

Luke Chapter 19 – John Karmelich

1. There's a famous story even to this day among religious Jews that happened fairly shortly before Jesus was around. It was based on a question asked to the two leading Jewish religious teachers of that time, "Can you summarize the Torah (first five books of the bible) while standing on one foot?" One rabbi said it couldn't be done and walked away. The other took it as a challenge. He came back to the man who asked the question and said what is translated, "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself, the rest is commentary, now go and study Torah".
 - a) I open with that story, as I'd like to use it as a challenge to summarize why did Jesus come into the world, while standing on one foot. Picture me standing with one foot in the air as I answer that question: It goes, "God came into the world He created to save whoever will trust in Him. Now go study how and why this was necessary." OK, foot down. Yes that is my lesson title, the question of why Jesus did come to this world. Hopefully I'll explain why that title ties to this chapter as I explain it. Here we go:
2. The first story in this chapter is about Jesus meeting a chief tax collector in Israel. In that culture, to be a tax collector meant one was a traitor to one's country, and far worse, one used strong arm tactics to collect as much as possible. This is not a knock on those who work say for government to collect taxes today. It's just that in the Roman world, these people were the highest bidders to collect taxes for Rome and whatever they could collect over and above that they could keep. This tax collector was a chief of tax collectors and rich, so you know he was powerful and successful at his job of taking advantage of others.
 - a) In the last chapter we just had a story of a rich and successful man who refused to trust in Jesus with every aspect of his life, and wasn't saved. In this story, we get another rich and successful man who was willing to let go of all he had in order to earn salvation. We read of Jesus agreeing to spend time with this man as he's willing to give back whatever he has stolen from others in order to get rich.
 - b) My point of this story has nothing to do with how much we give, say to our local church. It is about learning to trust Jesus with every aspect of our lives including whatever wealth and power we have in life. That's why this story is a great example of God coming down to earth to "seek what was lost".
3. The second story is about a wealthy man who gave a large sum of money to ten of his servants. The wealthy man then told his servants to go do "business" while the boss was gone. He wanted his servants to go make a profit based on the amount of money they had received. The issue for us is not how many people we've lead to Jesus or anything to do with making a profit. It has to do with using the resources God has given us. If we have nothing but time, then God expects us to use some of that time for His glory. If God's given us more than time, then He also expects us to use some of that wealth for His glory as well. How we are to use it is between you and God. It usually depends upon what we enjoy doing anyway and combing that joy with finding a way to make a difference for Jesus in the world around us.
 - a) Like the last story, this one also teaches us why Jesus came into the world. So that He can work through us to save others and lead others to Him. In this story the servants are then rewarded or punished based on how much effort they made based on the resources they were given in order to make a difference for God. The point of the story is not that we say get a point in heaven for every person we save. The point is based on our effort to use the time and resources God has given us in order to make a difference for Him.
4. The final story of this chapter is the famous one of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey to be proclaimed as a king. It's the only time in the Gospels Jesus arranges to be worshipped as a king. He knew His time on earth was almost up. The reason we read this story here is that Jesus wanted the give the Israelites a chance collectively to see Him as their king.

- a) The exact day of this event was predicted hundreds of years ago by the prophet Daniel. A point here is that the Jewish experts should have realized that "now" was the time that the Messiah was to be presented into the world.
 - b) What's interesting in this story is we don't read of Jesus say leading the crowd to where a group of Roman soldiers were located to overthrow them. We don't read of Jesus leading the crowd to say the home of Pontius Pilate. Instead we'll read of Jesus causing havoc in the Temple area by overturning the tables. Jesus point is the religious leaders of that day were as corrupt as the Roman tax collectors as they'd take advantage of all the people who would come to Jerusalem for a religious holiday by charging very high prices to purchase what was required for people to participate in that holiday. In that sense, this story has its own similarity to the rich man from the last chapter or the rich tax collector from earlier in this chapter. My point is Jesus came to save what was lost and the eternal price of failing to use our time to make a difference for Him is not just "overturned tables" but eternal life away from the presence of God as we failed to use our time to make a difference for Him.
5. In summary the first story was about a man willing to repent and use his life to make a difference for Jesus. The second story is about people willing to use their time and resources to lead others to Jesus. The final one is about those who were in charge of leading people to God, but used their time to grow rich instead of leading people closer to God. Coming back to my lesson title, get the idea that Jesus came to seek what is lost, He expects us to help in that effort and there's a big price to pay if we fail to use our lives to make that difference. On that scary thought, time to start with the verse-by-verse commentary on the text itself.
