

Parables of the Ten Minas

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Preacher: Kirk Ronzheimer

[0 : 00] So this morning, we have kind of a fun treat for you. So Kirk Ronzheimer and his family, many of you know them. They've been serving with us and loving this family well for many years.

Here is part of our family. And if you've ever been around them, you know they're just a blessing to everyone that's here. What you may not know is that before being a part of this church, Kirk and his family ministered for a lot of years all throughout Southeast Asia and a bunch of countries throughout there.

And so he's been following Jesus for a long time on a journey kind of all over the world and what that looks like in different contexts. And so Kirk's actually going to come and give the message today.

So this is not his first rodeo in giving a sermon to a group of people, but it is his first here at City Grace. So sometimes the scariest thing is getting up in front of family and friends.

But his heart is great and we're just so excited to bring him up. So as he comes up to the stage to continue our parable series, why don't you join me in making Kirk welcome and feeling like you want to hear him.

[1 : 09] Thank you. Appreciate that. Good morning. Good morning. I am thankful for this opportunity.

I'm losing my voice just a little bit. So bear with me. Got real excited for service and try to keep it calmer this time. But I appreciate this church.

I love sitting under the leadership of Elliot and Jesse, hearing them speak the word of God. So I get to learn every week I come. They're teaching and just glean on that. And so it's really a great honor for me to be able to share this as well and continue our parable series.

And I have to be honest at first, when Jesse asked me to speak about the parable of the minas, I was not so sure. I love life and agriculture. You know, Jesus talks a lot about plants and weeds and all these things, you know, that I find very interesting.

And at first I was like, what's a mina? You know, I kind of forgot about a mina. What is that? And then when I figured out his money, let me just say, you don't want me in charge of your finances.

[2 : 18] You don't want me to do your counting numbers. They're not my jam. I'm not good at them. So I was a little discouraged. Like, oh no, what am I going to say? But like all of Jesus' words, once I got into it, it's so rich, y'all.

Like this parable, there's so much to say. And I had to cut a bunch of stuff out and try to say just what God put on my heart. So always good stuff. Let me give you a physical context. This is prior to what Jesse spoke on last week as far as chronological order.

So Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem. And the book of John has three different trips, but in the other gospels, there's just one. And it's this trip. So he leaves Capernaum for all practical purposes. That's Jesus' hometown up in Galilee near the lake there. A lot of stuff happens near the Sea of Galilee. And because of some issues with the Samaritans, he has to cross the Jordan, come down that way, and he comes in through Jericho.

And Jericho is a thriving place. It's a big city. It's a trade center. When he comes into town, immediately on his way in, there's this story of the healing of a blind man called Bartimaeus. Incredible story.

[3 : 21] Look it up sometime. He asks Bartimaeus, you know, what do you want me to do for you? And he's blind, but he's like, I want to see. So he heals Bartimaeus on the way into the city. So if he wasn't popular enough in his earthly ministry, I mean, he's got huge crowds following him now.

And then he comes in and does something very unique. He finds this short guy in a tree. When I was a kid, I loved the story. Zacchaeus, right? Because I was short. All kids are short. And I love to

climb trees.

I'm like this. I thought that's what it was about. It's really a story about healing. So Bartimaeus is healed and Zacchaeus is healed spiritually. And his national ethnic identity is restored as well because he decides to give everything back and follow Jesus.

And Jesus makes this amazing comment like, hey, this is the son of Abraham as well. And so that's where we're going to start. So you need to know that's kind of where this story starts. So I'm going to start reading when they're all listening to him.

And I'm going to start with Zacchaeus' story. Okay, so Jesus goes to be with Zacchaeus at his house, this tax collector sinner dude. And it says, when the people, when they saw it, verse 7. Sorry, Luke 19, if you have Bibles.

[4 : 27] Luke 19 is where we're at. And we're going to start in verse 7. Okay. So when the people saw it, they grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.

And Jesus stood and said, Lord, behold, Lord, I give half my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.

For the son of man came to seek and save the lost. As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable. Because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

He said, therefore, a nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas and said to them, engage in business until I come.

But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, we do not want this man to reign over us. When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him that he might know what they had gained by doing business.

[5 : 38] The first came before him, saying, Lord, your mina has made ten more. Ten minus more. And he said to him, well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little. You shall have authority over ten cities.

