

Luke 19:11-27

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[0 : 00] I don't know how many of you have heard of song by the Boontown Rats, I Don't Like Mondays. I remember that I bought this record in this country, in this city, in London, when I was a teenager.

And every time I was going to secondary school, the song was in my head, no? Tell me why, tell me why, I don't like Mondays. And Mondays are a depressing day for many people.

And you wonder why, of course, it's got to do with the thing you have to do with the beginning of a new week. Then you realize how much is the burden of your life.

I don't know if you are aware that there is more possibilities that you have a heart attack on Monday than on any other day. Some say that the blood tension is so high that even you can have a stroke. And even the possibility of an ulcer, they say that it's bigger. Maybe you find a strange figure, but some people say that twice there is more the chance that people commit suicide on Monday than any other day.

[1 : 17] But, of course, we realize that this has not only to do with work, but with the purpose of it. The reason we live, why we are here for.

Because idleness can be attractive if you have something to do. If you don't have anything to do, you cannot enjoy idleness.

In a way, this is the problem we face, when the things we have to do are in front of us on a new week. And it's really to do with the purpose of our lives.

What we are here for. And Jesus has this story, these amazing parables, which really are often striking, because it's in the end, in the tale of the story, when it's the great surprise.

And here, like in most of the stories of Jesus, it's a strange end. It's not really the conclusion with respect at the end of the story. But it brings us something, not only of the perspective of Jesus Christ and his message, but the reality of our own expectations.

[2 : 38] In Jesus' day, people were waiting for better times. They call it the kingdom. The kingdom of God. When he will come and he will rule and things will be as they need to be.

But in this Gospel according to Luke, it's the story of a journey. The journey of Jesus and also the announcement in the center of what he's going to do in Jerusalem.

And from that very moment, he finds all these reactions to him. Why he speaks about his death, about his sacrifice, what he's going to offer, giving his own life in Jerusalem.

In a way, our lives are also like a journey. And here, the Lord Jesus Christ shows us what is really the greatest goal and purpose for our lives.

To live for that kingdom. And this is hope. Because without hope, there is no life at all. It's Woody Allen, I think, who says that the future is not what it used to be.

[3 : 58] And the reality is that so many doomed thinkers saying that what we have to face is even worse things that we have today.

It makes us really wonder what future have we got for our lives. When we come to this life, we all have dreams, expectations, ambitions.

But when you get older, like me, you start to think that finally, better forget them. Because you are not going to fulfill them anyway. And this is a hard factor we have to face very soon in our lives.

The fact that these dreams and expectations cannot be achieved by ourselves. But here, the Lord proposes to us better goals and achievements.

What is the purpose and the end of his kingdom? And I would like to show you this evening three reactions you find here, in the parable, about what people can think about the kingdom.

[5 : 08] First, you have the really shocking scene of those who reject this kingdom. You see that there is no future for them.

Those who have said, I don't want him, ask him, they will not have him. Forever. For an eternity. Without him. And this is a shocking reality. What we face here is the danger we all have when we say that we prefer our dreams, our goals, our ambitions to what God showed us through Jesus Christ.

And one day, this is the message again and again in the gospel. We will have to face him. And then he will be the king.

We don't have the last word. This is the hard thing for us. To realize that we have to take a second place. He must be the first.

[6 : 16] And it is not the question if you want to, if you like to. The truth is that he is going to rule. And there is only two possibilities.

Or you are under his rule, no? Or you are against his rule. And if you are against it, there is no future for you. Because the whole message of the gospel is his victory.

He has finally not only got the last words, but there will be no enemies in that kingdom. No dissenting voices.

Everyone will worship him. Everyone will acknowledge and assault him. Because he is the king of kings. And all kingdoms will be under his throne.

And he will be forever, the whole eternity, the only king. So there are only two possibilities for us. Or we submit to him.

[7 : 20] We surrender to him. Or we will see one day what it is to resist him. And after this serious danger, we find another two reactions.

And these two are surprising. Because all of us think that the purpose, the goal of our lives is what we can achieve.

What we can get. But we see how different really is at the end of the day. First you have some servants who come before this king.

And they show him what they have achieved with their lives. With their resources, the endowments, the talents, the minus they have received.

There has been a lot of discussion in the commentaries about what does it mean, no? These minus. Some people say, well, maybe it's the gospel.

[8 : 35] What we have done with it. Others have said, the Holy Spirit, the greatest gift we can receive from the Father. That is the minus. And others think that the way we use our resources, everything we receive in this life from him.

I would say that probably all those things are included in the minus. Like in so many parables, it's easy to get lost in the trees, no?

Not to see the forest, the purpose of it all. And the truth is that he is not anymore with us. That is what he is saying again and again to his disciples.

