

**Home Church Study Guide—June 13, 2010**  
**An Exciting Invitation Accepted (Luke 19:1-27)**

Last week we studied about a rich ruler who could not let go of what he had in order to receive abundantly more. We also enjoyed a brief glimpse of a man who had nothing but faith who saw Jesus for who he was and was greatly blessed as a result. This week, we are again surprised by a man no one would consider worthy of Jesus' time. After all, he is in Jericho, passing through to Jerusalem. Many were convinced he would there be crowned messiah, marking the beginning of a glorious time of power for the nation of Israel. Don't you know those leading the procession were "feeling their oats"? They had already tried to keep the blind man from interrupting the "messiah-elect." What do you think they would have done had Zacchaeus, the infamous chief tax collector, attempted to speak to Jesus? The fact that Luke names Zacchaeus likely indicates that his story was well known in the ancient world.

I love the implications of this story. It begins with a broken and searching heart. Zacchaeus was nothing like the rich ruler. He knew he had turned away from his religious upbringing. He was a traitor of the worst kind. He became rich by being a repressive chief tax collector for the Romans. No one was more hated. He likely thought he had no chance of seeing the kingdom of God. But at least he would see Jesus. Without pretense of dignity, he ran like a child and climbed a tree like a child, just so he could see Jesus. This was likely a good place for him to be for reasons other than he was not very tall (I'm being politically correct here). A crowd was not a good place for a chief tax collector to be. I wonder what Zacchaeus first thought when Jesus called him by name? Was he going to be disciplined for his sinful life? Would he be ridiculed by Jesus as an example of a worthless life? No, Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' table! The implications are amazing. Jesus counted Zacchaeus worthy of his company. Of all those in the crowd, it was at Zacchaeus' table that Jesus would dine. What a wonderful surprise for Zacchaeus. With joy, he led Jesus to his house.

The crowd's reaction was both predictable and disappointing. Jesus' table manners were once again atrocious! He was allowing himself to be the guest of a sinner. But this sinner was ready to truly repent. Luke gives us no information on any stipulations or teachings of Jesus. The response of Zacchaeus was spontaneous. He clearly repented of his past sins. It doesn't take a mathematician to figure out that if he pays back those he'd cheated four times over, and gives half his possessions to the poor, he has little or nothing left. But he doesn't care. He will not let this possibility of kingdom life pass him by. That is why Jesus joyfully responded, "today salvation has come to this house." Zacchaeus understood what Jesus offered. The kingdom life had come in Jesus and nothing would keep Zacchaeus from following His leading into salvation life! Jesus then provides that famous description of the purpose of His coming that should be on all our hearts, "the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost." Whom do we seek? And, what are we willing to give up to enable us to follow Jesus into salvation life?

The parable of the ten minas is not one of the more well-known parables. The better known is the similar parable of the talents and their distribution. But Jesus tells this parable with a specific purpose in mind. Many were expecting Jesus to assume the throne of David upon His arrival in Jerusalem. He wanted them to understand the true nature of the coming kingdom. This parable precedes His kingly arrival in Jerusalem. He wants them to see that the full realization of the kingdom will not come at once. Jesus is like a king who goes away to receive His appointment as king. He would leave His wealth with His followers for a specific purpose—to use the resources for the expansion of the kingdom's wealth. Not everyone was pleased to have this person as their king, but that made no difference in the outcome, except the ultimate punishment they receive on the king's return. The real question of this parable is, "What will we do with what Jesus has left us?" Will we bury it or use it for its intended purpose? Surely Luke expected this parable to have a motivational effect on each of us as we read the gospel. We are reminded that the king will indeed return. What will we have done with that which He left us?

In the ancient world, huge risks allowed for huge rewards. There is a clear call to take that which the Master leaves us and put it at risk for His glory. In return, there will be great reward, for we have taken that entrusted to

us and done wonderful things. The third servant is one willing to acknowledge his servanthood, but not willing to acknowledge his responsibility as such. It is interesting that the Master deals with him on his own terms—if he did nothing because of his great fear of his Master, then the Master deals with him as expected.

What are we doing with that which the Master has entrusted to us? Are we out to expand the kingdom, putting our gifts at risk for the sake of the coming Lord? Or are we burying our calling out of timidity or fear, consuming life for our own purposes? The kingdom has come. The King is receiving His full authority. He will return. Will we be among the faithful servants, will we be the fearful servant, or will we be counted among the enemies of the king? The rich ruler lost his chance to find salvation, the blind beggar risked and thus received reward, Zacchaeus put it all at risk and found salvation, the Pharisees stood and rebuked the king. Where are we in this story?

**“So What” for Home Church discussion:**

1. Discuss the different reactions of the ruler and of Zacchaeus. Which would you most likely be?
2. Discuss with personal focus what gifts we have individually received and how we might put them to use in the expansion of the rule of God.