And the second came to him, saying, Lord, your mina has made five minas. And he said to him, and you are to be over five cities. Then another came, saying, Lord, here's your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief, for I was afraid of you because you are a severe man.

You take what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow. He said to him, I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant. You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.

Why then did you not put the money in the bank? And at my coming, I might have collected it with interest. And he said to those who stood by, take the mina from him and give it to the one who has ten minas. And they said to him, Lord, he has ten minas.

I tell you that everyone who has, more will be given. And from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.

[6 : 45] This is the word of the Lord. So I want to give a little more backdrop before we get into the parable about what Jesus is talking about and his reason for this parable.

And we see one thing in verse seven right away, right? These people are grumbling, they're muttering. He's gone to be the guest of a sinner. Man, that's a strong word, right? And if you get in a fight at home or something, and someone calls you passive aggressive, just pull that out.

Hey, you're a sinner, right? That's a way to win one. Your wife will love that. Your kids will love it. Anyway, just kidding. But he's responding to these attitudes, right? Because sin is a proximity issue for them. If you're near someone who's a sinner, it's going to rub off on you.

And that came from the law, okay? They're not all wrong there. When I lived in Malaysia, my family lived in Malaysia. It's a Muslim country. And we had some Muslim friends. And in that context, it reminded me of people living under the Old Testament law.

So our Muslim friends, certain things they couldn't eat. Like I couldn't eat certain foods. It has to be clean or unclean. And sometimes we had dogs, which are an unclean animal. So our friends would let their kids pet our dog, but only if they put on gloves.

[7 : 51] And I was always really encouraged when my friends would invite us into their home. Because I'm not Muslim. I'm technically unclean. And so they had that mindset, kind of like the

people here. The Jewish people are like, what's he doing there with those people?

And let's be honest, we all suffer from this. We all suffer from our religious ideals and proximity is an issue for us.

But really, Jesus is saying, this is a hard issue. Okay, it's not a proximity issue. It's a hard issue. Jesus seeks out unclean, unwanted people in sketchy circumstances to be part of his kingdom. Just like Zacchaeus. Not a good guy. Not a good circumstance. You would not want to be at his house. But Jesus did. And then he takes those people. And I love this. He says, I've come to seek and save the lost. So he takes those people.

He seeks them out. And then he saves them. And then, grab this. He gives them gifts to serve and set them on mission like Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus is a whole new person.

[8 : 50] And we're going to talk about that later. So that's one of the backdrop things you have to understand. Why is Jesus talking? What's his reason we're talking about this? The second thing in verse 11 is that he's near Jerusalem. And the people expect, hey, the kingdom of God is going to happen now.

Now, Jerusalem was a very politically, religiously, ethnically charged place. The disciples knew it was dangerous to go there. They tried to kill Jesus earlier. You have Jews fighting with Jews. You have Jews all hating the Romans. You got other foreign groups. And it's just, it was a hotbed. It's just a hot mess. Okay. And so going there meant it's going to get serious. And these people are expecting like, hey, this, is this our king?

This is the Messiah? Like he's going to throw down. It's going to be a cage match, but someone's going to die. But I think, I think it's time. Now, we all want to win, right? Jesus is very good at speaking to all of us who love power and control.

And we want what we want now. Right? That's like the story of my life. That's us. All of us. Right? We love to win. I get emotionally invested pretty easy. My wife was watching the show a few years ago called The Amazing Race.

[9 : 58] I don't watch this show. It stresses me out, man. Like I lived overseas for many years. Like people struggling to get on buses and boats and planes and all these things. Like I've done it. Like I'm not, like honey, enjoy that show.

But she was captivated by this family. They're called The Holderness Family. Family. Right? There's only two of them. I don't know. Does anybody know this couple? Like it's just a couple, but they're called The Holderness Family.

And she's like, babe, you got to watch them. I love these people. The Holderness Family. They're on The Amazing Race. Right? And they're from Raleigh, I guess. And so like I'm like, okay, whatever. Like by episode three, man, I'm invested emotionally.

I'm like, you know, I'm calling my family like, hey, these are my neighbors. They're on the show. You know, I think we shop at the same Trader Joe's. Like I've never met them, but we could be best friends. Anyway, and it got near the end of the season. And like they were so close, man.