And as we have remembered one Ascension Day recently, we don't have our Lord upon this earth. We cannot organize pilgrimage to the Holy Land to see him. It would be a disappointment, you know? So long queues, no? So a difficult journey just to be, just for a moment, to see his face for an instant.

[9 : 44] It's a blessing for us. So the Lord says, it's better for you that I don't stay here. Because I have something better for you. That is someone.

Someone who is another Christ, the Comforter, in my place, the Holy Spirit. And this is the greatest gift we can receive now.

And it's interesting that this is introduced in the way the Lord Jesus speaks to us about God as our Father.

He says to him, if you, who are not good, but bad parents, when your children ask you something, breath, are you going to give them a stone?

When they ask you for food, are you going to give them a snake? Being not good and being evil, if you do that, why do you think your Father in Heaven is not going to give you better things?

[10 : 54] So the Lord concludes that section. Ask them the greatest gift of all, the Holy Spirit. So this is the reality we can have today.

The Spirit brings us the life of the Son to us, Jesus Christ. And we can understand about Him through His testimony.

It's through Him that we realize what good is to come. He is the assurance we have that we are His children.

So the testimony of the Spirit goes not only with His words, but works deeply inside us. The Apostle John speaks about this inner testimony that you are children of God.

The Apostle Paul in Romans 8 speaks about how this sonship awareness comes through the work of the Holy Spirit.

[11:59] And what a great difference makes in this life to know that you are not alone. That you don't have to face this task and existence without a Father.

You are not an orphan anymore. You have God as your Father. And the Lord teaches to pray to our Father in Heaven.

And you see, this is the problem of the last servant. The last servant, what view has he got of God, of the ruler, of the king?

When the Master comes, his first words give us exactly the view of God.

And he is so close to us, so familiar to us. He is afraid of Him. I don't know how much you have been afraid of God, but it depends on how good you feel.

[13:09] When you think that you have a problem with Him, it is when you realize how far you are away from Him. That is probably what Luther said when he said that before you have Christ as a friend, you have to see Him as your enemy.

In a way, there is no way to come in a relationship with Him if first we don't realize the distance. How far away is from Him. But not only the distance, the fact that He has something against us.

That our sin has made this big problem which we cannot resolve.

Then we are afraid of that day. Some of you have the privilege of being raised in a Christian family. I am one of the few Spanish evangelicals who had that opportunity.

And it is an advantage. And at the same time, of course, it can be a problem sometimes. But I remember always that this fear of what it meant the responsibility I have.

[14:29] When I was growing up in the 70s, we used to have a lot of comics. It was the entertainment of those days before the computers came. And there were even Christian comics.

You know there is a Christian alternative for everything. We have built a subculture like that. And some who have been growing in the church, we have grown in the subculture. With the Christian music and everything Christian.

And one of these comics is rather worse. A publishing company in America. Very fundamentalistic. It is called Chick Publications. Chick Publications has a very low series of comics. Very popular in the States between Americans. And one of them was the expectation of what could be the last day. And that last day, there would be a film. So, in a big screen. And you could see in the drawing all the people around the hills looking like a cinemascope screen.

[15:37] Well, the younger ones don't know what is cinemascope. But it was a very big screen, you know. Like in the old cinema. When the theatres were very big, you know. And there were crowds, you know.

Going to the cinema on the weekends. And the nightmare I have, you know. Is that the story of that film was my life, you know. And what you will see is what I would not like you to see.

The things I must say of. The realities I have. And that was a nightmare. To think that one day you have to face yourself.

The reality of who you are. And this is really the greatest hopelessness of it all. And that is what that wicked servant experienced.

The fear is God, no? That he has to face such a demanding master. Someone who is going to ask you, what have you done with your life?

[16:40] And he has this distorted view of him. Because when you think about it, he is not so mean. He has given them not only the minas. All these gifts.

And that is what he is sharing with them. In fact, in that kingdom. It is not someone who is exploding them. Who wants to use them for his own benefit only.

He wants to share with them what it means. The goodness of that kingdom. But that wicked servant thinks only in his fears. And that is very often the truth when we look at ourselves.

When we look at ourselves, we realize how much we miss. How much we miss first in us. We are not the people who we would like to be.

We realize how far we are to be the good servants. Who can hear that day. Good and faithful servant. Come with me.

[17 : 46] Some are afraid that that day we will not hear good and faithful servant. And like that man, our gifts, everything we have received from him, is well kept.

Hidden, preserved, conserved, but not used for him and his kingdom. Why? First, because of this self-pity.

Maybe we think like this man, what have I got? If you notice the difference between these servants and the others. There is also a different number.

He has got only one man. The others have got several. And it is multiplied. They got more with that. But this man has only one. And very often we think of our lives like that.

What can I do? I am not such a great person. Maybe if I have the ability to speak well. Or I could be a preacher.

