

Occupy Till I Come

“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.”

Luke 19:12-13

Introduction:

1. The Son of God came to earth to die; He returned to heaven to be crowned; He is coming for us soon.
 - a. He did not save us for our own pleasure and to take our fill of the world while we are on earth.
 - b. He has saved us and left us here to advance and service His kingdom until He comes for us.
2. We can be thankful that the Holy Spirit tells us the purpose and primary lesson of this parable.
 - a. The Good Samaritan defines a neighbor, not care for the hurting or a gospel lesson (Lu 10:29,36).
 - b. The Prodigal Son rebukes self-righteousness, rather than teaches parental policies (Luke 15:2,32).
3. Remember, when dealing with a parable, we want the overall lesson, not the inconsequential details.
 - a. It does not matter at all how many pence the Good Samaritan gave to the innkeeper (Luke 10:35).
 - b. It does not matter how the prodigal spent his money or what he desired to eat (Luke 15:13,16).
4. This parable has a cousin parable in Matthew 25:14-30, but the details of this one make it better.
 - a. The word “talents” in the other, though clearly money, are often mistaken by readers as abilities.
 - b. It is this parable or version of the same parable that has the valuable words, “Occupy till I come.”
 - c. It is this parable or version of the same parable that has citizens refusing his reign over them.
 - d. It is the other parable that speaks of money being loaned based on the individual abilities of men.
5. Let us follow this order: read the parable distinctly, explain it, and then apply it (Nehemiah 8:8).
6. Why are you alive and on earth today? You live and move for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom.
7. Jesus Christ is our king, and His kingdom is the first priority of our lives (Matt 6:33; Heb 12:22-29).

11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

- A. It helps when the Lord tells us the reason for a parable, as the Good Samaritan (Lu 10:25-37).
- B. He gave this parable for the express purpose of correcting their errors about kingdom timing.
 1. While on the way to Jerusalem, Jesus knew perfectly his hearers had kingdom problems.
 2. It was a common error of the Jews to expect a carnal, earthly, literal kingdom (Lu 17:20).
 3. Even the apostles at our Lord’s ascension were anxious about kingdom timing (Acts 1:6).
 4. Paul saved Thessalonica from anxiety about the timing of His coming (II Thess 2:1-3).
- C. The New Testament kingdom of God is the reign of Jesus Christ over heaven and earth.
 1. It began with John’s baptism and announcement that the time was fulfilled (Luke 16:16).
 2. Jesus was crowned with glory and honor at His ascension (Hebrews 2:5-18; Rev 5:1-14).
 3. It came with Holy Ghost power on Pentecost with apostles worldwide (Acts 15:13-18).
 4. It came with fiery power in 70AD, when He destroyed His enemies (Mat 3:10-11; 24:14).
 5. We are part of a spiritual kingdom now in the gospel (Romans 14:17-19; Heb 12:22-29).
 6. Jesus will take full rule of the universe and deliver it up to God shortly (I Cor 15:24-28).
 7. The new heavens and new earth will be the final and ultimate phase of His kingdom.
- D. Jesus used this parable to address His apostles and the self-righteous multitude (19:7,28-29).
- E. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning ... to hide truth (Matthew 13:10-17).
 1. Contrary to ignorant Sunday School teachers, parables are not to make the truth simple.
 2. Parables are extended proverbs and obscure stories that only the enlightened or instructed can grasp and understand (Ps 49:4; 78:2; Ezek 17:2; Matt 13:36; John 10:6).

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

- A. **Nobleman.** One of the nobility; a peer. A man of noble rank; a member of the nobility.
- B. As his hearers knew well, there were many appointed kings i.e. Herod, Agrippa, Aretas, etc.
- C. These men would have made trips to Rome in order to be installed under Caesar's authority.
- D. We do not have to worry about how far ... for the emphasis is more of time than of distance.
- E. Jesus Christ came in humility, went to heaven to receive a kingdom, and promised to return.
- F. We do not make Him king or give Him a kingdom. God does both. We reject dominion theology, postmillennialism, reconstructionism, theonomy, or other manmade kingdom ideas.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

