

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

Wise Use of Tainted Wealth

Luke 16: 1-18

In Luke, chapter sixteen, Jesus tells one of the most interesting and debated stories of His entire ministry, a story that has nearly as many interpretations as interpreters, and runs the gamut of meaning and analogy. It is in the Bible, however, and comes from the teachings of Jesus Himself, so we know that it has a moral argument and makes a point consistent with all of His other teaching.

I. The Basics of The Message

- A. This is PRIMARILY a story about wise management of wealth
- B. It is also a story about greed and covetousness
- C. And it is a story about the nature of money and worldly wealth in general
- D. Before any attempt can be made to understand what Jesus is really saying, these key points must become firmly fixed in our minds

II. The Narrative of the Unrighteous Manager

- A. The day of reckoning arrives
- B. The dilemma of a proud and lazy man
- C. A scheme is devised that may solve the problem while hedging his bet
- D. The surprising response of the owner/master

III. The Application to the Disciples

- A. The righteous use of inherently unrighteous "mammon"
- B. Faithfulness as a principle of life and character
- C. Divided loyalties and the plain truth about money and wealth
- D. A truly startling statement: what God values and what He abhors
- E. Twisting the law of God to suit your own interest

We live in this world with its economies and cultures. We cannot live without money or the things it buys. But we are to be aware that, while we are IN the world, we are not OF this world. The inherently ungodly nature of the world's attitudes toward wealth and money can actually be turned around in the Kingdom with eternal reward and blessing if we use our wealth, be it great or small, in wise and godly ways.

Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager. The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.' And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

"He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the manager (steward) actually doing when he reduces the amount owed to the master?
2. Why do you think the master praises the manager for his shrewd handling of his predicament?
3. What bearing does this story have on the Pharisees? On the disciples?
4. Why does Jesus suggest that mammon (money & wealth) is basically unrighteous? What makes it tainted?
5. What can we, as followers of Jesus, do to sanctify what has been given to us as God's managers?
6. What is so startling about Jesus' statement in v.15? In what ways does this apply to this story and to other aspects of life?

NOTES

unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.

"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."

Luke 16: 1-18 NASB

But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:9-10 NASB

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