

Luke Lesson 16

Luke Chapter 16

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Memory verses for this week: *2 Cor 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

Introduction: We continue our study of the book of Luke this week as we continue in chapter 16. Last week's lesson was mainly on three parables. The Parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the lost son who has come to be known as the prodigal son. We continue our study this week with the parable of the unjust steward.

I. Parable of the Unjust Steward

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

The parable of the unjust steward is one that has been misunderstood by many. Here in America, we have a whole different view of what a steward is compared to those in foreign lands. We see that he commends the man for his work, and that the word 'lord' is not capitalized. It wasn't God who commended the man, but rather his earthly master. In an Eastern home, during the days of our Lord, a steward was an overseer of the affairs of the whole household. He was trusted to take care of many things, and the master of the house gave the steward money in order to buy the necessities for the family.

If the steward was a shrewd businessman and purchased things for a lower price than the ordinary market value, then he was allowed to keep the extra profit for himself. As we read these verses, be sure to keep this in mind so it will make better sense as to what is being said. If a steward used thrift and was careful with his lord's money, then he could save money for the household and also gain a substantial profit for himself. Likewise, it was possible for an unjust steward to waste away his master's money and not provide properly. This could happen from reckless buying or perhaps keeping dishonest accounts. If you've done much business in the world, you find all sorts of illegal and unethical things that

go on with kickbacks and bribes. Apparently, this man was one who had not managed his master's money properly. The steward was faced with the possibility of losing his job and had to do something about it. In verse 3 he questions what he is going to do if he loses this job.

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

Luke 16:5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

Luke 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

The first thing the man does is to seek out those who owed money to his master, and he cuts the debt down that these others may pay up a portion of the money. Sort of a liquidation of accounts receivable that was old and unpaid. By doing so, he was losing his portion of the profit, but gaining back the original money for the master. By doing this, he would be in favor to those who were the debtors if he was relieved of his stewardship.

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The master of the steward commends him for doing things wisely. Jesus takes this time to tell us that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. We need to recognize that we are no match for the wolves out in the marketplace. Sometimes God's children are more worried about the 'right now' than what blessings might be awaiting us if we invested our time and money into the Lord's kingdom. We need to look daily to the Lord for our provision, but we should be liberal givers that the Lord might be glorified and will give us treasures in heaven.

Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Jesus speaks of making friend by the right use of money. (mammon) This is what we do when we use our money to spread the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Money we put into those special envelopes designated for a missionary that is above our tithe are savings we are building up to the glory of God. In verse 10, a very real truth is taught. Jesus say that if we are faithful in the little things, then we will be faithful in the big things.

If we aren't faithful in the least, we won't be of the large things either. Sort of goes back to the teaching in Accounting 101. If you take care of the pennies, the dollars will always be right. So true in the work of the Lord. So what is the least thing? Is it being faithful to the secondary church gatherings, going on visitation, witnessing at work, maybe calling a friend who is sick? I don't know what is least important, but God wants us to be faithful in the least. He says if we can't be faithful with the money, how can God entrust the true spiritual blessings to us? A man who is faithful in giving his money will be faithful in other things. Those who love money will be unkind and evil in other ways also.

Matthew Henry said this about being faithful in the least.

The riches of this world are the *less*; grace and glory are the *greater*. Now if we be unfaithful in the less, if we use the things of this world to other purposes than those for which they were given us, it may justly be feared that we should be so in the gifts of God's grace, that we should receive them also in vain, and therefore they will be denied us: *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much*. He that serves God, and does good, with his money, will serve God, and do good, with the more noble and valuable talents of wisdom and grace, and spiritual gifts, and the earnest of heaven; but he that buries the *one talent* of this world's wealth will never improve the *five talents* of spiritual riches. God withholds his grace from covetous worldly people more than we are aware of. [2.] The riches of this world are *deceitful* and *uncertain*; they are the *unrighteous mammon*, which is hastening from us apace, and, if we would make any advantage of it, we must bestir ourselves quickly; if we do not, how can we expect to be entrusted with spiritual riches, which are the only *true riches*? v. 11. Let us be convinced of this, that those are *truly* rich, and *very* rich, who are rich in *faith*, and rich *towards God*, rich in Christ, in the promises, and in the earnest of heaven; and therefore let us lay up our treasure in them, expect our portion from them, and mind them in the first place. i

iHenry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

It is impossible to serve two masters. We choose to either make God our master or we follow after Satan. You will love one and hate the other. Jesus is teaching here that if you love money, it is not likely that you will really love God as you should.

II. Jesus Answers the Pharisees

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

The Pharisees were guilty of being covetous, and they deride the Lord for what He had taught. Jesus tells them the truth when He says they were trying to justify themselves before men. Note God is not impressed with what man thinks that should be highly esteemed. He says it is an abomination in the sight of God. God knows the heart and nothing is kept from Him. The world admires the man who has done well and accumulated a lot of wealth and lives in a beautiful mansion. But God looks on things totally differently. God's heart goes out to the man who will live for Him and use what he has to reach the lost.

Mat 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

Mat 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Mat 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Mat 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

God wants people who aren't looking for a lot of this world's goods, but are sold out to do His will.

Luke 9:57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Luke 9:58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Luke 9:59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Luke 9:60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

Luke 16:17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Jesus warns them that the kingdom of God is now preached. The gospel was now going forth since the time of John the Baptist, and Christ never came to destroy the law. Rather he came to fulfill it which none of us could do.