- A. *Ten* is irrelevant, except to mean many (Gen 31:7; Nu 14:22; Neh 4:12; Job 19:3; Dan 1:20).
- B. This nobleman had many servants, and he loaned money to them to trade while he was gone.
- C. What is a *pound*? British? It is money, but do not get distracted by irrelevant money details.
- D. It is not an issue of human "talents," but of money, though human talents are part of our duty.
- E. But *occupy* is a key word, as it indicates what the servants were to do in his lengthy absence.
 - 1. **Occupy.** **5.** To make use of, use (a thing). **6. trans.** To employ oneself in, engage in, practise, perform, carry on; to follow or ply as one's business or occupation. *Obs.* **b. intr.** To be busy or employed (in some capacity); to exercise one's craft or function; to practise; to do business, to work. *Obs.* **7. trans.** To employ (money or capital) in trading; to lay out, invest, put out to interest, trade with; to deal in. **b. intr.** To trade, deal. *Obs.* [OED].
 - 2. The context, as always, helps us define the word by seeing it is clearly trading (19:15,23).
 - 3. The nobleman loaned his servants some capital to trade while he was gone, so that he might receive some profit from the use of their time when he returned (19:16,20,23).
 - 4. The nobleman owned the estate, but he gave opportunity to show diligence and wisdom.
 - 5. The nobleman traveled to a far country, so it was key to think of occupying a long time.
- F. Jesus Christ has given each disciple duties to do in His kingdom to bear fruit at His coming.
 - 1. The servants are those closest to the nobleman, committed to serving Him faithfully.
 - 2. While it is certainly true that His ministers have special duties, so do all other saints.
 - 3. Every part of your life that has scriptural duties assigned is a pound to be increased.
 - 4. Are you bearing fruit and return in every area of your life, especially in His kingdom?
 - 5. God gave grace. Do you labor more than others, or squander it (I Cor 15:10; II Cor 6:1)?

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

- A. Here we see a second class of persons, those called *citizens*, not his specially chosen servants.
- B. These *citizens*, who could have had the nobleman as king, rebelled against him treacherously.
- C. Here we see the Jews at large, who rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as king (John 19:15,19-22).
- D. But we also see all men, who have rejected creation, providence, conscience, and scripture.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

- A. The nobleman, now king, returned as he had promised, to measure his servants' faithfulness.
 - 1. With full regal authority, he commanded his servants, rather than called them (19:13).
 - 2. As a wise king, he examined each man's character by their trading of his loaned pounds.
- B. The Lord Jesus Christ shall come from glory, and we shall stand before Him to give account.
 - 1. We shall appear before His judgment seat to give account (Rom 14:9-11; II Cor 5:9-11).
 - 2. The king we shall meet is different from the one that left (I Tim 6:13-16; Rev 1:10-18).
 - 3. As with the servants, in that day, every man shall bear his own burden (Galatians 6:5).

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

- A. The first servant, and the order does not matter, showed he had obtained a 1000% return!
- B. Rather than saying this man should not reign over him, this servant addressed him as *Lord*.
- C. Rather than lay claim to either the first loan or the return on it, he gives it all to his *Lord*.
- D. The best servants of the Lord Jesus Christ will cast their crowns at His feet (Rev 4:10-11).

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

- A. The king praised this diligent and faithful servant, saying, "Well done, thou good servant!"
- B. Because the servant was faithful in the small matter of a pound, he gave him cities to rule.
- C. Jesus will praise and reward his saints in the Day of Judgment for small things (Matt 25:40).

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

- A. The second servant, and the order does not matter, showed he had obtained a 500% return!
- B. Rather than saying this man should not reign over him, this servant addressed him as *Lord*.
- C. Rather than lay claim to either the first loan or the return on it, he gives it all to his *Lord*.
- D. The best servants of the Lord Jesus Christ will cast their crowns at His feet (Rev 4:10-11).

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

- A. The king praised this diligent and faithful servant, saying, "Well done, thou good servant!"
- B. Because the servant was faithful in the small matter of a pound, he gave him cities to rule.
- C. Jesus will praise and reward his saints in the Day of Judgment for small things (Matt 25:40).
- D. Though this servant only earned half as much, he received similar praise (Matthew 25:21,23).

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

- A. Here is the third category of person we meet in the parable, a foolish and slothful servant.
 - 1. There is little profit, if any, in fussing or striving to know if this person was elect or not.
 - 2. The truth of the matter is that there are both fruitless Christians and excusing reprobates.
- B. This servant had done nothing productive for his master and king, but to live comfortably.
- C. Of course, he tried to cover for himself by saying how neat and clean he had kept the money.
- D. There will be those in the Day of Judgment that have done nothing with God's mercy in their lives, and their calling Him, "Lord," means nothing at all (Matt 7:21-23).