And I'm like, oh, I just, they have to win. I'm like, they, like if they don't win, I don't know what I'm doing with myself. Like I'm going to have to go on a depressive episode and like eat chocolate for a few days. I mean, whatever.

[10 : 54] They did win. It was so beautiful, man. And they crossed the finish line. We're like, we're like almost getting choked up in our neighborhood, in our living room. And I was like, dang, I'm like really invested in this. Like I'm so glad.

I really, I really wanted to win. We all want to win. We hate losing. And we want to win now. We like want to see these results now.

Jesus, in his time, it was politics and religion. Right? The Jews, that was their big hang up. And they're ready. It's like, this has to happen now. It's time. Jesus is saying this is not the kind of kingdom I'm running here.

Sometimes my kingdom feels like losing. And sometimes it feels like waiting. It may not happen yet. My kingdom might take a while. Okay?

So that's, he's really getting into the gritty of like these people's expectations, their hopes, their allegiances. So this has been hard for them to hear. I'll be honest, it's a little hard for us to hear. So I want to review, I want to review the parable.

[11 : 52] The master gives his servants these minas. And then, it's money, but I want to use the word gifts today. Okay? Just think of it as gifts. He's gifting them something to use.

So he gives them minas. And then he leaves. There's also this group of people that don't want him ruling over them. We'll come back to them at the end. And then he returns and he settles accounts. He holds everyone accountable for their attitudes, their actions, what they've done with what he's given them.

Now, the people of his time would have understood this. Jesus' listeners would have got this. This is what the Herods did, the rulers in Israel at that time. They go to Rome. They get their crowns. They get their authority. Whatever. And then they come back.

And they rule over these people. Right? The Jews weren't very excited about that. They also would have understood the idea of minas and trade culture. Like, this makes sense. That word, do something useful, or like, go do business with this, that comes from the Greek word pragma, where we get pragmatic.

You know, do something necessary. Like, increase this. And they understood trade culture. That's how it worked. So they very much would have understood what Jesus was saying about this parable.

[12:58] And it fits the whole idea of scripture as well. Like, the big picture of scripture is this. Right at the very start, you see the master. You see Father God, like, creating the world, and then putting Adam and Eve in this place.

We're like, hey, there's something to do for you here. Like, it's perfect. Perfect. Everything's good. But there's still work to be done with the master. Like, I've given you jobs and roles. I've entrusted you.

And then we fast forward to the New Testament. We see in the book of Acts, the inception of the church. And God pours out his Holy Spirit and gives people these gifts to use to build up the body of Christ and advance the kingdom.

And then at the very end of the story, maybe the start of the story, but in Revelation, we see how Jesus is going to come back. And everyone's going to be accountable for everything we've done. And he's going to reward and redeem.

And so this whole story that Jesus is telling is actually a micro story of the big story. It's pretty awesome. Here's the point.

[13:57] One thing I really appreciate that Elliot has said, Jesse has said, is that these parables aren't supposed to be tricky. There's not like some secret hidden meaning that you're going to miss it. Like, there's usually one big main point.

And I'm going to talk about some other things, but I don't want you to miss this. Okay, here's the point. Jesus is saying this. I'm the master. I'm the king. But I'm not what you expect.

And this kingdom isn't what you're expecting. And okay, by the way, you might have to wait a little bit here because I'm going to leave, but I'm coming back. And while you're waiting for me, use the gifts I've given you for my prophet and my kingdom.

That's the point. Can I be honest? If we can just do this, I'd be like, sermon over. Let's go get lunch, right? If we can live every day understanding that the master's in control of this thing, sometimes it feels like, man, is God really?

Is he really here? Is the master still knowing what's going on? But if my head can hit the pillow, if your head can hit the pillow at the end of every day, and you can look at every event, and you go, man, you know, there's some good stuff, some bad stuff, some relational things, some financial things, some health things, some awesome.

[15:06] If you lay down at night and you can say, yeah, the master, he's still got this. He's in control. He's coming back. That's a game changer. That'll lift off the anxiety.

Man, that'll deepen your trust. The master's coming back, right? That's the point. Jesus is coming back, church. Hold on to that, all right? I don't want you to miss it. But here's some takeaways I have for us this morning that just, and this is what God put on my heart, okay?

And so I hope as you read that or you think about this, there's things he gives you. But some of the things I want to talk about this morning is just this question, how can I be faithful? All right, if the master's entrusting me with something, how can I be faithful to what he's given me?

