So, that's the Servants. The faithful servants are rewarded as co-heirs of the Kingdom. The unfaithful servant loses what he had.

Let's come back to the citizens (the citizens who hate Jesus – the multitude who do not want Jesus, to be their Lord)... And the parable ends on a rather gruesome note.

Here's a question: If a person doesn't want Jesus as their Lord/King, can they opt-out? Can they be their own King? Can they **choose** their own king in eternity???

You know, I've heard so many unbelievers joke that they'd rather spend eternity with the Devil – that would be a lot more fun... Can the Devil be their king? No...

In eternity, there can only **be** one Kingdom, and that's the Kingdom of God. And there **is**, only one King: The Lord Jesus Christ.

The ones who rejected Jesus, actually went and made representations: "We don't want Jesus to be our king". Did that work? No. Never. **Jesus, will be king.** You cannot be a conscientious objector to Jesus....

With V27, you don't need me to explain it:

**27 But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.'**

Oh yes, when it comes to justice, because He is righteous, Jesus has to be **a severe man**.

There will be a day of reckoning.

At the moment, we live in the gap.  
Jesus has done His work of salvation.

- He died on the cross to atone for our sins.
- He rose from the dead, winning a victory over sin and death.
- He ascended into Heaven; and
- is seated at the right hand of the Father (appointed, as the eternal righteous King).

Until He returns, we live in the gap.

And here in the gap, we choose.

We choose:

- if we want Jesus as King; and
- if we carry on the business of our King...

And while we're living in the gap, it may appear as if it don't matter...

For many, they reject Jesus, or at least pay Him no heed... It seems as if it doesn't matter. But it **does** matter... Because the gap comes to an end, and the King **will** return... And He **will be**, your king.

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Every time there's a change of government, we see the Directors General of the Public Service being cleaned out... Why? Because these are political appointments. They are loyal to the Government who appoints them, and they do not want the new government in place...

When King Jesus returns, the faithless, will be cleaned out. Those who reject Jesus, will be sliced & diced...

What are you doing in the gap?

- Are you a citizen? Or a servant?
- Are you someone who doesn't want Jesus as King?
- Or are you someone who is keenly awaiting, the coming of King Jesus?  
And are carrying on the business of Jesus,  
until His Kingdom comes...

Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, You are King.  
We proclaim You as "King";  
We worship You as "King".

And we pray,  
"Come, Lord Jesus;  
Bring Your Kingdom."

But until the day that You do,  
here in the gap,  
by Your Holy Spirit,  
set us free from fear.

Give us faith, to know You,  
and to trust You;  
To know Your grace and mercy;  
and with this faith,  
to serve You.

Lord, may we be "good" servants;  
May we be faithful, in the task You have given,  
to seek and save the lost.

And Lord, we **pray** for the lost:

We pray, for those whom we know,  
who up until now, have rejected you –  
they have **not** wanted You to be their king.

Lord, in Your great mercy,  
do Your work in them;  
Soften their hearts;  
Bring them to repentance and forgiveness.

Open their eyes to Your love;  
and grace;  
and mercy.

And bring them to their knees,  
to proclaim:  
"Jesus, You are my king".

Praise the Name of Jesus.

Amen.