6. Chapter 19, Verse 1: Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.
- a) Way back in Chapter 9, we began a road journey where Jesus slowly traveled from town to town preaching that people need to repent of their sins and doing miracles to prove He came from God. Now, here in Chapter 19, we are about at the end of that journey. Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem for what will be His final days on earth until He literally returns one day in the future. I state that here because the city of Jericho is near Jerusalem. There is a road that connects Jericho to Jerusalem and Jesus is traveling on that road to get there.
 - b) By this point in the story Jesus is famous in Israel. Many Jewish people wanted Him to go to Jerusalem, overthrow the Roman Government and set up the eternal kingdom there on the spot. In the last chapter, we had the story of the rich "synagogue president" who meet Jesus and was willing to follow Him. Jesus effectively turned this man down because he would not let go of his riches and power in order to follow Jesus. The moral of that story is not about us being required to sell all we have. It was about loving God more than any and everything we have in life and if we care about those things more than money, then we have mixed loyalty between serving God and serving our own interests.
 - c) I remind you of that story as Jesus is still traveling on that same route. As I mentioned in the last lesson, there was at that time two "Jericho's". There were the ruins of the old city and life in a new one near by. In the last story, Jesus confronted the rich "ruler" between those two cities. In this story, Jesus is traveling through the newer city of Jericho. Here in this city, there was another successful and wealthy man who wanted to see Jesus. Since there was a large crowd on the main highway, he couldn't get a good view of Him. So in order to see Jesus he climbed a tree.
 - i) A quick note on the tree itself. There is some debate over what type of tree it was, as the Hebrew word used here can describe a few different types of trees. What is important is that it was the type of tree that's fairly easy to climb. Picture a fat tree with low branches that an adult can easily climb and one gets the idea. Now here is this wealthy notorious man "lowering himself" to climb a tree just to see Jesus.

7. Verse 5: When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.
- a) Coming back to this "top tax gatherer" who climbed the tree, I don't think it was even in his thoughts that Jesus would want to stay with him. I think he just wanted to get a look at who Jesus was as he was traveling by. I'm also convinced that despite his success in the corrupt world of the Roman tax system, he knew there had to be more to life than making money. I'm pretty confident based on the upcoming text that this man would be willing to give up all that success in order to earn salvation the way Jesus taught it based on trusting in who God is and what He desires of us.
 - b) Some commentators believe that because the disciple Matthew was a former tax collector, he's the one who recognized Zacchaeus and told Jesus who He was. Others just say that Jesus as God knew all things. Either way, the events happened as described here.
 - c) Remember that Jesus is traveling on the road. He doesn't have places to stay and in that sense is trusting God the Father to work out where Jesus stays as He travels. I logically assume that a man as successful as Zacchaeus had a house large enough that Jesus and His disciples could lodge there comfortably. For Jesus to invite Himself over to dinner probably also included a request for Himself and his disciples to spend the night as well.
 - d) Now think about the reaction of Zacchaeus. He could have said, "Hey Jesus, I just wanted to get a good look at You. I didn't want to make dinner for you and your friends." I don't know if I have room in my house for all of you. Instead we read of Zacchaeus welcoming Jesus gladly. That alone is a good sign of salvation, and not the necessity to change every aspect of one's life there on the spot. It's just our willingness to accept Jesus into our lives and let Him take over our lives.
 - i) I once heard a fairly famous pastor in the area (Rick Warren) describe Christianity as Jesus establishing a "beachhead" within us so that for the rest of our lives Jesus can work on us to change us to be more of how God desires us to be. That in effect is what Jesus came to do, save what is lost so that He can work on us for the rest of our lives to do God's will through us in our lives.
 - ii) That leads us back to Zacchaeus. All Jesus asked Him at this point was if He could come to His house. Jesus didn't say stop being a tax collector or sell all he had. He just asked this man effectively could I come over for a meal. Zacchaeus said yes.
8. Verse 7: All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a `sinner.' "
- a) Remember that there was a large crowd on the road to see who Jesus was. That's why we read of Zacchaeus having to climb up a tree in the first place. The crowd knew who this man Zacchaeus was. That's why they grumbled about why Jesus picked him for a meal.
 - b) The point for us is that if Jesus came to seek what was lost, crowds will grumble because they think of some people as beyond help. One of the great challenges in life is to learn to see people as needing Jesus and not say as someone who's hurt us, or others.
 - c) This week as I write this lesson, I'm also reading a biography of an American pastor who had the assignment right after World War II to go to Germany to the trials of the leading prisoners of that war and minister to them during that trial. The short version is that it wasn't easy as this pastor saw these men as those who've murdered millions of innocent people in the slaughter of millions of Jewish people. I mention this book, as it's a perfect example of learning to see people as God sees them and not just as people who've done horrible things. The challenge of reaching out to those others see as horrible people is how I see this crowd reacting to Jesus reaching out to this chief tax collector. In my book not all the people there repented, but it shows the willingness to try to reach those who we would consider lost for Jesus' sake as God sees all of us as being "lost" without Him.
