

Do You Know What God Expects From You?

Luke 19:11-27

Good morning, men. Today we are celebrating the 27th anniversary of the Man in the Mirror Bible Study. Give God a hand for that. I am looking around and seeing some of the originals. Thank you, guys, for sticking with it, and for all of you men who have come along over the years, thank you for being a part of this, too.

I want to salute the people who make the team work. We have a fantastic media team in the back. Michael Lenahan on the video. Brian and Scott Russell – son and father – make up the media team along with Dave Hamilton. Jim Angelakos is the administrator. He is the successor for Jim Siebert who is our emeritus administrator. Handling the front is Jeff Taylor. Steve Hall is the tax collector at the front door. Steve Jones, who is not here yet, runs the second timer table. Tom Watson. Am I missing anyone else? Bill brings the donuts. It takes about ten men to make this Bible study work.

Hoorah is a term of endearment. It means I agree with that. I am all in. I am for that. It is a military term, of course. There are many different ways of expressing it. I am Army so I say HOO-rah. If you are Marine or SEAL you say OO-rah. On the count of three, give these men a great big hoorah, and tell them how much we appreciate them. One, two, three, hoorah! Thank you for you guys who contribute who makes this work so well. Happy anniversary to the Man in the Mirror Bible study.

You should be at Luke 19. What I would like you to do is keep your finger there and turn back to Luke 14:26. I said we would start doing shout outs for the new groups. Let's do the hoorah for the new guys too, in addition to the applause.

There are three new groups who have started. Guillermo Delgado at Pool of Bethesda in Hollywood, Florida. There is a group of men from different local churches, meeting at the local Dunkin Donuts for three years.

Dave Reed has a group at Murrysville Community Church in Murrysville, Pennsylvania. It is a men's group designed to provide fellowship, healing, and discipleship.

Then a shout out to Jim Schultz at the Log Church in Crosslake, Minnesota. This is interesting because they have a men's leadership team just finishing up Man in the Mirror's No Man Left Behind training. They have six men attending FUEL next week. Don Lenzen is an Area Director for Man in the Mirror who is on their team.

We would like to welcome you men and your groups to the Man in the Mirror Bible study. Give these guys a big shout out from Man in the Mirror Bible study. Welcome, guys.

The title of the message here is “Do You Know What God Expects From You?” Men come to faith in Jesus Christ, and back to faith, for many different reasons. For many men it is because they either got what they wanted or maybe they didn’t get what they wanted, and in either case they ended up with deep sense of futility about their lives. Then they had an existential crisis that drove them to a deeper search for meaning and purpose. Many men have done something that makes them feel so riddled with moral guilt that they must do something to assuage this guilt. They must find a way to repent and to have forgiveness for this egregious sinful thing that they have done.

Some men come to Christ as a matter of natural maturity. Perhaps it is the occasion of getting married and realizing it is time to become a man. Maybe having a child and realizing they need to step up and figure out what it means to be a man of God. These men make these decisions and come to faith.

You know that you are grateful for what God has done for you in making this happen. You want to be a Christian. You want to be a good disciple. You read passages like this verse in Luke 14:26 which says if anyone would come after me, he must love his family less than he loves me otherwise, it says at the very end, even he must love his own life less, and if he doesn’t he can’t be my disciple. Anyone who “does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.” You read these verses and say, wow I want in on that.

When you say on the inside, hoorah! I want to be part of that, then distractions come. These distractions come in all different forms. Sometimes they come as secret ambitions. Sometimes they are holdover ambitions from the previous life. You are not prepared for how fiercely this life with Christ is being contested by an enemy.

You realize that after a while that these distractions have become your agenda. You have agendas that you are after. Sometimes these agendas are the result of sin. Because you have exchanged the truth of God for a lie, or the glory of God for an idol, and you have a false confidence that you are walking in a right way with God. But what you really have done of course is turned your agenda on its side and that you have this pretense that it is God’s agenda but it is really your agenda.

But other times, it is innocent. But then the devil comes and he exploits this agenda that you have and you end up with this feeling that you don’t really understand what it is that God expects from you. You are walking on eggshells and you hate it and you don’t want to feel that way but good news this morning – you don’t have to feel that way. There is good news. “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion” (Philippians 1:6). “Even when we are faithless, He remains faithful” (2 Timothy 2:13).

