Do Business Until I Come Back

10/28/2018
Y. Joe Kim
yhjoekim@gmail.com

As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. [12] So he said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. [13] He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, 'Do business with these until I come back.' [14] But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to rule over us.' [15] When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. [16] The first came forward and said, 'Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.' [17] He said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.' [18] Then the second came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' [19] He said to him, 'And you, rule over five cities.' [20] Then the other came, saying, 'Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, [21] for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' [22] He said to him, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? [23] Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.' [24] He said to the bystanders, 'Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' [25] (And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!') [26] 'I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. [27] But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.'" (Luke 19:11-27)

1. The Watoto Children's Choir

Last week we hosted the Watoto Children's Choir concert on Saturday night. About 150 people came and we raised $1,500 of free will offerings. And eight children were signed up for sponsorship. People came from places far from us like Taunton and Hyannis. Some drove over 40 minutes to come to our church. We were amazed by the children who shared God's gifts with the people in our community. Wherever the children's choirs go they make people get excited about Jesus and receive lots of support from people all over the world. I think they do both ministry and business very well.

2. The Parable of the Ten Minas

Business isn't a common topic in church but in today's scripture, Jesus talks about business. Jesus' disciples and many Jews are excited about the coming kingdom of God. They hoped Jesus would establish an earthly kingdom and get rid of Roman occupation immediately. Jesus however was going to Jerusalem to die. He used the parable of the Ten Minas to dispel any hopeful rumors that the time of the kingdom had arrived. Through the parable, Jesus tells his disciples and the Jews that he is not going to set up his kingdom right away.

Jesus says in the parable that the nobleman has to go to a distant country to be crowned king and then to return. Most of his people hate him and send word ahead that they oppose this coronation. Before leaving, the nobleman calls ten of his servants and gives them 10 minas, one apiece. A mina was about three months' wages. So the value of one mina was considerable. The nobleman asks his servants to do business with the mina while he is gone.

When he returns, he calls his servants in to find out what they did with the money he entrusted to them. One earned another ten minas, and the second earned another five minas. He commends the first servant saying, "well done, my good servant!" "***Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities***." To the second servant, Jesus says, "***rule over five cities***" (19:17 & 19). The two servants embrace the mission and multiply what they have been given.

The third servant does nothing with the mina given to him. He says to the nobleman, "***Lord, here is your mina. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth,*** ***21*** ***for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow***." The servant misunderstands his master. The nobleman says the servant should have at least banked the money. Then he would have received his money back with interest. The third servant does not expect the king to come back. The servant is not concerned about the king's business. His money is taken away and given to the one who has done the most for the king.

This parable tells the disciples and us that Jesus would go away for a while to receive a kingship. When Jesus returns, he will establish his kingdom. Until that time, Jesus' followers need to be faithful and productive during his absence. Upon his return, Jesus will reward the faithful commensurate with their service to him. This parable teaches us that while awaiting the coming of God's kingdom, we must do God's business.

3. What is God's Business?

Jesus asks his disciples to do business with what they are given until he comes back. What business does Jesus want his disciples and us to do? The example of God's business can be found in the previous paragraph (Luke 19:1-10).

When Jesus and his disciples are in Jericho, many people come to see Jesus. One of them is Zacchaeus. He is a chief tax collector and is wealthy. Because of the crowd and being a short man, Zacchaeus isn't able to see Jesus. He climbs a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus. When Jesus notices him in the tree, he says, "***Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today***" (19:5). Zaccheus hurries down and gladly welcomes Jesus.

People start grumbling, "***This man Zacchaeus is a sinner! And Jesus is going home to eat with him***" (19:7). Tax collectors in Jesus' time were considered traitors. They were among the most unpopular people in Israel because they worked for Rome. Tax collectors made themselves rich by gouging their fellow Jews. Although he was hated by many people, Jesus loved Zacchaeus. That's why Jesus takes the risk of visiting Zacchaeus. I am sure Zacchaeus was touched by Jesus' visit. Later that day, Zacchaeus stands up and says to the Lord, "***I will give half of my property to the poor. And I will now pay back four times as much to everyone I have ever cheated***" (19:8). Zacchaeus demonstrates inward change through outward action. Jesus says to Zacchaeus, "***today you and your family have been saved, because you are a true son of Abraham***" (19:9).

We see that Zacchaeus experiences a transformation through the forgiving love of Jesus. Zacchaeus realizes his way of living does not give him happiness. Zacchaeus decides to give his money to the poor and make restitution to those he cheated. The Bible does not tell us more about Zacchaeus' life after he meets Jesus. But we can imagine that he would live his life quite differently. Zacchaeus would live his life for God's kingdom for the rest of his life.

4. Be Faithful to God's business

This parable reminds us that Jesus will one day return. The early Christians in the first century AD believed that Jesus would come back very soon. Revelation 22:20 says, "***Yes, I am coming soon***." This is what one of Jesus' disciples John hears what the Lord says in his vision. Then John says to Jesus, "***Amen. Come, Lord Jesus***." Although no one knows when Jesus will return, we know one day we will see him face to face. Until the time comes, we need to be faithful to God's business.

5. Take the Risk and be Faithful

What do we learn from the parable of the ten minas? Two of the servants take the risk of investing their master's money. But the third servant is afraid to take the risk, so he puts the money in a safe place. He earns no return. The Lord wants us to take risks in doing his business. Without taking risks, we may be safe but can't really make progress. Taking risks does not guarantee us result. But what we need to remember is that God isn't interested in our result, but in our faithfulness to God's plans. Mother Teresa says, "God has not called me to be successful; he has called me faithful."

6. Conclusion

God has given each of us talents and resources to fulfill his plans through us. God calls each of us to experience transformation and be part of his ministry. We may not be able to control the results but God calls us to trust in him and to work for his kingdom. When Jesus returns, he will call us to find out what we have done with the resources he has entrusted to us.

7. Application

Many people are waiting for October 30. I am one of them. Do you know why? This coming Tuesday, Apple will host its product announcement event. We expect this event to include updates to the iPad Pros, Macbook, Apple Mini and others. I am sure many people would come to Brooklyn Academy of Music to find out the updated products.

I wish church leaders are more creative than Apple. So they update their worship service every Sunday and make it appeal to many people. I wish every Christian gets excited about good news of Jesus Christ. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every Christian can't go to bed Saturday night because he or she is so excited about Sunday worship service?

What part of God's plans are we called to as followers of Jesus and as a church? We are called to do God's business. If we want a business to grow, we have to have the best products like Apple products. And if we have the best product, we need to promote the products. Do you know what product we have? We have the best product, good news of Jesus Christ. Do we promote our product? We do not have to visit our neighbors to talk about Jesus. But when we live transformed lives like Zacchaeus, they would be intested in Jesus. And when we invite them to our Sunday worship service, Bible study, Sunday School, cantatas, concerts, yard sales, Vacation Bible School, and Christmas bazaar, they would come and be interested in Jesus and our church.

I pray that when we meet Jesus face to face, he would say to all of us, "***Well done, my good son or daughter. Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities***." Amen.