 - d) I should also state that forgiveness is not about a lack of justice. The men on trial in this book were still killed for their crimes. It's about helping them see God to ask forgiveness.

9. Verse 8: But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."
- a) My favorite comment on this verse came from John MacArthur who said effectively, "I can just picture the long line of people willing to collect back what Zacchaeus took from them in taxes". I can give you verses in the Old Testament that state why he said he'd pay back four times what he stole. The important point here is that Zacchaeus is willing to give up what he had financially in order to trust in Jesus as being in charge of his life.
 - i) Did Zacchaeus understand all about Jesus dying on the cross? Of course not. All we do read is Zacchaeus willing to change his life based on what Jesus taught. In that sense, Zacchaeus is like the person Rick Warren described as allowing God to establish a "beachhead" within us so that He can work in our lives for His glory.
 - b) At this point, it might be a good time to remind us what John the Baptist said to other tax collectors who came to him. John's line was in effect, "Don't collect more than what you're told to collect". (See Luke 3:13) As I said in my lesson introduction, if you work for a tax collection agency, it is not a sin. To cheat at any profession is the sin, not to have a job of collecting taxes in the first place.
10. Verse 9: Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham." ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."
- a) Notice Jesus' attitude here. He didn't say, "OK, start giving away your money and then we'll talk." He didn't say, "OK, watch me die on the cross in about a week and then you can believe in who I am". Jesus was willing to consider this man saved just based on the fact he was willing to change his life based on his attitude about Jesus.
 - b) Speaking of John MacArthur, he also stated that he read that early in church history, this man Zacchaeus became an early church leader. I didn't verify it. If it is true, it does show how much a person can change just based on trusting Jesus to take over one's life.
 - c) Notice Zacchaeus is Jewish by birth. Jesus calls him a Son of Abraham. (I.e., He's Jewish).
 - d) I'm also tempted to ask the question here, "What if the man changed just based on what he knew about Judaism? What if non-corrupt priests were able to get to this man to teach him the correct way to live?" The hard part is society sees people like him as beyond help. The reason why I believe it requires Jesus to change our ways is the unique Christian view of life as seeing people as needing God no matter what they've done in their lives. To tell a person who's hurt us badly or hurt someone we've loved badly not only that we forgive them but that God still cares about them has to be one of the hardest things to do in life. I am convinced it is only by the power of the Spirit of God living within us that we are even capable of loving and forgiving a person that way. Such a person may still have to suffer the penalty for what they did, but at the same time, we have to see them as needing Jesus just as much as we did.
 - i) All of that can be summarized by Verse 10, which as you can tell by now, is what I based my lesson title on. A big part of living the Christian life is learning to love what God loves and hate what God hates. While He hates sin, God never stops loving the sinner. If that is true, why send people to hell? Why isn't for example, a million years in hell enough time to make someone pay for a horrible crime?
 - ii) The answer is God is perfect. A perfect God is willing to perfectly forgive. At the same time, a perfect God can never (big emphasis on never) forgive if we're not willing to ask for that forgiveness in the first place. So if we trust in Jesus and say we die right after committing some bad sin, are we not saved? Of course not. It's about our willingness to trust that Jesus loves us and died for every sins we have ever committed, especially including the one's we've done after we've made that commitment to Him in the first place. Hell is strictly for those who refuse to trust in that forgiveness not offered by Him in the first place.

11. Verse 11: 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.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. "Put this money to work," he said, "until I come back."
- a) My first question is who were the "they" who were listening to Jesus in Verse 11? My best guess is it refers to the disciples and whoever else was at Zacchaeus house when Jesus is speaking the words beginning here in Verse 11.
 - b) The next thing to catch is that Jesus is telling a made-up story, which is what a parable is. Matthew 13:34 says that Jesus spoke in parables so that those who don't get it about Jesus won't understand what He's saying and those who do get it would understand what He's saying. The point isn't that an unbeliever can't figure out what a parable means. It means point is an unbeliever doesn't care about Jesus' parables as they don't care about Him by definition. Jesus spoke this way so that those who do care about Him would take the time to figure out what the parable means to learn more about Him.
 - c) With that introduction completed, time to talk about the parable itself. The next thing to notice is that Jesus states the reason for this parable in Verse 11. Jesus said because He is close to Jerusalem, many people think, "This is it, the Messiah is coming to overthrow the Roman Government and set up the eternal kingdom right now". If nothing else, this verse shows here it was never Jesus intention to overthrow the Roman Government and declare Himself the Messiah in the way that most Jewish people wanted the Messiah to come, as a ruling leader over the world so they could enjoy peace over their enemies.
