

**“THE NOBLEMAN, THE KNIGHTS, AND THE KNAVES”**

**SIGN FACING WEST:**

“The Nobleman, the Knights,  
and the Knaves”  
Luke 19:11-28

**SIGN FACING EAST:**

“All appear before  
the judgment seat of Christ.”  
2 Cor. 5:10

**Text: Luke 19:11-27**

And hearing them adding he said this parable because of his being near to Jerusalem and of their being of the opinion that instantly the kingdom of God was about to be appearing. Therefore he said, ‘a certain one of noble race was traveling into a distant land receiving to himself royal power and to return. And calling ten of his own slaves he gave to them ten minas and he said to them, ‘Be about your business (pragmatikeo) with it then I come.’ And his citizens were hating him and sent (apostled) an elder after him saying, ‘We do not wish this one to reign over us.’

And it came to pass that he came back from receiving the kingdom and he asked to be called to him those slaves to which he had given silver, so that he might come to know what they had gained. And the first one came near saying, ‘Lord, your mina has earned an additional ten minas.’ and he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because in little you were faithful, be having authority above ten cities.’ And the second came to him saying, ‘Your mina, Lord, made five minas.’ And he said also to this one, ‘And you become above five cities.’ And another one came saying, ‘Lord, behold your mina that I had stored away in a burial shroud. For I was fearing you, because you are an austere man, lifting up what you did not place and reaping what you did not sow.’ He said to him, ‘Out of your mouth I judge you, evil slave. Because you had perceived that I am an austere man, raising up what I did not place and reaping where I did not sow. And on account of why did you not give my silver on the table (in the bank)? And I coming with interest might collect it.” And to those standing by he said, ‘Lift up from him the mina and give it (same verb as previous verse, ‘collect’) to the one having ten minas.” And they said to him, ‘Lord, he has ten minas!’ “I say to you, to everyone having much it will be given, and from the one not having even what he has will be taken up.” Yet to those ones hostile to me, the ones who do not wish me to reign over them, lead them! here and kill them off in my presence.”

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**Act 1: A Nobleman and His Household**

Once upon a time, in a land not far off, and a time not too long ago, there lived a wise but somewhat eccentric nobleman. This particular nobleman had a deep concern for the poor, and used his great wealth and talent for business to improve their lives. He lived modestly, and was more concerned for others than for his own standing among the rich of the town. But the nobleman was also known for his shrewdness. Not a few of the more prominent business people in town had been tricked into giving up their own money to the nobleman’s projects. Many of those in his town loved his caring attitude. Some thought he had a strange way of doing business, but who could fault his motives? But there were also a great many who thought he was giving their town a bad name.

One businessman said, “How can we make our way in life when this fellow undercuts our prices, and to top it all off gives most of his profits away? Do you know that he gives a portion of the taxes that he receives as a nobleman to...to beggars?” “What’s more”, another one said, “he forgives loans to people who can’t repay. He gives grants to the lowest classes so their kids can go to school. What kind of nonsense is this? He’s destroying the underpinnings of our whole economy!” The town goldsmith added, “Just last week I discovered that he sold me 22k gold at the price of 24k! It cost me an extra 10% profit! And then he turned around and gave the money to the orphanage.” “But didn’t you promise him last year

that you would give \$100 to the orphanage?” his wife interjected. “That’s beside the point! Whether I give money to charity or not is my own business, not his.”

## **Act 2. The Two Knights**

Then, one day, the nobleman was summoned to the capital of the Empire. The Emperor had decided to make him king of the whole country. So he began packing his bags for the long trip to the city. Just before he was ready to go, he called his two men-at-arms, his two knights, to his side.

“Sirs,” the nobleman said, “you have both been in my service since the time I was the nobleman of this town. Now I must leave, but I will soon return. In my absence, I have a task for both of you.” He pulled out his moneybag, and gave each of them thirty dollars. He said, “these are my instructions. Carry them out to the letter. I want you to go out into the town and put this money to use. Now I must go. Remember your instructions! I’ll want an accounting from you when I get back.” And with that, the nobleman mounted his horse, and rode off to see the Emperor.

The first knight looked down at the thirty dollars, up at the back of his retreating master, and then down at the money again. “Put it to use? Put it to use? What on earth does he mean?” The knight shrugged, pocketed the money, and left to go into town. The second knight shoved the money into his armor pocket and looked even more perplexed. “This is the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard. What does the master expect me to do with just \$30?” He too shrugged, and headed off to the other end of town.

Meanwhile in the town, the local business club got wind of the change in the political scene. The situation with the nobleman was about to take a turn for the worst. He wasn’t just going to be the chief businessman and unofficial “mayor” of the town. Now he was going to be king! Who knows what he would do with *real* power! This was unacceptable! Something was going to have to be done!

So a vote was taken, and the tailor was picked to lead a delegation to the Emperor. He had made some robes for the Emperor, and was the most likely to get an audience with him. The tailor and his delegation would ride fast in an attempt to beat the nobleman. They would tell the Emperor in no uncertain terms that this guy was not to be made king. He would destroy their enterprises! He would ruin their businesses! He could not be made king! So off they rode.

The first knight meantime was travelling down the road from the palace to the town when he came across a broken wagon lying in the ditch. Laying beside it was a man who almost looked to be sleeping. But as the knight approached he realized he wasn’t sleeping at all, but was badly injured. The knight leaped off his horse to the man’s side and discovered, thankfully, that he was still alive. “What happened?” he asked the beaten man. “I...was...attacked...by robbers,” he replied weakly. “Well, no worries,” the knight replied. “I think I can make a temporary fix to the wagon and get you into town.” The knight put the man on the back of his horse, and pulled the wagon and lead the horse into town. He got the man a room in the inn, and brought the wagon to the local wagon dealership to be repaired. He then went back to see his injured charge.