Point number one, here we go. Pray for the gifts of the Spirit and know your gifts. I really believe that God gifts us all. Those gifts come from him.

They're called the gifts of the Spirit. Paul in multiple epistles, Romans, Corinthians, others, like, has these lists of the gifts. There's evangelism. People are just really good at talking to other people and they always just kind of weave in the master's story like somebody.

[16:13] It's just like, they're just so good at that. They don't have to try, they don't make it awkward, they're just always talking about the Father. There's encouragement. You know, it's a spiritual gift. People have this way of just listening and lifting other people up.

I work with teenagers, they call these people mom friends, right? You ever got mom friends? They're just good listeners, man. They just make you feel so heard. Encouragement is a gift. Act of service is a gift. You know, it's a gift.

My brother-in-law has this. He's just, he's one of those guys that if you start talking about your plumbing or something, like, he's at your house. Like, you get home, you're like, what are you doing? He's fixing your, like, he just, he didn't have to look for it.

He's just helping people all the time. He'll neglect his own plumbing. It's unbelievable. But he's like, he just loves it. And like me, sometimes I need a little push. And people are like, come on, man, you got to serve, right? But he has this love for it. He just, it just flows out of him.

I watch him and it's amazing. He's got acts of service. He's got that gift by the Spirit. And there's more. There's healing, words of knowledge, faith, prophecy. The Bible, the Bible speaks of wisdom. Wisdom's from the Lord.

[17:11] Now, I don't want you to think this is some kind of super spiritual, you know, voodoo mama juju stuff. Like, it's out there somewhere and I don't know how to get away. Like, this is very practical, okay?

This is Solomon. Let me bring him up. In the Old Testament, okay, it says that God gave him his spirit and God gave him wisdom. Now, we know Solomon was a great administrator. He's a very wise king and he made great decisions.

You can just see that, man. He has the gift of administration. You know what? It also says that God blessed him with these gifts of understanding animals and plants. It said that Solomon understood the moss that grew on rocks.

Now, like my friend Escalator from Nacho Libre, you might be like, wow, that's science. I believe in science. You know, whatever. If you haven't seen Nacho Libre, it's okay. Does anyone need to see Jack Black in stretchy pants?

I don't know. Maybe. It's a toss-up. But I just want to tell you, it's not science, man. I mean, it is, right? But it's all gods, right? These are things that you can use. Like Solomon knew what to do with that. There's a guy that works with Solomon called Bezalel.

[18:11] And so the spirit of God came upon him and then he knew how to craft metal and copper and iron and wood and stone and all this stuff. He built part of the temple. He's like the lead architect. He built the Ark of the Covenant.

I guarantee you that guy was a creative. Right? People are like, wow, man. Not so great at rabbi school. Like flunked out of accounting. Right? But this guy's, and then God gives him his spirit. And he's building this stuff.

It's amazing. Maybe you're an engineer or something. You're like, oh, I didn't know that was from God. It's all from God. Okay? It's all his. So I don't want you to think it doesn't translate to daily life. This stuff does translate to daily life.

And when you know your gift, okay, when you know your gifts and you see God working in you and through you to affect situations around you, you start seeing this change in yourself, you're like, oh, I'm seeing things differently. And then you see people around you and the difference in their lives. It gets really exciting. All of a sudden, you've been put on mission. Corinthians says it like this. To each is given a manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

[19:08] That's verse 7 in chapter 12. Verse 11 says this. All these are empowered by one and the same spirit who apportions to each one individually as he wills. Do you see that? The spirit gives it individually as he wills.

You have something. It's empowered. 1 Peter 4 says it this way. As each has received a gift, each, everybody, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace.

He's gifted us. He has something for us to do. Excuse me. I had a student once a while ago. Tall, skinny guy.

You could tell he just had these gifts. He had this charisma. He was funny. I just remember the first time I met him. He's just like, wow, this guy's got so much life. But as I got to know him, I realized he struggled with his insecurity.

And he always felt like he wanted to have a girlfriend. If I just have someone with me, right, then I'll be, you know, I'll be the man I'm supposed to be or whatever. I'm not sure. And he finally did get a girlfriend. But it's kind of funny.