 - i) In other words, Jesus is teaching this parable in order for the disciples to grasp the idea that Jesus wasn't going to overthrow Rome then and there. To change one's lifelong belief in something takes time, which is why the disciples didn't get it on the spot. Still, it is important for Jesus to teach this so that both we and them get the idea it was Jesus plan the whole time to die for sins as well as to seek those of us who were lost without Him.
 - d) OK, enough of that. Onto the parable itself. Jesus is describing a prince who had to travel to a foreign country in order to be crowned king. In that Roman world, people like Herod had to travel to Rome in order for Rome to recognize people like Herod or even Pontius Pilate as being a ruler over that area. My point is was no stretch of the imagination for the disciples to think of an appointed leader having to travel to a distant land in order to be a ruler in the first place.
 - i) As to Jesus Himself, think of Him in this parable describing Himself having to go to God the Father in order declared "king of the world" in order to start the eternal reign of that king as promised extensively in the bible in the "Second Coming".
 - ii) Before this king-to-be travels to go away, he gives ten "mina's" each to ten of his servants with instructions to do "business" while the king to be is gone.
 - iii) For those of you who care, I learned that "ten mina's" was about three months of income to the average person back then. Whatever the exact amount was, the boss said in effect, go make some more money for me while I'm gone.
 - iv) OK, what does that mean for you and me? The issue is not salvation, but what we do with our salvation. Yes Jesus came to seek what was lost, but once we do make that commitment to Him, He doesn't expect us to just sit there and be saved. What He does demand of us is that we use our time and our resources in order to make a difference for Him in the world around us. In effect, this parable is teaching us that there are rewards in heaven based on what we've done with our salvation.
 - e) I should add here that I've heard of Christians on their deathbed begging to do one more thing for God before they die knowing their rewards are based on service. My response to such thoughts is "You've done all that God's asked you to do, why do more?"

12. Verse 14: "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'
- a) All of a sudden we get an interruption to the men with the 10 "buckets of money" to tell us about everyone else living in that kingdom. Coming back to the world of Israel at the time of Jesus, when a son of the first Herod went to Rome to get permission to be the king over parts of Israel, leading Jewish men also traveled to Rome to oppose the appointing of that next Herod. My point here is simply that the crowd hearing Jesus could understand the idea of a delegation opposing a new king coming into power.
 - b) This also ties to the idea of Jesus Second Coming and let's be honest, most people in the world want to decide for themselves what they can do and not do. In other words, they don't want Jesus or anyone else to be in charge of every aspect of their lives. That is the key reason why Jesus interrupts Himself to describe how the masses saw this event.
 - c) Next, it's time to describe what happens to the ten men who had the "bucket of money".
13. Verse 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.
- a) This is like when the second Herod came back to Israel, he was made a king despite the fact that the Jewish leaders opposed him. However, since in this parable the king IS the king, the next order of business is to focus on those who worked for the king. Think of this as Jesus order of business when He returns is first to establish Himself as king as He eliminates those who refuse to accept that idea. Then comes the rewards or lack thereof based on what we did with our "bucket of money and time" that God has given us. That in effect, is a good summary of Verse 15.
14. Verse 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.'
- a) In Matthew Chapter 20, there was a story of Jesus giving an equal reward to people called to work for Him at different stages of the day, just as Jesus calls people at different stages of live to make a difference for Him. In that story, everyone got the same pay. That story is about salvation. In this story the issue is heavenly rewards based on service once we've been called to serve Him. If we're not saved until later in life, does that mean we get less of a reward? Don't know, as I'm not in charge. What I suspect is our rewards are based on what we've done since we've accepted Jesus and how faithful we were based on what God's called us to do.
 - b) Coming back to the parable, one person made ten times the money as he was given in the first place. Jesus said his reward was he got to be in charge of ten cities. The next man in this parable made five times what he was given. Jesus said he'll now be in charge of five cities. This leads to the question of what do we do in heaven and what is our rewards?
 - i) First, I hold the view that heaven is not boring. We don't sit on a cloud all day, say watching television. The reward of being a good servant to Jesus in this life is we get to continue to be a servant of His in the next life. The joy we receive of putting others before ourselves is something we get to enjoy for eternity. The reason one person got "ten cities" simply means in heaven some will have a greater rank than others will. It has nothing to do with how financially successful we are in this life. It strictly has to do with our willingness to trust in Jesus as being in charge of our lives and doing what we believe He's guiding us to do. The same way that angels in heaven have "ranks" like an army ranks, so we'll have ranks in heaven based on how we've lived once we are saved.
 - ii) What about babies that die or those who've accepted Jesus right before they have died? What is their reward? A perfect God can figure that out. I just know that our incentive clause heavenly rewards exist based on our service to Him.

