While people were listening to Jesus speak, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near Jerusalem and they thought that the Kingdom of God would appear there immediately. So he said, "A nobleman went off to a distant country to obtain the kingship for himself and then to return. He called ten of his servants and gave them ten gold coins and told them, 'Engage in trade with these until I return.' His fellow citizens, however, despised him and sent a delegation after him to announce, 'We do not want this man to be our king.' But when he returned after obtaining the kingship, he had the servants called, to whom he had given the money, to learn what they had gained by trading. The first came forward and said, 'Sir, your gold coin has earned ten additional ones.' He replied, 'Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this very small matter; take charge of ten cities.' Then the second came and reported, 'Your gold coin, sir, has earned five more.' And to this servant too he said, 'You, take charge of five cities.' Then the other servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your gold coin; I kept it stored away in a handkerchief,
for I was afraid of you, because you are a demanding man;
you take up what you did not lay down
and you harvest what you did not plant.'
He said to him,
'With your own words I shall condemn you,
you wicked servant.
You knew I was a demanding man,
taking up what I did not lay down
and harvesting what I did not plant;
why did you not put my money in a bank?
Then on my return I would have collected it with interest.'
And to those standing by he said,
'Take the gold coin from him
and give it to the servant who has ten.'
But they said to him,
'Sir, he has ten gold coins.'
He replied, 'I tell you,
to everyone who has, more will be given,
but from the one who has not,
even what he has will be taken away.
Now as for those enemies of mine who did not want me as their king,
bring them here and slay them before me.'"
After he had said this,
he proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem.

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**Our Scripture Reflection**

Unfortunately, today's Gospel reading has been used by many as a text to support a fund-raising project. That thinking distorts it's deeper meaning. Our Lord told this parable as He was nearing Jerusalem, the city of destiny, where He would lay down His life for our salvation. He knew He would be leaving His beloved for a while. But while He would be gone, He left them work to do. And what is that work? To use our time, talent and treasure to build up His Kingdom here on earth. Please note, He did not leave us such an incredibly important task without the means to carry out the work. No, He knew we were blessed by His Father with the gifts to do the work and do it well. And most important of all, when He returns at the end of time, we will be required to give an accounting for what we did with our gifts.

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**Food for your Journey**

Many years ago, when a famine was bringing misery in Russia, the writer Leo Tolstoy passed by a bridge in Moscow where many beggars gathered. They were on the verge of starvation and were asking for alms. Seeing a beggar, Tolstoy searched in his pocket for a coin, but discovered that he had nothing with him, not even a copper coin. Embarrassed, Tolstoy took the beggar's hands in his own and said, "I am sorry, brother. Don't be angry with me. I have nothing with me today." The thin face of the beggar became illuminated, and he said in reply, "But you called me brother - that was a great gift, sir."

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Being Your disciple is not rocket science! All it takes is a pure and open heart. Help me, Lord, to love as You loved, unconditionally and sacrificially. Amen