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

- A. Here is the slothful servant's wicked excuse ... I was afraid ... for you expect too much.
 - 1. He described the king as an *austere* man lacking in compassion. **Austere.** *Adj.* 3. Harsh to the feelings generally; stern in manner or appearance; rigorous, judicially severe. 4. Severe in self-discipline or self-restraint, stringently moral, strict, abstinent. [OED].
 - 2. He described the king as expecting a return from others while not working himself, as those in authority can take from the poor, or as interest is earned by the labors of others.
 - 3. The words here are not understood as genuine timidity, but rather of rebellious indolence.
 - 4. The king showed no mercy for legitimate fear, but rather charged him with wickedness.
 - 5. The excuse is that the king is too demanding and used to taking more than can be earned.
 - 6. The heart here is not necessarily any different from those of the *citizens*, but it covers itself with excuses rather than outward rebellion (Titus 1:16; Matt 21:28-32).
- B. Many professors of religion do nothing – blaming God's religion as too demanding and hard.
 - 1. Why was Adam afraid? There should be no fear of the living God, Who does good to all.
 - 2. This is destructive, excusing fear ... far from fear of God that keeps His commandments.
 - 3. Contrary to these deceitful and lying words, Christ's yoke and burden are easy and light.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

- A. The king condemned and judged the foolish and slothful man by his own condemning words.
 - 1. There is no mercy from the Lord for legitimate fear, but he is charged with wickedness.
 - 2. His words were not sincere words of confusion, doubt, or fear ... but rather rebellion.
- B. If the servant knew that his Lord expected a return, then he should have done all for a return.
- C. The Lord Christ will judge us for neglecting creation, providence, conscience, and scripture.

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

- A. If the servant knew that his Lord expected a return, then he should have done all for a return.
- B. No excuses will work in the Day of Judgment, when righteousness will prevail over excuses.

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

- A. The king's judgment is to strip the man of his pound and give it to a much worthier servant.
- B. In Jesus Christ's kingdom, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, no matter the excuses.
- C. If you think this unfair, you are thinking foolishly, for this is perfect fairness and wisdom.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

- A. Who speaks? The disciples to Jesus, or the servants to the nobleman? The king's bystanders.
- B. Our hearts naturally ask what is in parentheses, why take from the poor and give to the rich?
- C. But let us consider this matter spiritually with just a little bit of sanctified common sense.
 - 1. The slothful Christian does not deserve the grace he was first given, so it is taken away.
 - 2. The diligent Christian has multiplied his grace by his efforts, so he deserves a reward.

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

- A. Faithfulness has its rewards, as it should in every sphere, especially under a perfect king, where rebellious indolence is punished and diligent faithfulness is rewarded.
- B. In the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. Alleluia! Amen!
- C. What blessings God gives, He can take away, and blessings you think you have, He can take.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

- A. Here we return to the wicked citizens that rebelled against the king described earlier (19:14).
- B. What would any decent king do to defiant, rebellious, and seditious citizens? Destroy them!
- C. There are many who reject Jesus Christ verbally and by works, but they will pay dearly for it.
- D. He is coming with mighty angels in flaming fire for vengeance on enemies (II Thess 1:7-9).
- E. Jesus had taught in earlier parables about coming fiery judgment (Matthew 13:40-42,47-50).
- F. Jesus Christ is Lord, whether you want to admit it or not. He will break or crush (Mat 21:44).