15. Verse 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?'
- a) In this parable of ten servants equally receiving the same amount of money to work with, we now get the story of one of those servants who says in effect, "I was too scared of you as I know you expect a return on your money". Notice Jesus didn't say, "You are forgiven for being honest about his failure." Also notice that some sort of banking system did exist in that day. Jesus effectively said, "Hey, you could have at the least done something with the money instead of just sitting on it feeling sorry for yourself".
 - b) The point here for you or me is that Jesus holds us accountable for whatever blessing we have in life. If we have nothing but time, then Jesus expects us to use our time for Him. If we have some assets, He expects us to use those assets for His glory. The issue isn't about giving away all we have, but about using what we have to benefit our king.
 - c) As to where to invest, pray for God's guidance. My view is to look for places where one sees God already blessing. If one sees a ministry that is making a difference for Him, to invest in that ministry is an example of getting a good return for your money in terms of earning eternal blessings. Of course I believe in supporting one's local churches. At the same time, looking where to put our "mina's" is a little like trying to pick good stocks in the stock market. One looks for a good return on one's investment.
 - d) What about your example of people who get saved on their deathbed or babies who die? How are they rewarded? The short answer is only with salvation. At the same time, if we do have the privilege of using part of our lives for God's glory, He expects a "good return" on His investment in us. That doesn't mean we can't have downtime or time to enjoy with say our families. It simply means that God holds us accountable for the time He gives us and expects us to use the time and gifts He gives us for His glory.
 - e) What I love to ask people is "If money was irrelevant to you, what would you want to do all day? What do you just love to do?" The point is to use what we are passionate about for His glory. Of course we still have to provide for ourselves and other necessities in life but we still can make the time to work toward what we enjoy in a way that will give us a return on our "mina" as Jesus desires of us.
 - f) Coming back to my lesson theme, Jesus did come into the world to call us to be with Him forever. The point is until we get to heaven, we aren't just saved so we can sit around and do nothing. God wants us to use our lives to make a difference for Him. That's why He holds us accountable for whatever "mina's" we do have in this life.
 - g) In the meantime, time to return to the story. The point here is this one man in the parable didn't do anything with his "mina" and now he's going to suffer for it.
16. Verse 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 he has will be taken away.'
- a) The point here is the man who didn't do business with the boss's mina, had to return it to the boss, who then gave it to the other servant who made ten times what he had. The way I describe faith is "it's like a muscle. Use it and it will go stronger. Avoid it and it'll grow weaker". The person who uses their life to make a difference for Jesus will then get more opportunities to be used by Him. The blessing of a servant is that he or she will get to be blessed more once we choose to live that way.
 - b) As I like to say, I don't see heaven as sitting around all day watching television. I believe we continue to get the privilege serve Jesus in the next life so we get used to doing it now.

- c) Even with that said, I don't see this verse as being about eternity as much as it is about our life here and now. It's about not wasting the opportunities or at least the time God's given us so that we can use those things to make a difference for Him.
 - d) As to this servant who wasted the "mina", it's hard to tell from the passage if he is or isn't saved. I believe there are lots of people in heaven who are barely saved because they do believe Jesus was in charge of their lives and did believe God raised Him from the dead. I also believe Jesus is teaching there are great rewards in heaven for those who use their life to make a difference for Him. As for this servant who wasted the mina, one can argue he wasn't really saved because he didn't care about pleasing the master or one can argue he was "barely " saved because he still trusted in who the master was. The point for you and me is simply that if God has called us to serve Him, we better be doing "just that" and not wasting whatever talent or time God has given us to live out our lives here on earth.
17. Verse 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.' "
- a) Keep in mind that the Second Coming of Jesus is not a joyous event, but one of judgment. I'm not talking about believers being taken to heaven when He returns, but just how those who refuse to trust in Jesus as both God and one who paid for their sins will be treated. In other words we read of Jesus giving us both the positive and negative motivation of living to be His servant. The positive motivation is there are eternal rewards if we choose to use our lives to make a difference for Him. The negative motivation, is we'll spend eternity in hell if we refuse to let God rule over our lives. That is what this verse essentially teaches.
 - b) Let's say you're reading this and thinking, "OK, I go to church pretty regularly, I believe in Jesus as God and one who's paid the price for my sins, so why should I feel guilty that I'm not doing enough?" The point is about surrender. It's about praying, "You're in charge of my life, how do You want me to use it for Your glory?" How God guides us based on that prayer is the answer to the guilt question. If we pray with that type of attitude that He is in charge of our lives and we spend regular time in His word and live like He's in charge of our lives, then we can relax that we are earning a return on His "mina". If we believe God is leading us in a different direction, explore it and see if that path taken can use for His glory.
 - c) In summary, I don't want to be "around" when this judgment does occur as hinted at here in Verse 27, so I try to use my life to get a good return on my "mina". So how do I know for sure I'm getting that return? Again, it comes back to doing what one enjoys doing or doing what one is good at in a way that makes a difference for Him. If we're living that way or simply serving Him by serving others, we can be assured that we are earning a return on our "mina" for Him.