Many of you already have confidence that you already know what God expects from you and you are on the beam. Many of you don’t. Many of you who are listening to us don’t. Here is the big idea. I want to throw it up there first. **What is my agenda? What is God’s agenda? Are we working on the same agenda?**

The idea is to help you understand what God’s agenda is and to help you evaluate what your agenda is. Then if you need to, you can make an adjustment to bring these two in alignment with each other. That is the big idea. The first thing I want to talk about is what is God’s agenda.

WHAT IS GOD'S AGENDA?

Let's go back to Luke 19. This is the parable of the ten minas. It is not the parable of the ten birds, it is the parable of the ten minas. A mina is about a hundred days worth of income; about three months' worth of wages.

Let's begin at Luke 19:11 and read the Word of God. "While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. He said: 'A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return.'" He is talking about Himself in this parable.

"So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas." Ten servants were each getting about three months of wages. "Put this money to work," he said, "until I come back."

Then it goes on and there are pieces here about other subjects, not wanting Him to be king. Drop down to Verse 15, the second half. "Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it." This would have been after the passage of some time.

"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.' "Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.' "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.' "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'

The final servant came and he had hidden his, and the master wasn't too pleased about that. Notice who this passage is for. It is for you. It is for servants. It is the Greek word for servant, *doulas*, a bond slave for Jesus Christ; a servant of Jesus Christ. Jesus called ten of His servants together, ten of His believers and He entrusted something to them. Then notice what He is saying here because the people thought the kingdom of God was going to come at once, and He said not so fast. I am going away. I'll be back. But not right away. You are going to be in charge until I get back, and I am entrusting you with something to work with while I am away.

What are His expectations? What does Jesus expect from these servants in this parable? Does He expect a certain level of production? Does he have a quota they are supposed to meet? No. He expects them to be faithful. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says now, "Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." We have here these men who have been given a trust – a mina.

Put your mina to work. The message for us is, what is God's agenda? Once you become a Christian it is to put your mina to work. What is your mina?

What is your mina? Your mina is everything which God has entrusted to His care. That includes your character, your integrity. It includes your money. It includes your wife if you have one. He has entrusted to you your children if you have them. He entrusted to you any particular skills that you have. For example the ability to persuade people or the ability to work with tools, or to

work out complex scientific problems, any skill that you have – a skill to teach. This is something that has been entrusted to you by God.

He has entrusted to you certain spiritual gifts. He has entrusted to you a certain calling. He may have entrusted to you a disease like multiple sclerosis, or cancer, or a speech impediment, or diabetes, or maybe poor self-esteem. These are things He has given to you to work with. How can, for example, a speech impediment be a gift? You have to understand. Everybody has gifts and sometimes the gift is to impart, but sometimes your gift is to give other people a place for them to impart.

Sometimes your gift is that you need others' help. All of these things help as part of God's agenda. Whatever it is He entrusted to you, that is your mina. That is your mina.

The big idea today is this: **What is my agenda, what is God's agenda and are we working on the same agenda?** God's agenda is to entrust to you something that He wants you to be faithful with.

You know what that is. If you will take the time and many of you have, to think this through, you know what God has entrusted you with and the issue is, will you be faithful with that?

WHAT IS MY AGENDA?

The second thing I want us to talk about this morning is what is my agenda? I know that when I became a Christian I didn't come as a blank sheet of paper. I didn't come as a blank slate. I had an agenda. I had a plan for my life, and I am guessing that you did too.

My plan for my will was not equal to God's will. My plan was not in concert with God's plan. Maybe yours was. Maybe it was the logical next step for you. But, my plan was not. My agenda was to get God to do what I wanted to do. I spent the first fourteen years of my spiritual journey and some of you know exactly what I am talking about, I spent the first fourteen years of my spiritual journey trying to persuade God that my agenda is something He ought to get on board with.

Here is the question if you are trying to figure out what your agenda is. It is a little self-test. Ask yourself the question, am I a servant, or am I just pretending to be a servant to get what I want? It is a nice little test.

Let me give you another test. Am I willing to be treated like a servant? The best test as to whether or not you are working on God's agenda is to ascertain if you are His servant; if you really are taking up His cross, following and serving Him.

The question to zero in on that is if I say I am a servant, am I willing to be treated like one?

I use to be in business and I got to hob-knob around. It is so interesting that the men that used to be my peers now have their assistants return my calls to explain why my former peer is now too busy to meet with me. I have that happen all the time. You might be surprised to hear that. I get regularly dissed by the guys I used to run with. You know what? Praise God. It is just the way

it is. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, you get me? The upshot of this is if you really want to be on God's agenda, then you need to find out if you are working His agenda or your own agenda.

One way to figure this out is to ask this question: am I willing to be treated like a servant. In other words, are you willing to be a piece of clay on the potter's wheel? Are you willing to let God shape you into whatever kind of pot He wants you to be? A big deal or a little deal? You can figure this out whether or not you are willing to be treated like a servant or not, by asking yourself when the other guy gets the promotion that you wanted, where do you end up on that? I am not saying you shouldn't feel disappointed initially, but where do you eventually come out?

Do you eventually come out filled with bitterness because that person got the promotion you were better qualified to get? Or do you say my agenda is to do what God wants me to do to be a servant. I have this saying I adopted twenty-five or thirty years ago. No agenda but God, no agenda but God's.

We have a man who used to be a part of our Bible study. I'd ask him about something and he consulted with Man in the Mirror for a while. He said all the time, if God's not in it, I'm not interested. Because he understood that he wanted to be on God's agenda, not on his agenda. He had been on his agenda like many of us, for a long, long time. But once he understood what God's agenda was, and what he had been entrusted with by God, and that God required of him to be faithful, then he was willing to give up his agenda and be a servant.

Am I willing to be treated like a servant when the other guy's book becomes the next best-seller I've written twenty books and God has stuck me in this niche called men's discipleship. If you want to sell a lot of books, the last place you want to be is in men's discipleship. If you want to write men's comic books it is a great place. If you want to write Christian literature for men, then you are going to take the hose.

These are the guys started out at the same time as me: John Maxwell, Max Lucado. We all started writing books at the same time. They are these meteoric author superstars, but this is what God has called me to do – to write books for men. I am just faithful to do that. I am willing to be treated like a servant. Again, do I always feel that way? Don't I sometimes wish, *Maybe this one*. Of course, that is human. But at the end of the day, are you really willing to be treated like a servant? That is the question.

Or you do roofing work or you are a carpenter and you keep putting out these bids. Maybe you are an air conditioning contractor and you put out this bid. There is this other company and they keep getting your business. They keep outbidding you. It is almost like there is a mole in your office so they can underbid you by just the right amount. Are you willing to accept that as God's agenda? Are you willing to be a servant and push through that?

Or if you are in sales, and you have been pitching this account, and you know you are up against some other people too and you really need this deal. You really need this deal, but God chooses to give it to somebody else. Are you willing to be treated like a servant or are you going to become bitter? That is the alternative. My agenda is to be a servant of the most high God; no agenda but God, no agenda but God's; if God is not in it, then I am not interested, and I accept

what is going on as God's agenda for me, because my agenda is God's agenda, or at least I want it to be.

We talked about this when we talked about James and John who asked to sit at the right and the left throne next to Jesus in the kingdom, because they wanted to be a somebody. The big idea was a man can make a real contribution once he gets over wanting to be a somebody. You may end up being a somebody, but the point is that if your goal is to be a somebody your agenda is not the same as God's agenda; because God's agenda for us is not for us to be a somebody but it is to be faithful in what He entrusted us to.

He is the potter, we are the clay. He has the right to make out of that clay some for noble purposes and some for common use. But we are His servants. We deny ourselves. We take up our cross. We follow Him. He is the boss, we are the servant. The big idea is what is my agenda? Am I willing to be treated like a servant? What is God's agenda? He has given us something. He has entrusted something to us and He wants us to be faithful. That is why He has written this parable to show us that His agenda is that we would be faithful, and are we working on the same agenda.

WORKING ON GOD'S AGENDA

Let's talk a little bit about working on God's agenda. How do we do this? There are different positions you might find yourself in. One position would be that you are confident and you are content. You are a fourth seed Christian. The seed that fell on the good soil is like the man who hears the word and produces a crop, thirty, sixty, a hundred times what was sown. You are good. Look around and help somebody that is not.

Second, you might be motivated to do things for God by guilt. You have this feeling that there must be something that I have left undone. There must be something else I need to do and you never quite have the confidence that you know what God expects from you. The message from you is if that is your situation is that you are right. There will always be one more thing that you have to do if you are trying to do it in your own strength. But the gospel of Jesus is that He knows you can't do that, and He has done it for you and by faith in Him, and repentance then He will stand in your place as to the guilt. You can have confidence that you are actually in Christ, you are His servant. You have the freedom to work on His agenda, knowing you will not do everything exactly correctly, but that your Lord and Savior Jesus stands in your place when you don't do things correctly.

