**Use Money to Gain Friends**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 16:1-15

**The Big Idea**

Jesus invites us to use the wealth God gives us to bless others. While wealth is a temporary possession that doesn’t last forever, we can use it in strategic ways to bless others in ways that do have an eternal impact on them.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. The parable of the shrewd manager is a notoriously confusing parable. What was the most helpful idea from Sunday’s message that helped open the meaning of that parable for you?

2. On Sunday we talked about the idea of using our money and possessions strategically to make an impact on others for eternity. Can you think of an example when you were strategic in using your money/possessions to make an impact? Or can you think of someone else who was shrewd and strategic in how they used their money (or a specific possession) to impact others?

3. As you consider your own story, your own gifts and passions, and the ways God has worked in your life, how might that inform the kinds of ministries you give to? That is, what issues and causes are particularly close to your heart that you want to invest in?

4. After considering Jesus’ teaching on money and possessions over the past two weeks, what is your next step as an individual or family? (e.g. it may be to read a book, to have a conversation with your spouse about finances, to identify an organization to give to, to sell a possession, to commit to a regular pattern of giving, to work on getting out of debt, etc.)

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introductory comments on wealth

A. Notice the presence of the Pharisees (v. 14-15)

 1. They loved to combine personal piety with a pursuit of wealth

 2. Likewise the church in America pursues this dangerous combination

B. Wealth so quickly asserts itself as a master (v. 13)

 1. Wealth quickly becomes not just something we have but something that has us

2. We start asking wealth to provide what only God can provide (security, satisfaction, and significance)

 C. But wealth is just stuff that has been entrusted to us (v. 10-12)

 1. Relatively speaking, wealth is just a “little thing” (v. 10)

 2. And our money is actually “someone else’s property” (God’s)—v. 12

 3. We’ve been entrusted with God’s stuff and are called to manage it faithfully

II. The parable of the shrewd manager

A. A rich man: He is a wealthy landowner who is a creditor

B. A Manager

1. He has been entrusted to run the master’s business

2. The potential loss of his job represents a profound crisis: lose job, lose home, lose social status, thrown out on the streets

3. The manager is not a person to emulate in many was

-He’s irresponsible, lazy, proud, self-centered, and dishonest

4. But Jesus invites us to be like him in one way: he is shrewd

C. The Manager’s plan

1. He realizes he has a very short window of opportunity before he has to give an account and is kicked out. He still has his master’s money, so he uses it to gain friends who will feel obligated to welcome them into their homes once he’s thrown out into the streets

2. The master commends him for this shrewdness (v. 8). The master isn’t necessarily happy for what’s happened, but as a shrewd businessman himself, he can appreciate how the manager saw an opportunity and made the most of it.

D. The point of the parable

1. Our situation is very similar to the manager’s: Like him, we have a very short window of time (our lives) before the money runs out and we have to give an account (when we die), but we can use the master’s (God’s) money in this short time to use it to invest in people so that they welcome us into their eternal homes (so they are happy to see us in eternity because of the ways we used God’s money to bless, provide for, and impact them for God’s kingdom).

2. Jesus wishes we were as shrewd in making the most of our opportunities to impact people for eternity as people in this world are in making the most of opportunities to get ahead in this life (v. 8b)

3. So, wealth is just stuff. It’s not eternal. But we have the opportunity to use God’s stuff to bless people and make an eternal impact on their lives.

D. Living the parable today

1. How can you use your possessions strategically to impact people for God’s kingdom?

 a. How can you use your home to bless people?

 b. How can you use other possessions to bless people?

c. What possessions can you give away to others? Which can you sell in order to give the money away to bless others?

 2. How can you use your money strategically to impact people?

 a. Consider specific people in your life whom God may want you to give to?

 b. Consider organizations who are doing “shrewd” work in the world?

1) Types of organizations: education, justice, evangelism, poor and needy, etc.

2) What passions has God placed in your heart and how might that inform where you give?