 - d) Let me try this one more way: Suppose we're stuck in a situation we don't like. Let's say for example we have to take care of a sick loved one or even help someone we're not crazy about. How do I earn my "mina's" in that situation? The answer is we can't always be in control of our situations, but we can always control our attitude about it. If we truly hate the situation we're in, pray for God to give us the strength to get through it. Pray that He teach us what He wants us to learn in that situation we're in. Then remember the classic bible line, "This too, shall pass".
18. Verse 28: After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ³⁰ "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. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' tell him, 'The Lord needs it.' "
- a) I stated in the beginning of this lesson that Jericho is not too far from Jerusalem. We will now focus upon the final week of Jesus' life on earth from here to the books' end. The first event of this final week is preparing for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem riding on a donkey.

- b) If you think about the Gospel stories, you never read of Jesus desiring to be worshipped as God. If anything He's told those who've received miracles to not discuss it so He can go from town to town and avoid being mobbed. Here we read just the opposite. We read of Jesus arranging to be worshipped. Why is that? Jesus wanted to give the Israelites the opportunity to collectively accept Him as the Messiah. Did Jesus know He'd be rejected after He did this? Of course. Still, He didn't want the Israelites to claim they never had an opportunity to collectively either accept Him or reject Him as their promised Messiah.
- c) There are two Old Testament passages written hundreds of years earlier that the Jewish leaders should have known lead to this time. The first is based on the last four verses of Daniel Chapter 9. The short version is it teaches from the day the order was given for the Jewish people to return to their homeland (while in captivity in Babylon) until the time of their Messiah would be exactly 49 periods of seven years. Yes I believe if one works out the calculations it comes out exactly to "Palm Sunday" when Jesus rode into town. Even if the religious Jews didn't have the tools to do the math, they should have known the time was near. For details on the math, I wrote a lesson just on those last four verses.
- i) The second Old Testament passage is from Zachariah 9:9, which predicts that the Messiah will be presented on a donkey. That's what we see Jesus arranging to do here in these verses. Some bible scholars think that Jesus "pre-arranged" this event on a previous trip to this location. Others argue that Jesus is all-knowing which is why He makes the statement that if anyone complains about taking of the donkey, just say "The Lord needs it".
- ii) You have to admit that it seems strange to state that the God of the Universe, who created everything, has need of a borrowed donkey. Just as God chose to come to the world as a baby of a peasant woman, so He depended upon others to survive and had to borrow what He needed to live or use in order to make a point. What that teaches us is that God wants us to depend upon one another so that together we can make a difference for Him.
- d) Let me pose another question: How do we know that Jesus wasn't just a man obsessed with being the Messiah, and that's why He arranged to be worshipped here? If someone asks that, answer, how do you explain the miracles that were never denied? How do you explain Jesus rising from the dead where His body was never found? Imagine how hard the religious leaders looked to find His body! I'm just saying the evidence of the actuality of these events occurring as described is very strong if you study them. That's why many skeptics through the centuries have become Christians, as they can't deny the evidence.
- e) OK enough of all of that, back to the verses. The road from Jericho to Jerusalem requires traveling over a large hill that we know of as the Mount of Olives. On the opposite side of where Jerusalem is located is where these two villages are as described in these verses. In one of those towns is where Jesus told His disciples they'd find this colt of a donkey that had never been ridden before. For those of you familiar with raising larger animals, you'd know how difficult or impossible it'd be to ride an animal that hasn't been "broken" first. It's just another little piece of evidence to prove to Jesus disciples He is who He claimed to be in the Gospel accounts.
19. Verse 32: Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"³⁴ They replied, "The Lord needs it."
- a) At this point, the story is repeated a little, essentially to say, "It happened just as Jesus did predict it would happen". It's one thing for Jesus to say some things will happen exactly this way, and it's another for them to actually happen that way. That's why the verses are included here. Speaking of things happening exactly as Jesus predicted, not only do we have the events of the cross coming up exactly as He predicted, but He'll also describe the destruction of Jerusalem exactly as it happened about 40 years after these events occurred.

20. Verse 35: They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ 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: ³⁸ "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"
- a) Here we have the famous story of "Palm Sunday". It has been called that, as most scholars will argue this took place the Sunday prior to when Jesus rose from the dead. Years ago, I wrote a lesson on explaining the exact date of "Palm Sunday" and how it fulfills to the day of the time line as predicted by Daniel hundreds of years earlier. That lesson is based on a book written in the late 19th century by Robert Anderson, called the "Coming Prince". He was knighted in England for tying Daniel's prediction to that Palm Sunday to the day.
