

Week 4: Parables Unique to the Gospel of Luke: The Unjust Steward *Luke 16:1-13*

A challenging parable – to understand AND to implement once understood!!!!

Context: Luke 15 – parable of the lost & found. Consider the END of the parable...

Father and Younger son feasting (he had been lost outside the house)

Older Brother (at one time inside the house ‘serving’) is now outside the house – unwilling to associate with his younger brother!

Luke 16 is an elaboration on the OLDER SON from Luke 15!! HIS wastefulness when he was INSIDE the house!

Cp. Luke 16:1 and Luke 15:13 – BOTH were wasters (same Greek word!) – but which one will be in the Kingdom?

The younger for sure (feasting)

See also Matthew 21:28-31 – two sons – only 1 in the Kingdom!

In Luke 16 it’s not a Father-Son relationship but a Master-Steward relationship – perhaps that’s how the Older Son felt in Luke 15 – he was ‘in the house’ but never connected with his Father in a meaningful way!

How can we be ‘in the house’ and yet all the while ‘wasting our master’s goods’??!!

Think about ALL we have been given. Do we keep it to ourselves, or do we share it in service to others?

How can we ‘waste’ our master’s goods, while thinking we are “OK” – in the ecclesia?!

Ex. time and energy spent on SELF indulgence! Are we selfish or selfless??

1. Intro: Key Points & Main Lessons

We **will** all give account of our “stewardship”. (How should we react when we ‘mess up’?)

We **cannot** serve two masters! (Choose this day whom ye shall serve!)

2. The Parable (Luke 16)

v. 1-2 ‘rich man’= God. Cp. Husbandmen of Vineyard.

‘steward’: 3623 oikonomos - a house-distributor (i.e. manager), or overseer – fig. ‘preacher of gospel’ Cp. Joseph and Daniel.

v. 3 ‘dig’ – See Luke 6:48 (for a foundation) and Luke 13:8 (to help the fig tree produce fruit). Only other places used!

(This is a positive thing but means hard work... Are you willing to DIG??)

‘beg’ – See Luke 11:9-13 – used of a son asking blessing from a father!

(Another GOOD thing...Are you willing to ask - humbly???)

This man had no desire to humble himself, change his way, make amends, or seek forgiveness!

This **could** have been an alternate response after getting ‘caught’?

(As stewards we will all make mistakes – the key is what we do AFTER wasting our master’s goods!)

v. 4-7 This man turns to his own (deceitful) ingenuity instead of to his Lord!

The creditors were in debt to God = sinners in need of forgiveness! **This man ‘cut their debt’!**

Do our words or actions in the house cause others to see their sins as less serious than they are?

These creditors left the Master truly unforgiven – but thinking they had paid their debt! End result? Eternal death!

Note: God does not ‘reduce debt’ (20% or 50%), He FORGIVES it (100%)!!!

The Unjust Steward was not manifesting his Master! He was WASTING his Master’s goods!!

See Ezekiel 13:22; Jeremiah 23:16-17

“bill” = gramma = scripture (2 Timothy 3:15 – “All Scripture...”)!! Usually used of the Law.

They were ‘reducing’ God’s word to fit their own desires! Ex. ‘Corban Law’ – Mark 7:11

The Pharisees reduced God’s Law to a set of rules they thought they could keep!

We should never add to or delete from God’s Word!

We could do this by ignoring parts of scripture that don’t fit our view, or by adding our own opinion!

2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2 Do not handle God’s Word deceitfully!

v. 8 “Commended” – like the man who did not use his pound, Jesus rebukes the man based on his own opinion or perspective on the situation (cp. Luke 19:22). How did that work out for him?

This comment is an ironic commendation. It is said **facetiously**!!

“Wise” = shrewd. He knew how to ‘play the game’ – the question is: Are we playing God’s game or Men’s?

Note: There is no indication given in the Parable whether the man’s scheme worked. Do you think that doing deals with schemers will ever work? (cp. Jacob & Laban) If you cheated your employer/spouse for the benefit of someone else, could that person ever trust you? Or you them? Not likely! The very act of commending him publically revealed his dishonesty to the world! Who would take him in now!!!?

‘**their** everlasting habitations’ = eternal death!!

Recall the connection to the Prodigal Son (the waster) – he had made ‘friends of the mammon of unrighteousness’ – how did that work out for him? (Luke 15:16 – no one gave to him! Where did all his ‘friends’ go?). He ended up feeding swine – and would have been left there FOREVER!!

There is only ONE way to recover ourselves after ‘wasting’ our master’s goods...HUMBLY return to the Father!

The lesson for us is that if we really believe the Kingdom is soon coming – how are we preparing?!

See 1 John 3:1-3 – we have a hope that should cause us to want to purify ourselves by God’s influence in our lives!

v. 9 - “Make yourself friends...” – this must have also been said facetiously or tongue in cheek.

“unrighteous mammon” = that which is fleeting and temporary = our life now. (Jesus SAID we can’t serve God and mammon – he is NOT contradicting himself here! **Cannot** serve God and Mammon! see Luke 16:13)

James 4:4 “... the **friendship of the world is enmity with God?**”

4. Lessons and Conclusions from this parable

Rom. 6:12-13 - Decide now – who are you going to serve?

King Sin who pays wages of Death? Or Christ the King who gives the GIFT of Eternal Life?

Conclusion: **Matthew 24:45-51** – ONLY two types of Stewardship:

1. Faithful: watching, busy serving OTHERS, ...
2. Unfaithful: self-serving, abusive, ...

The type of steward you are NOW will determine your ‘everlasting habitation’ THEN!!

ARE THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES UNJUST STEWARDS?

Squandered the inheritance	Ezekiel 34:21-23 – scattered the flock – God will set up a good shepherd who will feed and care for them. Luke 20:9-16 – God wanted the fruit from the vineyard but they kept beating the servants and sending them away.
About to lose their stewardship	Luke 20:9-16 – vineyard is God’s inheritance – see the heir come and want to kill him so that they can seize the inheritance
Ashamed to beg	Ashamed to ask Jesus about real salvation or admit they needed help – thought they were the religious teachers. John 9:40 – “Are we blind also? If ye were blind ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” Matthew 23:13 – ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Blind leaders of the blind.
Didn’t want to dig	Weren’t putting in the effort to lay a foundation and investigate whether Jesus was the real Messiah – didn’t find out where he was born – or see the signs that indicated who he was – therefore weren’t preparing God’s nation to accept Jesus as the Messiah and find a way to produce the fruit God required. Mark 11:13-14 “No man eat fruit of them hereafter forever” – the barren fig tree.
Trying to win the people to keep their own position	Luke 16:15 – justify yourselves before men John 11:49-51 – it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not.”
Marking down debt	Corban laws Mark 7:7-13 – “teaching for doctrines the commandments of me... reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition...make the word of God of none effect through your tradition.
Serving the mammon of unrighteousness	Luke 16:14 – the Pharisees also who were covetous...
Unfaithful in the least so won’t be trusted in the Kingdom	Luke 13:28 – you will see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob...in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.
Everlasting habitations??	Luke 13:34-35 – Behold your house is left unto you desolate: