

# The Ten Minas

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus gave the parable of the ten minas. A mina was a unit of money (and also of weight), which was equal to about three month’s wages for a laborer at that time. Jesus began His parable by saying:

“A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. (Luke 19:12-15)

The first servant came before the nobleman (who symbolizes Jesus Himself), saying that with the mina he had been given, he had earned ten more minas. The nobleman commended him saying: “Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.” (Luke 19:17).

A second servant came before him, saying that with the mina he had been given, he had earned five more minas. The nobleman commended this servant also, saying that he would be rewarded with authority over five cities.

Then another servant came before him saying: “Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.” (Luke 19:20-21).

The nobleman was angry with this unprofitable servant, and replied to him saying:

“By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’ Then he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’ And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas already.’” (Luke 19:22-25).

Jesus concluded His parable with the nobleman’s reply to those who objected to taking the mina from the unprofitable servant and giving it to the servant who had gained ten minas. The nobleman said to them: “I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence.” (Luke 19:26-27).

One of the lessons that we can glean from the parable of the ten minas is that there are degrees of reward for “good” and “faithful” servants (Luke 19:16-19), and there are degrees of punishment for “wicked” or “worthless” servants (Luke 19:20-27). The “good servant” who gained ten minas was given charge of ten cities, and the one who gained five minas was given charge of five cities. By contrast, the wicked servant who gained nothing lost even the little that he had, and those who were openly hostile toward the noblemen, he ordered to be brought before him and slaughtered (Luke 19:27).

Another lesson that stands out in the parable of the ten minas is that the good and faithful servants were productive, or fruitful, whereas the wicked or worthless servant was unfruitful. So once again in this parable, as He does in several other of His teachings, Jesus is making distinctions between those who are His and those who are not. Here and elsewhere, Jesus taught that genuine believers will always be productive, bearing fruit to the glory of God the Father, whereas unregenerate individuals will not bear fruit, and in fact they cannot.

We learned a very similar lesson in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23), where the “seed” of the word of God bore fruit only where it fell on “good soil”. The “good soil” was the analogy that Jesus used to symbolize God’s elect, who hear the word of God, understand it, and do indeed come to faith in Him, bearing fruit, with some bearing one hundred times, some sixty times, and some thirty times what was sown. (Matthew 12:23).

Just as the seed in the parable of the sower symbolizes the word of God, so also the mina in the parable of the ten minas symbolizes the word of God. Some hear the word of God, and by His grace they have been given ears to hear and understand it; they come to faith in Christ, and they bear fruit (again, Matthew 13:11, 23). At the same time, others receive the word of God in their hearing, but they do not come to faith in Christ, and therefore they are unable to bear fruit. (Matthew 13:4-7, 19-22).

One lesson that is given to us in both the parable of the ten minas and the parable of the sower, as well as in other teachings of Jesus that we have discussed, is that there is no such thing as a genuine believer who does not bear fruit. Jesus taught us in John 15:8 that we prove ourselves to be in truth His disciples by the fact that we bear much fruit to the glory of God.

Our fruitfulness as genuine believers comes about only because we “abide in the vine”, in union with Christ (John 15:1-8), which means that we have been brought to faith in Christ; we have been saved. Our salvation was not brought about by way of our own will, choice, or decision, but by God’s grace and His sovereign choice (John 15:16, Romans 9:16). We are among those whom the Father has “given” to His Son (John 6:37). We are those who have been drawn to Jesus by the Father, and we will all be raised up at the last day (John 6:44). We are those to whom it has been granted by the Father to come to Jesus (John 6:65).

We are God’s elect; we are Jesus’ sheep. In His time, He calls each of us out by name, and we all do indeed follow Him (John 10:3-4). We have been given eternal life and *no one* can snatch us out of His hand or His Father’s hand (John 10:27-30). As genuine believers, we will all bear fruit to the glory of God the Father. By contrast, all the rest do not believe because they are not Jesus’ sheep (John 10:26), and it has not been granted to them to come to Jesus and to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven (John 6:65, Matthew 13:11).

The teaching in the parable of the ten minas is similar to the teaching in the parable of the talents, which is given to us in Matthew 25:14-28. *In both of these*

*parables, the fruitful servants were commended as “good” and “faithful” servants (symbolizing genuine believers), and they were rewarded. By contrast, the unfruitful servants were condemned as “wicked” and “worthless” servants (symbolizing the unregenerate), and they were punished.* Only genuine believers can, and will, bear fruit to the glory of God. All the others will not bear fruit, and in fact they cannot (Matthew 7:17-20, John 15:5-6).

Jesus gave us a similar lesson about spiritual fruitfulness in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). The wheat, which symbolizes genuine believers, bears fruit. However, the tares, which symbolize professing, but unregenerate individuals mixed in among genuine believers, cannot bear fruit.

We see another similar lesson in Matthew 7:15-23. In this passage Jesus warned us to watch out for false prophets. He said that we would know them by their fruits. The false prophets in this passage were those who professed to be genuine believers but were not. They were bad trees that could bear no good fruit (Matthew 7:18), and they would one day hear from Jesus: “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” (Matthew 7:23).

Another important point that we can learn from the parable of the ten minas and other passages as well, is that every time we see a reference to a “servant” or a “disciple” in the Bible, it does not necessarily represent a genuine believer. (Consider John 6:66, 1 John 2:19). There are tares mixed in among the wheat; there are wolves in sheep’s clothing mixed in among the sheep. In other words, there are professing but unregenerate individuals mixed in among genuine believers in most every congregation, who will receive the word of God in their hearing, but they do not come to faith in Christ. Because they are unregenerate, they can bear no good fruit. (Hebrews 6:4-8).

The parable of the ten minas is yet another of Jesus’ teachings which reveals to us that all genuine believers will bear fruit, while professing but unregenerate individuals will not bear fruit because they cannot. They cannot bear fruit any more than the tares of the field can produce wheat (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). ***All genuine believers will bear fruit to the glory of God, and God Himself will work in our lives to bring these things to pass, according to the principle that Jesus taught us in John 12:24-26.***