[20 : 10] She was a little weird. I don't want to say weird. But she just didn't pay a lot of attention to him. She paid attention to other people. So then he got jealous. It was just like this whole ball of mess. He had this anxiety going on. And I started talking with him.

And we started, like, praying together. And God revealed to us, like, he really, he just had this spirit of rejection. And he really struggled with that. And so that's where this need came from. And we started to pray about that.

And I just watched Jesus, like, heal him of that. And it was incredible. He came to me one day, you know, in the midst of this. And he said, you know, I feel like I need God more than I need a girl. I was like, dang, rude. Like, yeah, that's good. And then I watched as he started, like, to be healed of this insecurity. And how God just started to use him, like, immediately.

He started praying for people. He started encouraging younger guys. He had this leadership gift that people started to look to him to lead. And then after high school, he took this gap year.

[21 : 09] And he was in this program. He was working with middle school students. And, I mean, what's really cool is, like, the stuff that he'd been healed of and then moved on to being gifted for. Like, God used it almost immediately. Like, he's talking to these younger guys.

And he's telling these, like, middle school boys, like, hey, you need God more than you need a girl in your life right now, bro. Or whatever. It's like, it's amazing. Like, wow, he's passing it on. And you can just tell, everything he touched, he just got put in these places of leadership.

God put him on mission. He went from no awareness of his gifts to, like, daily kingdom mission.

Working alongside the master. From anxiety to just courage and blessing.

He's like Zacchaeus, right? That dude was gifted. Like, he knew how to make money. He knew how to, like, influence. He was a leader. But he was just misusing it all. But Jesus, like, puts him on a different path. Same gifts.

But he was misusing them. So, number one, pray for the gifts of the Spirit and know your gifts. You can know the gifts that you have. Number two, don't compare your gifts with others.

[22 : 07] Don't be overly anxious about results. In this parable, it's interesting. The master gives these minas. You might be more familiar with the parable of talents. Where the master gives, you know, it's like one person gets one talent, two, five.

So, they're different. In this one, they all get the same. But the results are very different. Here's a spiritual principle I want you to hold on to. Jesus is 100% responsible and sovereign over the results.

Okay? At one point in the book of John, Jesus has his disciples together. And he says to them, I'm like this vine. Okay? Life comes through me.

I'm the vine. And you guys are like these branches attached to the vine. And if you take those branches off, it's not going to work.

Apart from me, Jesus says, you can do nothing. Whoa! It's not an insult. I think Jesus is just trying to take the pressure off.

[23 : 09] Trying to help us see, like, we're not meant to do. We're a branch. Branches don't do anything once you disconnect them from the vine. It's all about Jesus. He's responsible. He's sovereign over the results.

He gives us gifts that other people may not have. He wants us to stay humble, dependent, and faithful. I've met so many missionaries my time overseas who have been in really hard countries. Places like Japan, the Middle East.

Like, well, they've been there for decades, y'all. And seen very, very little results. But they've been faithful. When I was in Laos, one family, I got to see one family come to know the Lord.

It was super cool. But I tell you what, I spent a lot of discouraged months and years like, why am I here? I'm not great at the language. I don't fit in. I mean, I love the people. But it's like, it was, what am I doing here?

Didn't see the results. It wasn't until later I thought about it. And I realized God used me in a particular way that fit my gifts. I'm not necessarily an evangelist. But I'm an encourager.

[24 : 11] I love discipleship. I love teaching. And I ran this small business. It was a language school. And we had many Lao, young Christian people in our business. And some who were not

Christians. And I started this Bible stone.

Like, every week, let's just, let's get together, have lunch, break into groups. We'll study the Bible. And one of my friends come. He came to me, like, after doing this for a while. And he said, Kirk, this is so great. I didn't know we could do this.

I thought a pastor had to teach us about this. Like, in his understanding, he just didn't know you could study the Bible or talk about it. Like, in a group, you had to be at church with a pastor. And I saw people like those seeds of the gospel started being planted.

So that's, for me, as someone who loves discipleship, as an encourager, like, the fruit that comes out for me, it's like the seeds. The results are seeds. For other people, they're going to see the harvest.

But it's okay. It doesn't matter. It's all in Jesus' covering in this time. What he wants for us is to be faithful. Here's what's really cool. The master is graceful.

[25 : 07] Did you notice, like, when he talks to that servant who hid that, who hid his mina? The point is not, like, what were you thinking? And, like, you're the worst. And, like, it is, like, you should have done something.