 - b) Tell us again, why did Jesus arrange all of this? It gave the Israelites who were gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover holiday an opportunity to collectively say if they accept or reject Him as the Messiah. Here, it appears they're accepted Him. Again, I'm convinced if Jesus led this crowd to kill the Roman soldiers stationed there, they would have accepted Him as the Messiah. Remember that the Israelites wanted a king to rule the world from Jerusalem and they thought "this is it, the eternal reign of a descendant of King David is starting here and now". Jesus stated several times earlier in Luke that He knew He was going to be rejected, but He still needed the present the opportunity for the Jewish people to accept Him as their Messiah (here's the important part) on Jesus' terms, not their terms.
 - c) A little background would be helpful here. All the Jewish people who took God seriously were required to celebrate the annual holiday of Passover in Jerusalem. Part of the annual tax that Jewish people were required to pay as stated in Deuteronomy 14, was to pay for the annual holidays such as this one. At this time, there was a historian named Josephus who was a non-Christian Israelite who was "Pro-Roman". One of the facts he gave about is for a Passover holiday to be celebrated over 200,000 lambs were needed. Figuring that one lamb could feed 10 people, then figure about 2,000,000 people were in Jerusalem for this holiday. This is taken from Josephus non-biblical book, "War of the Jews", 6.9.3 where he states over 280,000 lambs were sacrificed in one such holiday celebration.
 - i) Speaking of background, also realize that Verse 38 is a quote from Psalm 118. That Psalm is associated with the Messiah. This crowd did accept Him as the Messiah. The only reason it didn't count is that they only accepted Him as a warrior, not as one who would suffer the price for their sins.
21. Verse 39: Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" ⁴⁰ "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."
- a) There is an old joke that goes if you ever visit Jerusalem and want a free souvenir, grab a stone on the road that Jesus traveled upon as He road into town. That road is famous and many tourists walk that road to this day. The joke is those stones are the ones that would have cried out if the people didn't publicly proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.
 - b) With that joke out of my system, notice in Verse 39 the religious leaders understand what is happening and asked Jesus to rebuke His disciples. The religious leaders didn't believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but they got the idea that the crowd wanted Him to be "it". That's when Jesus rebuked His critics by stating that if they didn't proclaim it, the stones of the city would proclaim it.
 - c) There is a view I heard as taught by John MacArthur that argues that Jesus wasn't literally talking about talking stones, but it is a reference to the fact that in 70 AD, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was so complete, that they tore down most of the walls of the old city. In other words, the fact that Jesus was corporately rejected by Israel will be made evident a generation later with the destruction of that city. The fact that Luke never says anything about that destruction is a good bit of evidence that the Gospel of Luke was put together prior to that event occurring. More on that destruction in a bit.

22. Verse 41: As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² 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.
- a) One can never argue that Jesus didn't care about the Jewish nation. Here we read of Him weeping over their corporate rejection of Him. So if God knows all things, why would He weep over its rejection of Him? The answer comes back to my lesson title, that God came into the world to save what was lost. One thing to grasp is that God will never violate our free will to choose Him. He didn't make us like robots to be forced to worship Him. We have to come to Him out of our free will. The weeping is over our collective choice to not want to come to Him in the first place. In that sense, I believe the "weeping" continues to this day in the sense that God desires all people to choose to be with Him forever. I don't see God as an old man sitting in a chair. The weeping is a way for us to relate to God in His desire to be with each of us forever.
 - b) That little speech leads us to Verse 42. What is implied here is that because the Israelites refused to collectively accept Jesus not as a ruling Messiah, but one who had to suffer for the sake of redeeming them of their sins, now it's "too late". The classical question here is "Is that rejection permanent?" Notice Jesus doesn't say they are hidden forever. He just says they are hidden. Like many evangelical Christians I hold a view that a day will come when they will collectively ask for the Messiah to come. But haven't the religious Jewish people been praying the return of the Messiah for 2,000 years now? Yes. At the same time I'll argue that during the "Great Tribulation", whenever that occurs, because of the witness given by two men as stated in Revelation Chapter 11, they will collectively ask for Jesus' return which happens at the end of that time frame. One day history itself will tell me if I was right or wrong on how that actually plays out. What is important to this point of the story is that Jesus is now says, it's too late to corporately accept Me know as the Messiah.
23. Verse 43: 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. ⁴⁴ 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."
- a) Before I discuss these verses, remember that history records that almost all the apostles as well as Luke, who was not one of the "12", were tortured and killed because they refused to deny Jesus was God or that the Gospel stories were not true exactly as it was written.
