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Ask the bigger questions

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Using your God-given gifts

A cost benefit analysis of following Jesus:

What does Jesus require of me: Is it worth it?

- Session 9

The words of Jesus

Luke 19:1-27

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 because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

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.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

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."

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 the lost."

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.^(a) 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'

14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' 15 "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it.

16 "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' 17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'

18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' 19 "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

20 "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21 I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.'

22 *"His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?' 24 "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'*

25 *"Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'"*

26 *"He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 27 But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.'"*

Footnote:

(a) Luke 19:13 A mina was about three months' wages.

Jesus tells this parable because he is on his way to Jerusalem (Luke 19:11). People are expecting to see the kingdom of God appear. They thought that Jesus would overthrow the Romans and establish Israel as a nation again. The noble man in the parable goes to another country to have himself appointed as king – not of that country but his own country. It might be helpful to know that in the days of the Roman Empire, the puppet kings established in the area of Palestine had to go to Rome to have their kingship of their area in Palestine approved by the Roman Emperor.

Q1. Why is Jesus telling this parable?

Q2. A "mina" is a sum of money (about three months wages, so a considerable amount). Do you think Jesus is just talking about how to make good monetary investments?

Q3. If Jesus isn't just talking about how to make good monetary investments, how is good work judged? (Hint: It has something to do with the work of the king. Have a look at Luke 19:10).

Q4. "I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man" (verse 20). Do you think the third servant really believes this?

Q5. Are the servants rewarded on the basis of performance? (verse 17)

Q6. What if you're not yet sure you want to be a disciple?

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