But here's what's interesting. He tells me, like, you should have at least put in the bank. Like, a little interest. That's a pretty low bar. It's, like, do something, man. Like, do something. And then with a faithful servant, what's cool is, like, yeah, he's excited.

You can tell it's, like, well done. Ten, that's pretty awesome. But then what is his comment to him? Hey, you were faithful with the little things. I gave you one little thing. You were faithful with that. The father, the master, wants us to be faithful.

And often that comes in the mundane, daily things in life that he gives us to do. I have a friend who recently has become a single mom, not by her choice. She has two small kids.

She works two jobs. She teaches and also teaches, like, music on the side just to make ends meet. She's also trying to finish her degree. A couple months ago, her son got a concussion.

[26 : 09] Man, I just watched. I watched as, like, everything was a struggle. Right? Like, she couldn't get to places where she needed to be. She couldn't get to work. She had to take care of her son. The hospital bills. It was just, like, look, nothing about her life is efficient.

No one's, like, calling her and saying, hey, you want to write a book about success. Hollywood's not going to make a movie about her life. From an outside perspective, she's barely surviving.

But to the master, yeah, she's so faithful. Every day she invests that mina. She's not always happy. It's hard.

But she has this joy. She loves to worship. She even leads worship at her church, which is just, like, you got one more thing you can do. But she loves it. And here's the deal. The master's not, like, more proud of her, more excited about her leading worship than she is about her taking care of her kids.

Or who she teaches. It all counts. Because that master has always been the master. He's the master today. He'll be her master forever into eternity. So all the stuff she does today counts forever. It all counts.

[27 : 12] The master sees it. He just wants our faithfulness. Recognize the master's pleasure when you are faithful in the daily mundane tasks he's given you.

I want to, I just want to make a comment and bring this home to two groups of people. I've noticed that our culture, me included, we're really infatuated with people in their prime. And sometimes, I work with young people, so there's this message that we give young people and teenagers.

They're going through school. And it's like, someday you'll be this contributing member of society. Like, someday you'll be able to make money. And, I mean, that's fine and everything. But that's really, like, a utilitarian view of people.

Like, what can you give us? What can you do? It's not built on the gospel. It's not built on his kingdom. And so, I want to give a little shout out here to two groups who I believe are very valuable to the master.

But sometimes get overlooked. And that's those who are young and those who are old. Like I said, I work with young people. I work with teenagers. And often they feel like their life is on hold.

[28 : 24] Like, well, someday I'll get through all this school and my life will start later. Or that I'm just stuck. I have no choices. Like, my parents decided to move here and put me in this school. And, okay, partly true. Right?

Geographically, you and your parents are like this for now. You're on the kind of same trajectory. But at some point, you will decide to do your own thing. But that doesn't mean you're not gifted. Listen, you have the gifts of the Spirit if you're young. The same Holy Spirit that came upon the disciples of Pentecost. In flames of fire. Allowing them to do things no one had seen. You have that Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit that descended upon Jesus when he got baptized. That's your Holy Spirit. God has gifted you if you're young. It's not about your age. You don't have to wait to use it. What I encourage you is I say this. Just pray this prayer. God, use me. Very simple. Very dangerous. Very exciting. [29 : 21] God, use me. And then watch. Just start to watch what happens in your heart and the people around you. The people you like that you didn't like. People start talking to. People start talking to you. Like, he'll bring people your way.

When I was in high school, my brother decided to start this Bible study. We didn't know what we were doing. But we were just like, let's just do Bible study. That would be kind of fun. And so we start in our basement. And, man, these dudes just started showing up. Well, these are the 15, 20 guys. And we started with Romans. I don't know why. I don't know anything about Romans. Like, Romans is not an easy read, but that's what we started with. Again, we don't know what we're doing. And in the middle of Romans, like somewhere in there, it talks about being sons of God. And we thought that was so cool. We're like, oh, we should name our group the Sons of God. And, of course, this is the 90s. We were like, we're the SOGs. This is so awesome. And we see each other. I went to a public school. And we see each other. We're like, SOG, what's up, bro? And then we'd slap each other on the rear, which is a weird thing. I know, I don't know why we did it. Everyone was doing it. Okay, don't judge us. But it's like, SOG, wha-bam, you know, whatever. Again, if you don't understand the 90s, like, just look at the 80s. [30 : 26] Okay, for those of you who weren't there. 80s were weird. It's the only way to get from the 80s to the 2000s. All right, so that's why we did what we did. I can't explain it. That's the best way I can explain it, right? We were so weird. But we decided to start this Bible study.