A third kind of man here today might feel like you have been abandoned by God. You put your faith in Him and to the best of your understanding you were faithful. But it didn't turn out the way you planned. The message for you is if you want to be working on God's agenda and not on your agenda, is to reexamine yourself and maybe ask the question, was I really acting like a servant, or was I just pretending to be a servant in order to get what I wanted? That was my situation.

I had allowed myself to be deceived by the enemy into thinking that all of the good deeds I was doing and all the righteousness I was pursuing in the name of Christ, really wasn't God's agenda. Really, it was me in my own strength trying to be the kind of man I thought God wanted me to

be. In His grace, He let go of me for a little while. I felt abandoned by God. But I realize now, of course, He had not abandoned me at all. What He was doing was get my attention so I would not eventually destroy myself. That may be the situation you find yourself in.

A fourth situation you might find yourself in is that you have grown complacent. You know you are saved, you know you are going to heaven, but you have grown complacent. You have lost your first love. You no longer feel that rush of adrenaline when you think about how much Jesus loves you and how much you love Him. You don't feel that rush anymore. You have lost your first love. Your love has grown cold. You have become lukewarm. The message for you this morning is recalibrate, get back to God's agenda and understand He has given you this trust. He expects you to be faithful with it and not on your own strength but because His Son Jesus is going to give you the Holy Spirit and give you His power and presence to do this.

A fifth kind of man is that you are irritated. You are an irritated and angry person. You are frustrated. You feel like your life is just one big frustration after another and you are angry at God. You are angry at God because you can't get what you want.

You have been trying to get what you want and He won't give it to you. Why won't You give it to me? If You love me, why won't You give me this? And He says, I won't give you this because I love you, just like we say to our kids.

What is the solution for all of this? There is one sure way to get on God's agenda and that is to lead the surrendered life. That each day I will deny myself take up my cross, and follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus says that but then He also says if you don't do this you cannot be My disciple. And we want to be His disciples. The solution for no matter how you end up working on your own agenda and I say this to all of us. No matter how we end up working on our own agenda there is only one solution and that is to lead this surrendered life. No agenda but God, no agenda but God's. If God is not in it then I am not interested. I will do anything God wants me to do. These are the thoughts of the man who leads the surrendered life.

How do you know if you are leading the surrendered life? You know it because the law is summed up in this one command. Love your neighbor as yourself. Do you neighbor-love the guy who got the contract instead of you? Do you neighbor-love the guy who has the best-selling book instead of you, or do you resent him? Or the guy who got the contract that should have been yours? Or the guy who ended up being the head coach and you had to be the assistant? You get it.

Does it make you bitter? Or do you receive that as a man who has surrendered his life to the lordship of Jesus Christ. By the way, you have to do this everyday. Why? Because this life we live is being fiercely contested. But men, we don't give in to terrorists. We are not going to allow the enemy to lure us in to distract us anymore to work on our own agenda, because men, I am here to tell you that your agenda is His agenda. When you are working on your agenda you are actually working on His agenda. Jesus said you are either for me or against me. He also said if you are working for me, you know the rest.

Look down to the last section Luke 19:26. Here is the bonus. Jesus said, "I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away." See the beautiful promise in there.

Take your surrendered life and go do what Jesus says in Galatians 5:14, love one another; this sums up the law." Romans 13:9-10, all the commandments, do not covet, do not murder, do not kill are all summed up in this one command, love your neighbor as yourself. He who does this will find that he is doing all of the others.

Matthew 7:12 in the Sermon on the Mount, do to others what you want them to do to you because this sums up the law and the prophets. 1 Corinthians 16:14 says do everything in love. Love is the evidence of the surrendered life.

Here it is again. What does God expect from us? He has given us a trust with which He expects us to be faithful, and the way that we are able to be faithful is through leading the surrendered life. The way that we know that we are leading the surrendered life is if we meet all of these things that come to us in neighbor-love. That's it.

What is my agenda? What is God's agenda? Are we working on the same agenda? If you are leading a surrendered life and neighbor-love is the hallmark of your life, so that when Max has his next best-selling book, since they all are, I will rejoice, because I am so happy to at least be His servant.

Let's pray.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for this great text, it just reminds us of what You are expecting from us and there are so many other lessons that we can learn from it as well. Lord, I pray that each of us here would reaffirm our desire to be a servant and to be treated like one, and make sure that we are not pretending to be one just so that we can get what we want, and we would be found faithful to be found working on Your agenda. We surrender our lives to You and all of God's men said Amen.