

What the Doctor Ordered: Accountbale Stewardship

Pericope: A parable about a man who has a steward that he decides to fire. Also: The Crafty Steward; Parable Of The Crafty Steward; Parable of the Dishonest Manager; The Parable of the Dishonest Steward; Parable of the Unjust Steward. MAIN: "the Christian approach to life is that we should invest our lives for the good of others and the glory of God. This chapter emphasizes that truth: life is a stewardship, and we must use our God-given opportunities faithfully. One day we must give an account to the Lord of what we have done with all He has given to us, so we had better heed what Jesus says in this chapter about the right and wrong use of wealth." (Wiersbe)

Luke 16

INTRODUCTION

- Read text Luke 16
- Verses 1–31 fit into the larger section about heirs of the kingdom by describing how those who belong to the kingdom should use their money.
 - **The right use of wealth is the overarching theme in chapter 16.**
 - He also speaks against those who love money, concluding with a story about a man whose greediness and unbelief lead to eternal torment. (rich man and Lazarus)
- This chapter emphasizes that life is a stewardship, and we must use our God-given opportunities faithfully. One day we must give an account to the Lord of what we have done with all He has given to us, so we had better heed what Jesus says in this chapter about the right and wrong use of wealth.

1 A Foolish Steward (vv. 1-2)

ILLUSTRATION

The *Wall Street Journal* quoted an anonymous wit who defined *money* as “an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider for everything except happiness.” The writer might have added that money is also a provoker of covetousness and competition, a wonderful servant but a terrible master. (Wiersbe)

BIBLE VERSE

1 Timothy 6:10 (ESV - English Standard Version)

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

BIBLE VERSE

1 Peter 1:4 (ESV - English Standard Version)

⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

EXPLANATION

- What is a steward? - someone who manages another's wealth/property.
 - He does not own that property but has the privilege of enjoying it for the profit of his master.^a
 - Must serve his master faithfully (1 Cor. 4:2; "In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.")
 - When he looks at the riches around him he must remember that they belong to his master, not to him personally.
- This steward forgot or ignored this truth and became a prodigal steward-wasteful steward.

APPLICATION

- We may be tempted to judge this man too quickly and too severely. Yet, let us examine ourselves through the same lens. How faithful have we been as stewards of what God has given us?
- **Material wealth:** much or little, one day we will have to give an account to God for the way we have acquired it and used it...but more than that, and maybe more importantly...
- **The rest of our lives:** Some feel that as long as they "give" God His 10% (money, Sunday worship, Wednesday class time - minimum service) then we have sacrificed much and God is satisfied. God is concerned about the other 90% of our lives too!
 - Dt. 8:11-18; ""Be careful that you do not **forget** the Lord your God **by failing to keep His commandments**, His **ordinances**, and His **statutes** which I am commanding you today; ¹² **otherwise**, when you eat and are **satisfied**, and you build **good** houses and **live in them**, ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks **increase**, and your silver and gold **increase**, and everything that you have **increases**, ¹⁴ then your heart will become **proud** and you will **forget** the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of **Egypt**, out of the house of **slavery**; ¹⁵ He who led you through the great and terrible **wilderness**, *with its fiery serpents* and **scorpions**, and *its thirsty* ground where there was no

water; He who brought water for you out of the rock of flint. ¹⁶ In the **wilderness** *it was* He who **fed** you manna which your fathers did not know, in order to humble you and in order to put you to the test, to do good for you in the end. ¹⁷ **Otherwise**, you may say in your heart, '**My** power and the strength of **my** hand made **me** this wealth.' ¹⁸ But you are to remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, in order to confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day."

- **Our Time:** Redeeming our time
 - The phrase comes from the business world and it means buying up the opportunity - time is eternity, given to us in minutes, hours, days, and years - handed to us to use either wisely or foolishly
- **Main lesson:** The steward, as dishonest as he was, *used his opportunity wisely and prepared for the future*...shared the power of his position- "I'm too lazy to work and too proud to beg...I'll forgive MY master's debtors' debt and they will become my friends and help me out in the future..."
 - 1 Peter 4:10; "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the multifaceted grace of God."
- In our case, we have been entrusted with the Gospel and should share it with others:
 - **God's people are stewards of the Gospel:** 1 Thessalonians 2:4; "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who examines our hearts."
 - **God has committed the treasure of His truth to us:** 2 Corinthians 4:7; "but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not intending to please people, but to please God, who examines our hearts."
 - **We must guard this treasure:** 1 Timothy 6:20; "...protect what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly, empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"
 - **We must invest the Gospel in the lives of others:** 2 Timothy 2:2; "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also."
- Just like this steward, we will one day have to give an account of our stewardship! (Rom. 14:10–12; 2 Cor. 5:10ff)

2 A Wise Steward (vv. 3-8)

EXPLANATION

- The steward knew he would lose his job, so he needed to prepare for his future
 - He could not change the past; he could only change his future - but HOW?
 - By making friends
 - He came up with a clever plan that even his master complimented him (**Luke 16:8**)
 - **NOTE:** Jesus did not commend the steward for robbing his master or encouraging others to be dishonest. Jesus commended the man for his wise use of the opportunity.
 - The children of this world only see the opportunities of this world - the things of time, but the Christians need to see the opportunities of eternity. (**Hebrews 12:2**; "looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.")