We had a friend there named Jimmy. And I'm still friends. He's the only high school friend I'm still friends with this day. And Jimmy didn't know anything about studying the Bible. He'd never done it. So he felt very awkward because he knew at some point he's going to be asked a question. And my brother was great. My brother gave him this line. And to this day, like, we were just talking about this last year. And I was like, bro, what did you tell him? And it's like, I can't. I don't remember what I told him. It was something very simple. Like, hey, if someone calls on you, just say, like, wow, I really, what Jesus says here, it really applies to our life. Or like, man, it looks like really God's got a plan in all this. You know, something so simple.

And everyone's like, oh, yeah, that's good, bro. So Jimmy was all set up. Again, he's just going with emotion. Like, what's funny is Jimmy's, he's been through a lot of life. At one point, he was an atheist. And then he's agnostic.

[31 : 23] And like, lately, Jimmy's talking about God. He even asked me to pray for him. And God did something kind of cool. So Jimmy's like teetering on this thing.

I like to think of people like Jimmy as, I'll say like sheep in wolf's clothing. You know, we've all heard of like wolves in sheep's clothing, right? But I believe there are some people who they look like the world.

But man, it's just a matter of time before God reveals like, no, they're mine. Those seeds were planted in the basement with a bunch of goofy dudes who didn't know what we were doing studying the Bible.

Young people, ask the master to use you. Ask them to give you gifts. Ask them to set you on mission. Also, I want to speak to the other end of the spectrum, some of you who are older. And let me just say this right off the bat. The biblical perspective of age is that it's good. I mean, it comes with a little back pain. Don't get me wrong, okay? But like, it's good. Like, you're experienced.

[32 : 26] You have wisdom. You have many, many decades of seeing kingdom like sowing and reaping and experience and fruit. You have so much to give. And here's what I, here's what I, here's where our culture gets it wrong.

Okay, on one hand, this is what I'm seeing. Like, our culture says, like, on one hand, you're really not needed anymore. My grandpa felt this. He retired. He's a very successful person. When he retired, he's like, no one needs me. Right?

That's something I know a lot of people just feel like, I don't know if I'm useful anymore. But on the other hand, we're like, well, just play though. You've earned it. Go play. Pick a ball, whatever. You know, just do your thing. Like, just play. And I mean, both are, I mean, they're kind of weird because neither one of them really centers on the gospel.

It's not kingdom. That's not kingdom truth. The master is all about taking people who are too young or too old or not capable or past their prime and igniting them for his purpose and sending them on mission.

Just look in, just look in scripture. Look at Moses. Moses was old. Guys, he was like on his third career. He's pretty happy. And then God's like, all right, we're going to get started now. You're 80, Moses. Let's do this.

[33 : 33] Wow. He was incredible. Like, Moses. Incredible. Sarah and Abraham. Isaac. Anna.

Zachariah. Elizabeth. I mean, the list, you can go on and on and on, okay? If you're in your later seasons of life, ask the master to use you. Ask him to give you gifts. Ask him to set you on mission. Listen. Even, man, even if it's just to talk and mentor someone. Let's say, hey, let's grab coffee every couple weeks and let's talk about life. It is so comforting to talk to someone who's been through it.

You know, be like, wow, I have no idea what I'm doing in life right now. To talk to someone who's been there and has that experience is so comforting. I believe City Grace has a host of disciples in their later prime years who the master cannot wait to call to continued purpose and mission.

Let me speak to one last thing before we move into communion. And that's the reason that I think a lot of us don't use our gifts or we're tentative, and that's fear. Like that servant who hid it.

[34 : 40] The problem was really he misunderstood the master's heart, right? He's like, well, I knew you might punish me. Like this fear of punishment was real for him. He misunderstood the master. That's not who the master was.

