

Luke 19:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. Before departing, the nobleman summons deka doulous (δέκα δούλους, "ten servants") and gives each deka mnas (δέκα μνᾶς, "ten minas/pounds"). A mina was roughly three months' wages—significant but not overwhelming. The identical distribution (unlike the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30) emphasizes equal opportunity and responsibility. Every servant receives the same resources; differences emerge in their faithfulness, not their initial advantage.

The command pragmateusasthe (πραγματεύσασθε, "occupy") is better translated "do business" or "trade." It's an imperative demanding active engagement, not passive waiting. The phrase "till I come" (heōs erchomai, ἕως ἔρχομαι) establishes the timeframe: the servants must work during the master's absence until his return. **Christ's followers are not to wait idly for His return but to actively invest His resources for kingdom advancement.** The parable teaches stewardship, accountability, and the expectation that disciples will be productive during the inter-advent period.

Historical Context

In the ancient world, masters often entrusted business affairs to servants during extended absences. The servant's responsibility was to invest wisely and increase the master's wealth through legitimate trade. Burying money or hiding it was

considered irresponsible (v. 20-21). The parable's structure would resonate with Jesus's audience: a period of absence, delegated responsibility, expectation of return, and final accounting. This framework applies to the church age—Christ has ascended, entrusted His work to His people, and will return to evaluate our faithfulness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What 'pounds' (resources, gifts, opportunities) has Christ entrusted to you during His absence?
2. How does the command to 'occupy' (do business) challenge passive Christianity that merely waits for Christ's return?
3. What does equal distribution of minas teach about equal responsibility despite varying results?

Interlinear Text

καλέσας δὲ δέκα δούλους ἔαυτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτούς

he called And ten servants his and delivered them
G2564 G1161 G1176 G1401 G1438 G1325 G846

δέκα μνᾶς καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς Πραγματεύσασθε ἔως

ten pounds and said unto them Occupy till
G1176 G3414 G2532 G2036 G4314 G846 G4231 G2193

ἔρχομαι

I come
G2064

Additional Cross-References

John 12:26 (Parallel theme): If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

2 Peter 1:1 (Parallel theme): Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

James 1:1 (Parallel theme): James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

Galatians 1:10 (Parallel theme): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

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