Gal 3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Gal 3:22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Gal 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

III. Jesus Speaks about Divorce

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Divorce is not a topic many want to talk about today, because it has become so prevalent in our society. While man has changed his views on marriage, God still has the perfect plan and we should stick to it. It says that if we put away our wives (or if a woman was to divorce her husband), then if we marry another, we commit adultery. Also whoever marries the woman who was divorced also commits adultery. The scripture is plain and we need to follow the vows we say when we get married. There are very few exceptions that will stand up when it comes to divorce, and there is NO COMMAND that we must divorce. God's desire is for every family to stay together if it is possible. Am I saying there will

be no troubles for a family if they are in church serving the Lord? No I am not. Trouble comes to us all, but if our focus is to please God, then we can work through almost any situation with God's help.

Mark 10:7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

Mark 10:8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Mark 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married

IV. The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luke 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Luke 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Luke 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

A couple of things need to be clear on this teaching. This is not a parable. A parable is a story that teaches a truth sort of like a fictional account is written in a novel. The difference is a parable is total truth from God and is totally true. This is a real account of an unnamed rich man and the beggar Lazarus. Parables never use proper names, and in this account we have two men named, Lazarus and Abraham. Secondly, Jesus was the most tender, loving, caring and gentle person who ever walked on this earth. This was not told to put a great fear into us, but to warn us of the consequences of ignoring salvation.

Most everyone will agree that there is a heaven after this life, but not many want to believe there is a hell. Believe me, there are both places. And there are MANY more references to hell than heaven in the scriptures, making it clear that God is warning us that we must be prepared for the life after death. Death is certain, and after that the judgment. All of us will face either the Judgment Seat of Christ or the Great White Throne Judgment. Jesus in these verses was not attempting to portray human suffering beyond the grave without a reason. And the reason is clear, we must be prepared to meet the Lord.

Heb 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Heb 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Job in the oldest book of the bible put forth a question about death.

Job 14:10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

We can not totally answer this question without assistance from God, but we know all men and women spend eternity either in paradise or in the flames of hell. Jesus has come down to redeem fallen man, and he relays this story to these people that they might know that we must be saved. Jesus did not begin this story with "Hear a parable". Rather he says "*There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*". This was about a real account of this man and the beggar Lazarus who sit at the master's table seeking crumbs to eat. Jesus knew both men. He knew how they had lived, and he knew what happened to each after they died.

The rich man did not go to hell for being rich, nor did Lazarus go to heaven for being poor. One was saved, and the other was lost. This unnamed rich man had lived for self and ignored two of the great commandments which are to "Love God first" and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." While the man lived, he had the best of things here on earth. He had no want for material things. The beggar Lazarus, whose name means 'God is my help', was a man of faith. He was a true son of Abraham as are all who know Christ as Lord and Savior. I suppose friends or family members brought the poor man to the rich man's gate hoping that he might receive sufficient alms to nourish him and prolong his life. The dogs showed more concern for the man than the rich man did, as it says they licked his wounds as he lay by the gate. Perhaps the rich man never even heard that Lazarus died. At best he had a simple burial. But as Jesus pulls

back the veil of time, we see when Lazarus died, a convoy of angels waited to take his spirit into the bosom of Abraham, the father of the faithful.

There was some time between the deaths, but finally the rich man died, and he was buried. Most likely he had a fine funeral with many mourners and the best of everything to honor the lifeless clay that lay in the casket. A lifeless body that housed a selfish spirit and cared little or nothing for the things of God. Even as this funeral is going on, the rich man is in the flames of hell being tormented. Some say that there will never be such a place. That a loving God would never do this to a lost soul. Believe me, God wants everyone to go to heaven. He has paid the price for each soul by sending His son to Calvary to pay for our sin debt. The debt has been paid, but we as individuals must come to God to accept that gift. God does not force salvation onto anyone. In the Greek, there are different words that are translated into 'hell.' One is 'Hades' which is the grave, "Gehenna" which refers to the final abode of the lost. But however you try to read this verse and change it around, the man was still in the flames of hell and in torments. He first died, and when he lifted up his eyes, he was in torments. We learn two things here:

1. Spirits out of the body are perfectly conscious and able to converse with one another.
2. There is recognition in the unseen world.

Even the lost can look across and see the saved in paradise, but there is a great gulf established and it is impossible for either side to pass to the other.

In his distress, the rich man prays from hell and asks that a drop of cold water be placed on tip of his tongue. Prayers from hell are not answered. Abraham replies "Son, remember that thou in they lifetime..." What a horrible place to be.. in flames and remembering every sin that was committed and not repented of for all eternity. You most likely would remember all the gospel messages you heard but ignored. Sin has a price, but thanks be to God that Jesus has paid that price when we come to Him for salvation.

Luke 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

Luke 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Isn't this something? A lost man in hell suddenly has a mind for missions. He remembers his five brothers who are still on earth and begs that Lazarus be sent back to deal with them about salvation. He does not want them to come into this place of torment.

Luke 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Luke 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Luke 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This man wants better for his family. He doesn't want them to wind up like him. Jesus died for all six of these brothers, but many will not hear the gospel, much less repent and be saved. He tells the lost man that that they have Moses and the prophets. He says... "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." He tells him that if they won't hear the gospel, they wouldn't be persuaded if one from the dead came. Today, one from the grave has risen, and He is there urging the lost to come to Him. There is no escape of death and the judgment. Be ready, or you will have to be separated from God forever.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.