



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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November 7, 2010

2nd Sunday of Endtime: Last Judgment

Sermon Text: [Luke 19:11-27](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Ezekiel 9:1-11](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 90](#)

Second Lesson: [2 Thessalonians 1:5-10](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 19:11-27](#)

Our King Will Judge

With Grace for the Faithful

With Fair Punishment for Those who Turn Away

If I say April 15 to you, what does that mean? What jumps to your mind? Unless it's your birthday, I'm guessing you're thinking about taxes, right? You know it's coming every year. For the vast majority of people, they are going to file their personal income taxes by April 15th. Yet every year, a number of people will end up filing for extensions. I've done it before. Every year, some people will just not bother to file their taxes with the hope that it won't get noticed. I've seen that come back and affect people in a way that is not pleasant. You know it's coming, but sometimes you forget about it.

Sometimes you look for things in the wrong places. That's what was going on in our text today. When they were looking for the kingdom of God to be established, they were looking for it at the wrong time. Jesus tells a parable to tell these people when he was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time that the kingdom of God would be established after he had gone away and when he would come back suddenly and unexpectedly. That's what we call Judgment Day. Yet, since the time Jesus told this parable, it's been over 2,000 years, so people think "Is it really coming? It's just all talk. I don't need to be ready. I can just keep going the way I am."

The parable that Jesus teaches to talk about the nature of the kingdom to these people also teaches us some truths about how important it is to be ready for our King's return because it is quite evident that our King will judge. There is no way around it. Every one of our readings this morning has driven that point home. God judges, and he judges on the basis of his standards, not yours, not mine, not anyone else's but his own. Although he is a gracious God, he is also a just God, which means there will be punishments handed down. So we would do well then to listen about how our King is going to judge and pay close attention to what he tells us about how to be ready.

As I just said, he was in the area of Jericho. He was on his way to Jerusalem for the last time where he would suffer and die. He had just ate at little Zacchaeus' house, the guy that climbed the tree to see Jesus. He had told the people that were there that Zacchaeus, this tax collector, is a true son of Abraham. The people were kind of wondering...he's talking about being the son of Abraham. The people were calling him Son of David and things like that. They were wondering, could he be the Messiah? Is the kingdom going to be established at once. So he tells them this parable so they would learn something about when the kingdom would be established. This parable of

the mina is different than the parable of the talents. It's similar, but it's told in a different context and it's told to teach a different truth. The other one taught about being faithful. This one is teaching us about the kingdom and how to be ready for Christ's return.

In this parable, the king is going to go away to be appointed king, a king that the people don't really want to be king. Obviously, in the context of Jesus telling it, he is the guy that is going to be appointed king. He is going to go away for a time. He is going to die and then rise and then 40 days later ascend to heaven and he is going to be gone. But this king in the parable, before he leaves he entrusts to three of his servants a mina, about 100 days' wages. He tells them to "put it to work until I come back." So he leaves.

Then when he comes back, he calls for these guys and he calls them to account. They are called into judgment. The first one comes in and says, "Sir, your mina has earned ten more." The first guy recognizes it as a gift of grace. It was his. It had only been entrusted to him. It was given to him to put to use and he put it to use and his efforts were richly blessed. He had ten mina. So the king says, "Put him in charge of ten cities." The next guy has five. "Put him in charge of five cities. Your mina has earned five more."

The next guy comes in and kind of has an attitude. "I know you are a tough man and you take out what you didn't put in and all this and that, so I just put it in a cloth. Here it is. You can have it back now." So the king says, "I'll judge you by your own words. You know that this is what I entrusted you to do. You didn't do it. So you are going to lose what you had. What had been given to you, you've lost because you didn't make use of it. So it's gone." Then he gave it to the guy that had ten and the people said, "That isn't fair." To him who has, more will be given. Then it sounds like the guy that didn't make use of the mina and the people that didn't want him to be king are put to death because this king would have none of it.

The point of the parable is as I said. Jesus is the king who is made king, and he goes away and is going to return on the last day and he is going to call everyone to account. So what is the mina that he has entrusted his people with, his chosen people? What has he entrusted them with that they are to put to use until he returns? When Jesus ascended into heaven, what were his marching orders? "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age." Go with the Word and with the Sacrament, reach out to those that aren't church'd, build up those that are church'd, those that believe. "Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." The mina would be the Gospel that God has entrusted us with. He hasn't given it to the angels. He has given it to weak, frail people like you and me, and to us who are like jars of clay he said, "You are the instruments that are my voice and my hands. You are to go out into the world and proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. That's your calling. That's your task. I'm gone. I'll be back."

