

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke the nineteenth chapter beginning at the eleventh verse, and we read in Jesus' name:

*Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. <sup>12</sup> Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. <sup>13</sup> "So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' <sup>14</sup> "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' <sup>15</sup> "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. <sup>16</sup> "Then came the first,*

*saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' <sup>17</sup> "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' <sup>18</sup> "And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' <sup>19</sup> "Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' <sup>20</sup> "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. <sup>21</sup> 'For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' <sup>22</sup> "And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. <sup>23</sup> 'Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' <sup>24</sup> "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' <sup>25</sup> ("But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') <sup>26</sup> 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. <sup>27</sup> 'But bring here those*

***enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me."***

Heavenly Father, sanctify us by the truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

Today is Saints Triumphant Sunday. Today is the day of the church year in which we gather in God's house to hear about the triumph that the saints have, not only on this earth but in the life to come. However, when you look at a text like we have today, there does not seem to be much "triumphing" happening. Well, maybe the king triumphs, but does anyone else really triumph?

Think about it. When you work for a company and you do a good job and you raise money for that company, do you profit? Maybe you get a commission, which is your pay; maybe you get a bonus, which again is pay; or maybe you get a promotion, which is more work and potentially more pay... but do you truly profit? When you work hard for someone else do you

truly profit? In the case of Christ, the answer is a resounding, "YES!"

In our parable today we have a man who left his servants in charge while he went away for a while. When he returned he called all of his servants together and gave to them according to what they had done. Friends, Christ has gone away... Christ is coming back... and Christ will give to each one of us according to how we have done. Just like in our parable: ***Jesus was made king and Jesus will return.***

Let's start off by noting that today's parable is not like the parable of the talents. In the parable of the talents the man gave differing amounts to his servants according to their abilities. When they came back to him they gave to him what they had earned. The point of that parable is to use your talents and abilities wisely and make progress for God.

That is not the point of today's parable. Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. So in our parable today Jesus, the king, the man of noble birth, is going

away. He calls His servants together and gives to each one exactly the same thing: His Word. Jesus gives to them and asks them to put it to use while He is gone. When He comes back and calls all of the servants together, notice what those who have prospered said, “Your mina has earned...” So it is not the men who are doing the earning, but rather it is the mina. The exact same gift that He gave to His servants before He left for a while.

But notice what the last servant says, “Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.” Notice that the servant did not let the mina do its work. He did not listen to His master to let the mina do its work... and oh if this is not us so often in our lives.

God has given each and every Christian the exact same word. He has given us the commission and responsibility to use that word and to take it out to people, but often times we have failed. Just like the last servant we have taken that gift of God and we have hidden it away in our hearts and in our minds... but we have not put it to work. We have the word of

God with us, and maybe everyone else should just go out and get it for themselves also. We begin to think that maybe it is not our job to share that word with others... we begin to not allow the word, the mina, to do its job. We get in the way of God’s Word and we are okay with that.

Or maybe even worse yet, we hide the word completely. Instead of just having it in ourselves, we actually lose or misplace the word. I don’t need to read the Bible today, I already know what it says. I don’t need to read a devotion today, it’s always the same thing. I don’t need to go to church or Bible Study today, it’s always so dry and boring.

So, that word of God, that mina that He has given to each one of His servants, we begin to abuse and misuse. To draw another application from a statement of Christ, we are not letting the light of the Gospel, of God’s Word, shine; rather, we are placing it underneath a bushel and dampening it’s light... or more appropriately, we are wrapping it in a handkerchief and killing the light altogether.

And yet, when Jesus, the King, returns He is going to call all of His servants to stand before Him and He is going to demand an accounting of what we have done with the mina He has given to each one of us. What will you say for your accounting? Sunday mornings are too early for me... the Bible is too dry to read... I read it once fifty years ago I don't need to read it again. So many excuses, and so many will end up like the last servant. The servant who looks at God and says, "I know you to be a hard and austere man." God, I know you to be mean and harsh and cruel and... well, I don't like that and I don't like you.

But have those people really understood the gift that was given to them? Does someone who thinks that God is simply an overbearing angry person truly understand the love and mercy and gentleness and kindness of our God? Do they truly understand the Word of God, the mina, that they have received?

In the Word of God we read how God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world. He sent His

Son to redeem the world from all of its sin. He sent His Son to live a perfect and holy life. He sent His Son to die an innocent death. A life and death that were sufficient for all sin of all time. And three days after His death, Jesus Christ rose from the dead to proclaim that His life and death were sufficient for all. This is what the Word of God teaches each and every one who reads it. The love of God is seen not in big and flashy things, but in the babe in a manger. The love of God is shown not in "Get up and walk" miracles but in the "I forgive all of your sins" statements. The peace of God is given when we realize that though we are sinners Christ died for us.

God's Word is what tells us all of this. That mina that Jesus gave to all of His servants before He departed, before He ascended into heaven and asked them to put it to work. He did not ask that you work, but that you put His mina, His word to work.

And that Word of God, as we read and hear that word, it works faith in our hearts. That Word of God places our hope, our trust, our faith in

Jesus Christ and none other. That Word of God which then strengthens that faith that He has given to us. And in that Word of God we read about His other sacraments, His other means of grace: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both of these sacraments are useless without the Word of God. If we go and sprinkle water on people without the Word of God, it is of no use to them. If we go and hand out bread and wine to people without the Word of God it is just bread and wine. But when we add the Word of God: we are cleansing people from all of their sins, and we are giving them the very body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all of their sins. This is what the Word of God can do.

So maybe using this parable, we ought to call today Word of God Triumphant Sunday. However, God chose to use His servants to get His Word to His people. God chose us, you and me, to share His Word with others... this is what God would have us do. And when Jesus comes back on the final day and calls us to account for what we have done, we can come before Him and tell of all the great things His Word, His mina has done... and he will tell us,

“Well done, good servant.” Wow... the mina, the Word did all the work and still Jesus is praising and blessing me. Thank you God!

Dear friends in Christ, when we work for a company or for a person, often times it is to make them more and more money. However, when we work for God... God is simply using us to get His Word and His message to so many others that He wants in heaven with us. As Gerhard states, “Anyone who properly considers this - that his exerting toil and work which he carried out in his station and calling will be exalted before all the angels and all men - will never allow any difficult toil to discourage him.” When we focus on heaven and do not let things of this world get us down... we will be glad and excited to share the mina, the Word that God has given to us to use. And we will then stand before God and receive praise because of what His Son and His Word has accomplished. That is the kind of God that we find in His Word. A God of love, peace, mercy, forgiveness.

Thank God for His Word. Thank God for His servants. Thank God that we are triumphant... when we use His Word and when we have faith in all that His Son has done for us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.