The master actually wanted to bless them, right? You can see this. I gave you something for blessing. And Jesus is saying, I'm the master. But Jesus is not saying that I'm like that, right? He even says in the parable, he's like, well, I'm going to talk about what you said, your own words. Jesus earlier in Luke says this. He says, I'm gentle and humble in heart. Come to me if you're weary. If you're tired, you're over it. Hey, I'm the person you want to come to. My yoke's easy. My burden's light. So he wasn't punished. Actually, the servant, what happened was he missed out. Did you notice that? Like he got his mina taken away.

He just missed it. He missed the opportunity to do something amazing with it. Now, there was a group that was punished. And let me make the difference because I believe a lot of us live in this fear of like, oh, am I one of those people that were punished?

[35 : 41] Okay, you have the servants. And then you have these people that eventually the master calls enemies. In the Bible, enemies, wickedness, it's people who continually have their hearts set on the wrong thing against God.

Like they didn't want a king. I want to be my own king. I want to be my own God. Okay? Very two, very different groups of people. It's not making mistakes. We all make mistakes. Servant makes mistakes. Servants make mistakes.

But these enemies, they continually do evil. And let me say this, church. If you struggle with that fear today, if you struggle with that guilt or like, oh, maybe, I don't know, maybe I'm in that camp. Maybe the Father wants to punish me. Maybe God has punished me. Can I tell you where it comes from? We do have an enemy. Bible calls him Satan. Here's what the Bible says about Satan. Liar, accuser of the saints.

And there's a lot more, but that's basically all you need to know. The liar and accuser of the saints. If you're a servant and you have those thoughts, my kids call them intrusive thoughts, right?

[36 : 42] Use guilt or I don't know, man. Let me just, can I help you this morning? We have the authority in Jesus' name to rebuke Satan. Okay? You need to say like, that's not true of me.

I rebuke that thought. I was greed or jealous. I'm going to rebuke that right now in Jesus' name. And then I like this little thing. Maybe you've heard people say if Satan reminds you of your past, you remind him of his future.

I don't know if you've heard that. He has a bumper sticker or something at one point. Revelation says that Satan ends up in the lake of burning sulfur. I love to pull that one out. After I say like, hey, I'm going to rebuke this.

This isn't from Jesus. Okay? Jesus' blood has covered this. And by the way, Satan, you end up in the lake of burning sulfur. Good. You're good to go. I tell you what. Your mindset will change. Do that.

And then I'm going to give you this verse. This is an amazing verse. I just struggle with this. Okay? I'm an anxious person. So I struggle through this fear a lot. It's from Romans. Just the first part is that all you need, man. Paul says there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[37 : 42] When you stand with Christ Jesus, are you condemned a little bit? No. No condemnation. So if you have to say that verse to yourself every day, do it. Multiple times a day, there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

I am not punished. I am not with the wicked. I am not with the enemies. I'm not an enemy. I'm a servant of the master. Better yet, I'm a child. I'm a child in the household. As the band comes on up, if this is all new to you, okay, if you're new, like, this Jesus thing, this, man, I don't know, I feel like I might live under punishment.

I don't know. There's going to be a prayer on the screen. But I also want to encourage you, like, come talk to somebody. Come pray with someone afterwards. Like, there's a whole new life for you that's free from punishment, set on mission.

It's amazing. Come talk to one, someone, afterwards. But for those of you who are servants, as we take these elements, and by the way, if you're new, we just come on up to the table.

You take the bread and the cup, and then you take it back to your seat, and when you're ready, you just take it, okay? I want to give you this truth, okay? The master celebrates you. All these parables about lost things, lost coins, lost sheep, lost children, lost sons, right?

[38 : 55] Jesus goes to great lengths to find us. Not because he needs us to do anything. He just loves us. The master really didn't need the minus. I think the master was okay. But the master really wanted the hearts of his servants.

He can do what he needs to do. Praise God, he uses us, but he really wants us. So today, before you come get your cup, or as you get it, I want you to just do this. I want you to receive his love. I want you to picture whatever this looks like for you.

I want you to sit, maybe with your eyes closed for a second, and just picture the master excited about you, celebrating over you, excited to put you on mission, just pleased that you're his.

Let's pray together. Master, Lord God, Father, thank you for the cup. Thank you for this bread.

Thank you that you allowed your body to be broken, your blood to be spilled, so that we don't have to stay broken.

As we draw near to you, God, help us to experience. Let us experience that you celebrate over us. We get lost so easily.

[40 : 02] Thank you that you come to find us, and there's nothing that can stop you. In your name. I'm a leader.