3 The Application (vv. 9-13)

JESUS GAVE THREE ADMONITIONS, BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE STEWARD.

- He admonishes us to use our opportunities wisely (Luke 16:9)
 - One day life will end, and we will not be able to earn or use our money. While we have opportunities, we must invest our money making friends for the Lord.
 - God demands total and complete integrity when it comes to using money and that it must not control us, but that we control it.
 - “Make money your god and it will plague you like the devil!” Jesus said, “Make money your servant and use today’s opportunities as investments in tomorrow’s dividends.” Be a wise steward! There are souls to win to the Saviour, and our money can help get the job done.”

4 The Wrong Use of Money (Rich Man and Lazarus) (vv. 14-31)

EXPLANATION

- Exegesis of the story
- Rich man squandered his time and money on himself and his pleasures while ignoring the obvious need at his door step
- Lazarus was hungry, destitute and ill, his only friends were dogs
- Both men died
 - Lazarus was taken to paradise by angels to Abraham's bosom
 - Rich man to torment
- Rich man in agony begged Abraham for relief
- Abraham explained there was no relief, and why he was in agony
- Rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers on earth

- Abraham said the living have time and resources (Moses and the prophets)

CONCLUSION

- Romans 2:4-5; "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"
- "The safest road to hell," wrote C.S. Lewis, "is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."
- "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)
- Jesus asked that question.
What is your answer?

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Alford, Henry. *Alford's Greek Testament : An Exegetical and Critical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Guardian Press, 1976. The connexion is,—“Ye are they that justify yourselves before men; ye are no publicans and sinners,—no poor and needy,—but righteous, and increased with this world's goods. But, since John, a kingdom has been preached, into which every one, publicans and sinners too (παῖς || πάντες, ch. 15:1) are pressing in. The true relation however of that kingdom to the law is not as ye suppose, to destroy the law (Matt. 5:17), but to fulfil.” Then, as an example, our Lord reiterates the decision which He had before given on a point much controverted among the Jews—the law of adultery. But this He does, not without occasion given, and close connexion with the circumstances, and with what had before been said. As early as Tertullian, cont. Marc. iv. 34, vol. ii. p. 443, it was remarked, that an allusion was meant here to the adultery of Herod Antipas

with his brother Philip's wife, which the Pharisees had tacitly sanctioned, thus allowing an open breach of that law which Christ came to fulfil. To this mention of Herod's crime the $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\chi\rho\iota \text{ } \iota\omega\acute{\alpha}\nu\nu\omicron\upsilon$ gave relevance. Still the idea must not be too lightly assumed. Bleek's remark is worth notice, that, had such an allusion been intended, the last words of the verse would have been otherwise expressed. Antipas had not married a divorced woman, but abducted a married woman from her husband..

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Augustine of Hippo. (1888). *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*. In P. Schaff (Ed.), & R. G. MacMullen (Trans.), *Saint Augustin: Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels* (Vol. 6). Christian Literature Company. But what means it, that He says they are "friends of the mammon of iniquity"? What is "the mammon of iniquity"? First, what is "mammon"? For it is not a Latin word. It is a Hebrew word, and cognate to the Punic language. For these languages are allied to one another by a kind of nearness of signification. What the Punic call mammon, is called in Latin, "lucre" What the Hebrews call mammon, is called in Latin, "riches." That we may express the whole then in Latin, our Lord Jesus Christ says this, "Make to yourselves friends of the riches of iniquity." Some, by a bad understanding of this, plunder the goods of others, and bestow some of that upon the poor, and so think that they do what is enjoined them. For they say, "To plunder the goods of others, is the mammon of iniquity; to spend some of it, especially on the poor saints, this is to make friends with the mammon of iniquity. This understanding of it must be corrected, yea, must be utterly effaced from the tablets of your heart. I would not that ye should so understand it. Give alms of your righteous labours: give out of that which ye possess rightfully. For ye cannot corrupt Christ your Judge, that He should not hear you together with the poor, from whom ye take away. For if thou wert to despoil any one who was weak, thyself being stronger and of greater power, and he were to come with thee to the judge, any man you please on this earth, who had any power of judging, and he were to wish to plead his cause with thee; if thou wert to give anything of the spoil and plunder of that poor man to the judge, that he might pronounce judgment in thy favour; would that judge please even thee?

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