“How are you feeling?” the knight asked. “Oh, much better,” the man replied. “But I must leave soon and return home. And I’m afraid I’ll have to leave my wagon here. You see, the robbers stole my moneybag and I have no money to pay the innkeeper.” Suddenly, the knight had an idea. He remembered the \$30 his master had given him. “here, take this,” he said to the injured wagoner. “Consider it a gift from the town’s nobleman.” And with that he left.

While all this was going on, the second knight was also making his way into town by another route. Right on the outskirts of town, outside a small and humble house, he encountered a young woman crying

by the side of the road. Stopping his horse, he asked her, “What’s wrong, fair maiden?” Through her tears she told the knight that her family was in dire straits. Neither she nor her father had had work in weeks, and tonight the family had nothing to eat. The knight apologized deeply to her for having interrupted her in her misfortunes and rode on. He didn’t get more than a ¼ mile when he suddenly stopped, and remembered the \$30 in his pocket. “The master did tell me to put it to use,” he thought, “but surely this is just throwing it away. What if the master returns tomorrow, and all I have to tell him is that I gave his money away?” So the knight spurred his horse and rode on.

A few months passed. Upset and dejected, the delegation sent to the emperor returned. He wouldn’t even see them! Apparently the tailor’s influence had been a little overstated. Back at the castle, the first knight was going through his mail and found three personal letters. The first was from the injured man he had brought to town a few months back. The letter thanked the knight profusely for his kindness, and asked him to pass on the enclosed \$100 to the nobleman as thanks for the help. Apparently the wagon man had been a rich businessman himself from a neighboring town! The second letter was from the town innkeeper. That letter also included \$100! The injured businessman had been so impressed with the innkeeper and his inn that he had referred a number of businessmen from his own town. The last letter was from the daughter of the owner of the wagon repair shop. It read, “Dear Sir. Many months ago my father and I were desperate for money. I was about to be laid off from the local inn since there were a lack of travelers, and my father hadn’t worked in weeks. Then he repaired the wagon you brought in, and since then, he’s had people coming from the neighboring town to have their wagons repaired here! Furthermore, the increase in travelers has prompted the innkeeper to keep me employed. Please find enclosed \$100 as thanks for your kind act that has had such an effect on our lives.” The knight was stunned. His master’s \$30 had netted \$300!

### **Act 3: The Return of The King**

Then one day the nobleman, now the king, returned. The king asked his two knights in to see him. To the first knight he asked, “Tell me – to what use did you put your \$30?” The knight smiled broadly and told the nobleman the whole story of the injured businessman and the three letters he had just received. “Here,” he told the king, “your \$30 has made \$300!” Now it was the king’s turn to smile. “You, my knight, understand who I am. You knew what I would have done with the \$30. That \$30 was made to grow to \$300 because you obeyed me. So I will make you the ruler of a whole town in my kingdom. I know that you will rule it in my stead as if it were I myself who were ruling.”

The king then turned to the second knight. “And you?” he inquired. “Lord”, the second knight said, “you are a rich man and I did not want to waste your money. So I kept it here in my pocket, waiting for a good business opportunity. But I never found one that had an acceptable level of risk and return. So,” he said, reaching into his pocket to pull out two crumpled bills, “here is your \$30.”

On hearing this, the king’s smile turned into a frown. “And what good did those bills do crumpled in your pocket? Who did they help? No, you don’t understand at all the kind of man I am. I can tell that by your words – that you think of me only as a rich man and not a generous or merciful one. You only cared about the money itself, and not what the money could accomplish. Give me your \$30.” On receiving it, he handed it over to the first knight. “I can be assured that you will put this to good use.”

“Now,” the king said to his two knights, “bring to me all those citizens who sent a delegation to the Emperor.” And he gave them the list of people to round up.

Later that day, the two knights presented before the king those who had rebelled against him. The king rose to address them. “So, you thought you could appeal to the Emperor and stop my coronation. Do you

not know that the Emperor is my father? Did you really think the Emperor would be inclined to listen to your sniveling complaints? You can be fully assured that I carry out his will in this kingdom, that my word is his word, and that my actions are his actions. When I was only a nobleman, you rejected my way of doing things. When it came time for me to be crowned king, you tried to stop me in every way you could. That sort of deceitful, inhospitable and *insubordinate* activity cannot be allowed in my kingdom.” He turned to his two knights. “These citizens had a chance to experience me as generous and merciful nobleman. Now they will know me only as king. Kill every last one of them.” And they did.

#### **Act 4: Epilogue**

The Lord, our master, gave us his Word as a treasure to be put to use. In the world’s eyes the Word of God seems cheap. Some people might say it’s not even worth \$30. But the Lord has commanded that it be preached to the nations. May we never hide the Word or think of it as an insignificant treasure. May we always speak it whenever an opportunity arises. May we never wait for the perfect opportunity to share the Gospel, but share it every chance we get. May the world see through our words and actions the loving heart of our master. May our Lord forgive us when it does not.

The Lord, our king, came into this world as a humble and merciful servant. He didn’t come to judge, but to bring forgiveness of sins. Yet most citizens of this world reject him. They don’t find him to merciful and humble for their tastes, and would rather have someone else as their king. We all have the choice of rejecting his merciful and gracious rule. But if we do, the Jesus we encounter at his return will not be a gracious Savior, but a Judge. May the Lord keep us in his grace, so that when he returns, we will rejoice, and not weep! The Lord will keep us steadfast in the true faith, through our communion in his body and blood, and through our hearing and learning his Word. Then, in the end, he will bring us to stand before him and all his saints. Amen.