Exposition

- A. Jesus came to earth to die, returned to heaven for His coronation, and left servants to occupy.
- B. He was not returning imminently, so He used this parable to exhort His servants to diligence.
- C. The Lord Jesus taught that His coming was yet distant, and His true followers would need to make good use of the time and duties assigned to them while He was gone.
- D. The loaned pounds represent the grace, duties, and privileges of each person in His kingdom.
- E. The charge to occupy was the command to use their roles profitably to advance His kingdom.
- F. The labor of diligently and wisely laboring in His kingdom was to continue until He returned.
- G. The lesson is not who is elect, justified, or regenerated ... but who will be a faithful servant proving election, justification, and regeneration, conversion, and glorification.
 - 1. The faithful servants earning a return on the grace of God are most certainly God's elect.
 - 2. The rebellious citizens that are slain before the righteous king are certainly reprobates.
 - 3. The slothful servant can either be a carnal, fruitless Christian or an excusing reprobate.
- H. We shall give an account of all done in our lives, good and bad (Rom 14:9-11; II Cor 5:9-11).
- I. Paul understood trading profits, for so he counted churches (Phil 2:16; 4:1; I Thess 2:19-20).
- J. The slothful servant shows many wicked traits, which we should isolate, identify, and judge.
 - 1. It was *ingratitude* to waste an advantage, a blessing, a mercy, and an opportunity to trade.
 - 2. It was *slothfulness* to hide money and not apply himself for its increase (Pro 12:27; 18:9).
 - 3. It was *theft* to hide another's investment that had been loaned only for profitable intents.
 - 4. It was *arrogance* to hide it in the earth and to bring it piously to the king with excuses.
 - 5. It was *wickedness* to blame the king and his character and practices for his own failure.
- K. The Lord Jesus Christ shows the righteous response to such a wicked and slothful servant.
 - 1. He is *reproached* for being a wicked servant, and so will all those who squander grace.
 - 2. He is *condemned* with his own words and actions, which a righteous Judge does not miss.
 - 3. He is *stripped* of the one talent previously given to him, for the poor get poorer with Him.
- L. If you have not been faithful in least matters of your life, you do not deserve those you have.
- M. The fear of the wicked is absurd and contradictory, much like Adam's, for it demands labor.

- N. It is possible to receive the grace of God in vain, not using it well for Christ, in spite of what Fatalists may say (II Cor 6:1; II Pet 1:9; Luke 13:6-9; Phil 3:18-19; Heb 12:15; I Pet 4:10).
- O. The parable is particularly Jewish by audience and context, but the lesson fits 2008 Gentiles.
- P. Men are held accountable to the abilities God gave them and rewarded according to effort.
- Q. How can something be taken from him that hath nothing? Even what he thinks he has!
- R. This earth is not our home, we are only strangers and pilgrims, but we have work while here.
- S. The wicked will be slain before this holy and righteous Judge, and we shall be examined.
- T. "Occupy till I come," should be a daily call for diligent, vigilant, faithful service to Christ.

Application

- A. We are servants. Are you thankful to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? A bondservant!
- B. God has made us servants by grace (actually children). What have you done with the favor?
- C. Which of three are you – a faithful Christian, slothful Christian or reprobate, or reprobate?
- D. What is your return in your marriage? In your children? In other souls? In your church?
- E. What is your return in your soul? In your knowledge? In your fruit of the Spirit?
- F. How many souls thank you for conversion? For spiritual growth? For knowledge? For zeal?
- G. Which areas of life do you occupy well – trade for God-approved profits? Children, marriage, church, knowledge, walk with God, hospitality, help to saints, prayer, reading, communion, profession, hair, service, charity, patience, wife, child, servant, employer, defend truth, example, spirit and moods, improve others, thanksgiving, mercy, peacemaker, time, money, website, business, government, etc., etc.?
- H. We shall give an account of our trading, both good and bad (Romans 14:9-11; II Cor 5:9-11).
- I. Are you seeking His kingdom first, which means all other things are secondary (Matt 6:33)?
- J. Are you eager to help the household of faith, as if this family is most important (Gal 6:10)?
- K. Our rest and reward comes when our Lord returns, and until then we are to patiently labor.
- L. Every man shall bear his own burden, so worry about yourself rather than others (Gal 6:5).
- M. Faithful in very little ... if you think the things of your life are small ... you are WRONG!
- N. Instead of knowing God's demands and duties and being intimidated into inaction, get active!
- O. The Lord Jesus went to heaven, but He is returning, and He left us with kingdom duties.
- P. There is a tendency to faint, but there is a reward to those who do not (I Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9).
- Q. His yoke is easy; His burden is light (Matt 11:28-30). He has not asked what you cannot do.

Conclusion:

1. Why are you alive and on earth today? You live and move for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.
2. Jesus Christ is our king, and His kingdom is the first priority of our lives (Matt 6:33; Heb 12:22-29).
3. The nobleman crowned king has charged us, "Occupy till I come." Will you answer the call?

For Further Study:

1. Sermon outline, "Cut It Down," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/cut-it-down.pdf>.
2. Sermon outline, "Is Jesus Lord?" ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/is-jesus-lord.pdf>.
3. Sermon outline, "Your Body Is the Lord's," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/pdf/your-body-is-the-lords.pdf>.
4. Sermon, "Gospel Millennium," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/prophecy/gospel-millennium/sermon.php>.
5. Sermon, "Two Parables," ... <http://www.letgodbetruer.com/sermons/exposition/two-parables-explained/sermon.php>.