 - b) I give that background as these verses predict in almost exact detail how the Romans did destroy Jerusalem in 70 AD. Time for a little background based on what is published in Josephus's' book on the "War of the Jews". The short version is Rome had "had it" with the Israelites constantly rebelling against Rome. The Roman government only had two key rules for its subjects: Pay your taxes and don't rebel. Beyond that, the Romans gave its subjects the freedom to worship and live however they wanted. Anyway, by about 70 AD, the Romans had "had it" with the Israelites. Under a general named Titus, the army started a campaign to literally destroy the Jewish people one city at a time. When they got to Jerusalem they literally surrounded that city with a wall of soldiers and starved it to its death. Millions died in that campaign. Still standing in Rome today is a giant arch made in honor of that general and his campaign. Many religious Jews to this day will not walk under that arch in order to remember that destruction.
 - c) Now think about Jesus' statement of the stones crying out: In that destruction, most of the stones that made up the walls of the city were torn down. My point here is simply that Jesus predicted in detail the price that the Israelites paid collectively for rejecting Him. To state the obvious, not every Jewish person alive died then. However this event does show us that Jesus says what He means when He proclaimed effectively, if you choose to reject Me you will be "slaughtered before Me". (Based on Verse 27). My point is simply that we have to grasp the idea that denying who Jesus is, will lead to eternal punishment.

- d) So does this mean, we Christians are to hate the Jewish Nation? Of course not. Our job is to lead people to Jesus, not to "dish out" His judgment. If heaven is God's home then He alone gets to decide who'll be with Him there forever. What He calls on us to do is to be witnesses for Him that He wants to save us from our destruction (since we're all incurably suffering due to sin) and He wants to lead us to our salvation. That's why my lesson title is based on the fact that God came into the world to save what is lost. In these last few verses we've been reading about the consequences of choosing not to accept His free gift of eternal salvation.
24. Verse 45: Then he entered the temple area and began driving out those who were selling. ⁴⁶ "It is written," he said to them, " `My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it `a den of robbers.' "
- a) It's interesting to think about the fact that Jesus didn't lead the crowd to where the Roman soldiers were located. Instead Jesus went to where the religious leaders were selling the "official" animals to be sacrificed at well, rip-off prices. Most of us know the expression, tourist traps, where high prices are charged to take advantage of tourists. That's what we read about here. That makes me consider that if Jesus came back today, I don't think He would go to say government headquarters to overthrow civil leaders, but He would want to go to Christian churches to teach, "Stop doing all these crazy non-biblical based rituals, and just worship God". In other words, Jesus used His popularity then to teach religious leaders how God's house is to be properly used and I don't think it'd be different today.
- b) Notice Jesus refers to the Temple as God's house. Jesus never denied that the temple as built by Herod is "God's house". The issue isn't the construction. It's the fact that it was dedicated to God for His worship. Instead, the religious leaders were interested in profit by selling sacrificial animals at very high prices.
25. Verse 47: Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. ⁴⁸ Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.
- a) Ever wonder what Jesus did between the time of "Palm Sunday" and the time He was arrested a few days later? Verse 47 is the answer. Notice Jesus didn't say, "woe is me, it's now time for me to die". Instead, He used the last few days He had in Jerusalem to teach the crowd about who He is. But didn't Verse 42 say it was too late for this nation? Yes it did. The difference is it's too late for the nation collectively, but it is always the right time for any individual to accept Jesus for who He is. Remember that God came into the world to seek what is lost. Therefore, He never did stop trying and never will stop trying to save all who desire to be saved until some day comes where God will effectively proclaim, "OK that's a wrap." That's our incentive clause that reminds us there's coming a time when it's too late to accept Jesus to be in charge of our lives.
- b) That leads us back to these verses. The religious leaders hated Jesus as He was trying to stop the "status quo" of the religious leaders cooperation with Rome to sell the high priced sheep as an example. However, those same religious leaders saw how popular He was as they couldn't figure out how to make Him unpopular. The only solution was to get Rome to punish Him so that the people would see Jesus wouldn't lead a revolution over Rome. That's why this same crowd that hung on His every word rejected Him a few days later as they realized He wouldn't be their political leader that they so desired.
26. To sum all of this up the chapter is three stories that show how Jesus desires to save what the lost. We had the tax collector who was saved by trusting in Jesus. The second was effectively about us being trusted with the Gospel message and God expecting us to do "something" about it. The last story is about the price of failure not only to trust in God but to use our lives for His glory. I'll be the first to admit, this is a tough chapter to consider its implications about how we live our lives. The good news is we can't be "more saved" by trying harder. What God asks us to do is to use our lives for His glory and let Him guide us as to how He wants to do that.

27. With that said, I'll close in prayer. Heavenly Father, first we thank You that You've chosen us to spend eternity with You. Help us to remember we "can't blow that if we tried". At the same time you do expect us to use our time and resources to make a difference for You in this world. Make it obvious to us what it is that You want each of us to do as we use our time and our resources for Your glory. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.