[18 : 52] Or if I would not be so shy. I could tell more to the people. This good news from the kingdom of God.

You wonder if you would have more money. What I could do for God's kingdom and his purpose. If I would have the abilities. What I don't have.

But here we see. This is exactly what the Lord does not expect from us. He is not going to judge us according to how much gifts we have received.

How much talents. How much abilities. How much resources. Endowments. Is not the number. It is clearly the lesson of the other servants.

The servants got. Because of the use they have done. Of the miners. They received citizenship. And some have got a greater number than others.

[19 : 56] But it doesn't matter. The point is not how much have you got. It is not how much do you achieve in your life. As we usually say.

It is not success. But faithfulness really. But how is faithfulness here seen. It is interesting that those of us who are more conservative.

In a biblical and theological way. Tend to be conservative in everything. So very often. We are afraid. So much.

Of everything. That. Not trying to put in danger. But we have got. We have gambled on. The greatest loss of it all.

Trying to keep. The things we have got. Because you see here. That the greatest risk. We can take in this life. Is doing nothing.

[20 : 54] Do you remember that. The thing Luther wrote to Melaton. Melaton was a very shy person. Who was afraid.

Of the steps they were taking. In the reformation. In the 16th century. In Germany. No. And Luther sometimes was fed up. No. With the. The way.

He was always. So paralyzed. By his doubts. No. And there is a very well known sentence. He wrote to Melaton. Seen both leads. Seen both leads. Seen both leads.

This sentence is something used by Catholics. To say. Yeah. What is this message of God's grace. Seen both leads. Seen both leads. Said Luther. But. Luther mentioned to. And said to Melaton. We've seen both leads. Seen both leads. Was the fact that he. Had to take risks. That. The. The. Responsibility. We have.

[21 : 49] Means that. We can make mistakes. No. But we have to do something. Something. With what we have received. And it is exactly. What you see here. No. No.

The great difference. With our lives. Is. When you see. The goal. The purpose. Of it. This often. The story told. Of. This man.

Working. Building. No. And you. Ask one person. Who is just. A. Hammering a rock. No. Working. On the stones.

No. And. They ask. What you are doing. No. No. Breaking a stone. No. Doing. The work. He is doing.

And you ask. The next person. And. He. Could say. Well. I am earning. My money. I am. Trying to. To provide.

[22 : 44] My family. With what they need. And of course. The story is that. Only the last one. Is able to say. I am building. A cathedral. He has got the purpose. The goal of it all.

No. Jesus. Cannot see further. Of what they are. Doing. At this very moment. And. That is why. Hope. Is so important. For us.

Because. Really. Not only. Our life. And our work. Worth. Value. But really. It means. That. We have.

This. Salvation. That we. Hope. To get. From our. Jesus Christ. Christ. And the Lord showed us that that day he is going to come to this earth and bring this kingdom. It's not ourselves who are going to bring the kingdom of God between the people at this present moment. This is of course the greatest mistake of much contemporary theology, of much of the humanistic Christianity, which speaks very boldly about what the work of the Church is achieving between the people and this world today.

As if they are building the kingdom in the sense that they are bringing finally this new world of justice just because of the service, the sacrifice, the commitment they have for God.

[24 : 18] But to pray that the Lord will come means also that our salvation will come from heaven.

He will bring this kingdom. And what we here face is what we have to do while we ask that thy kingdom will come.

what we have to do is something. This is the point of this story. You cannot just sit down and wait.

You need to do something with your life.

And the greatest the clearest point of the story is that you have to take risks. That there is a danger.

In this investment there is the possibility of a great loss. But what here we learn is that finally there is no loss at all.

[25 : 23] Like this missionary who was going in Ecuador to the Indians through these plains in the 50s. And they were killed by the spears of those Indians when they were going to preach them the gospel.

You know the story. Nathan and Sainz all these men we still remember. One of them wrote these words in his diary. It's not fool to put your life in danger when you don't have nothing to lose.

What do you want to keep if you cannot lose it? So the only way we can take risks that we can bring our lives to danger is when we realize that we are safe.

That we don't have nothing to be afraid. This is why the Lord says so often to his disciples don't be afraid. The peace be with you.

Because it's the fear which paralyzes us. It's the fear which makes us not able to do anything in this life. You know what are the greatest fears?

[26 : 36] The fears of the unknown. The fears which are not based on reality. The irrational fears we all have that could happen one day our greatest nightmare.

What we are more afraid of. And this experience of fear is that make us so difficult to do anything with our lives.

So the Lord shows us and he says to his disciples don't be afraid my beloved flock because the pastor has care upon you.

There is a shepherd a father in heaven who is taking care of you. And we need not only to hear that but to experience it.