So his judgment is in his grace, he gives us the gift of faith. When he comes back, on the basis of that grace, he judges us. Those who have made faithful use of the means of grace have remained in faith and heaven is theirs. God judges with grace to those who are faithful, to those who maintain their faith and strengthen that faith through making constant use of Word and Sacrament.

But here is the scary part. That last guy who buried it, he had the same thing entrusted to him. He'd be kind of like the person that stood in front of the same altar as other Christians and said I'd rather suffer death than fall away from God, and then took the Confirmation Bible gift they were given and took it home and used it to hold leaves. They didn't make any more use of Word and Sacrament. He put it in the cloth and buried it in the ground. If you don't make use of Word and Sacrament, even what you have will be taken away from you. The faith that God has given can be lost is the point.

So to the unfaithful, to the wicked, to those who had the gift of faith worked in them by the Holy Spirit but they got it choked out by all the other concerns of the world and all the other things of this world, when he returns, he is going to call them to account. He's not going to call them up ahead of time and say, "Hey, a week from Friday, that's when I'm coming back." He's going to come, as it says in Peter, suddenly, like a thief in the night. No thief robs more than one house that calls and makes appointments. He comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

So what is the lesson for us to learn? The lesson for us to learn is to immerse ourselves in that truth that we rejoiced in last Sunday...the pure Gospel. It's not our efforts that save us. It's not even our faithfulness that saves us. It's the grace of God in Christ Jesus. It's the Spirit-worked faith and the Spirit-strengthened faith. It's that flame that burns inside of us. But a flame can be put out, so keep making faithful use of the Word and Sacrament.

The hard question we have to ask ourselves I think is, do we do that? This isn't about a pastor standing in a pulpit and trying to make people feel guilty and shame people into making use of Word and Sacrament. This is just what God has said. He said "use it, or you are going to lose it." And if you lose it, you lose eternal life. I'm not trying to shame anyone. I'm trying to tell you what God has said and warn you.

It's interesting though...this last week there was an interesting experiment. See how it would work for you. In Confirmation Class we were going to look up a passage. It was the passage that I preached on two days earlier. So I said, "Does anyone remember what I preached on?" I was met by faces that were watching the walls just in case they might catch on fire or something, I don't know. I said "Okay. Does anyone know if the Packers played this week?" "Yep." "Who did they play?" "The Jets." "What was the score?" "Nine to nothing." Okay...who is your God? Who is it that you love above everything else? Who is it that we spend all the time dissecting when they lose and what McCarthy should have done? And when they win, we talk about how everything is great? Meanwhile, we can't remember stuff from even the week before when we

wanted to come and say, "God, I love you. You're the greatest thing in my life. I thank you so much for giving me heaven and taking my sins away."

Even for us as adults. What do we remember about last week's worship? Probably that it was too Catholic or we did things I didn't like or we did things I liked. But do we remember the Word of God that was proclaimed?

The question is, are we hanging on tight, or are we in danger of losing it? "Oh pastor, you just don't understand how busy we are." I know how busy everyone is, not maybe everyone individually, but I know everyone is chasing their tale and running in ten different directions. But when we talked about how busy we are at the athletic association meeting and someone suggested maybe we should have the boys practice only one night a week so they can have more time with their families, it was said "No, no, they have to practice twice a week so they learn these concepts." Sure, I agree with that. You'll learn the concepts better if you practice twice a week, more than if you just practice once a week, right? I understand that. But if we are busy and being pulled in every direction, wouldn't that same truth apply to our spiritual life? We'll grow closer to our God if we spend more than just one hour a week with him. I'll get to know him better if I spend more time with him, a couple of times a week, maybe even a little bit of time daily. I'll get closer and closer to him. Then if he comes like a thief in the night, it won't matter. I'll be ready because I'll be looking at him as my greatest treasure.

That's what our Savior is encouraging us to do because the kingdom of God is not about the here and now. That's what the people of Jesus' day thought it was going to be. They thought it was going to be here and now. Their eyes never raised higher than the here and now. But with this parable, Jesus is trying to get at least you and me, if they didn't, he is trying to get you and me to lift our eyes higher than the here and now and see just how incredibly eternally important it is that we remain close to Jesus Christ. And for the times that we have drifted away from him, our God comes to us and says, "I love you. I forgive you. In my life and my death on the cross, I took those sins away, so don't beat yourself up over the past mistakes. Now because I've loved you so much, just get closer to me. Just get to know me better now and keep doing it every day going forward." You never know when the Lord is going to say the final "Amen."