So the whole purpose not only of the Bible but of the work of the Holy Spirit is to have this assurance this confidence that we are his children.

[27 : 47] If we know that we are his children then there is nothing we have to be afraid of. This is certainly the great lesson of the suffering church in so many countries and for so many centuries.

Why how they were able to put their lives in so much danger to sacrifice themselves for God's kingdom. I think that there is only one possible explanation the assurance they have that they were God's children that there was no danger in that death.

I remember reading as a student when I was in the Christian Union the beginning of the Christian Union at the University of Madrid there was an American book called Sacrifice and this holiness teacher was asking from the very first page what have you sacrificed for the kingdom.

Oh then I realized the sacrifices are not so big maybe. So I started to worry how great is the sacrifice I've done and you get sometimes this a bit insane illy spirituality that very sick that what can you sacrifice for the Lord what thing can you do extra more but of course this is not the point of Christian life Christ has done everything there is no greater sacrifice that he has done so the Christian life is not about our sacrifices it's about his sacrifice to acknowledge that to realize that and to live according to that so here the Lord shows us that it's not through our sacrifices we achieve things is the way we see our lives the way we use them the ways we put our faith in practice because as you know there are two mistakes you can do to think that you can be saved by your works moralistic legalistic religion but you have the opposite mistake the fact that so many

Christians can think that they don't have to do anything at all but here it's clear to us that what we have to do is not to achieve or to get something to earn salvation what we have to do is the result the consequence of our confidence of being God's servants and it seems unfair the end of the story when you read the words of our Lord that this man who has only one mind will be taken yeah there's a bit harsh it's really too hard to cope with yeah you have pity for the poor man but is this shock at the end of the story that make us awake of the danger is not that when you have so little you are expected so little this is not how it works in the kingdom of God who am

[31 : 24] I what can I do the only thing I can do is to keep the faith to be faithful at the end and that is the only thing I can expect to do here is in a very striking way seeing the fact that even the ones who have something this could be taken from them of course we think about Israel and the way that the Jews have received such great blessings as God's people it is often said by commentators that of course in that time as in the reformation the usury the lending of money was forbidden so that this business aspect of that story probably was not possible between Jews so some people think that it's here this story understood better when we think in terms of

Jews and Gentiles so that here the Lord Jesus is saying you have to do something with your faith as God's people as Jews with the Gentiles with those who needed this light but independently of what it means originally in that context you see here the importance and the responsibility we have so that the privileges we receive doesn't matter we are Jews or Christians the privileges we have it means a responsibility what you do with it and you cannot hope like so many years that while the temple was there in Jerusalem then you don't have anything to be afraid of because God can take away that temple the Lord Jesus Christ said I can't destroy it

I can take this life and give the life to other people you don't have to think that because you are children of Abraham you have everything and nothing to be worried about if you don't do anything with this blessing you have received it can be taken away from you and this is of course a great lesson for the church for us all in this country as in my continent the fact that we have been so much blessed in history through centuries it doesn't mean just that we have to be grateful for what we have it's a responsibility are you going to share what you have with others so this Sunday you are thinking about mission what it means that we are here in this life for a purpose and the need that we have to invest our life our resources our gifts now and today before he comes because we have a mission to do now and what we have received we have to use them to use it and to invest it for their kingdom and finally

I want to lift you this glorious perspective what for what is the purpose of it all that one day when he will come back he will say good and beloved servant what it means for us the acceptance the approval of the Lord certainly as I say for many is the fear we have that one day when we will see him we realize how much are our shortcomings that we would be so afraid even to look at him but this is the distorted view of the wicked servant the wicked servant is here portrayed almost psychologically to us in the story the others is not much safe about how they look at the master what was their thinking and feelings about it but here in the wicked servant you see really how he was seeing him as someone so demanding that you have to be afraid and we realize that he will have this responsibility it's not to think that he so demanding that he would not be easy to satisfy the point is exactly that he is satisfied through

Jesus Christ there is nothing really he has against us so what he expects from us is the trust is the confidence so much that we take on risk our lives then we have to ask ourselves once more if we willing to take this risk to use even our small little gifts in our eyes it doesn't matter how small and little are in our eyes but what we are doing with our lives and the truth is that there is not much time it's coming back and then one day it will be too late so our responsibility is what we are going to do today tomorrow the only way we are able to do something is looking at him in a different way than this wicked servant if you think of him in the terms of this man who said that he was such a lord and master that he was so afraid that he will be condemned then we will do nothing but only when we feel the confidence the trust that he accepts us that we are not only his servants but his children then we can do something with our lives shall we pray to our father that we have this assurance that we are

[38 : 36] God's children that so much we have this confidence that we are able to take risks to put our lives on dangers to invest our resources our gifts for God's kingdom so we pray that he help us and enable us to do it