

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Parable of the Unjust Steward

Last time...3 Parables of the Lost

1. Sheep
2. Coin
3. Sons

A teaching of our Father's love for each of us

This time...the Parable of the Unjust Steward

We will be in Luke 16

Sections of the Parable

the parable	v1-8
the moral/point	v9
the application	v10-13
the reaction	v14-15

v1-2 unto His disciples...steward...wasted his goods:

Turning His attention from the Pharisees,
the primary audience of the 3 Parables of the Lost, because they were
murmuring that He was eating with publicans and sinners,
Jesus directs this next teaching to His disciples

A rich man has a hired overseer of his house and possessions

ala Potiphar had Joseph

Key difference between Joseph (shadow of Jesus Christ) and this fictitious
steward: faithfulness

The steward in Jesus' parable is dishonest – an embezzling thief

The rich man has on good authority that his steward is stealing from him

Num 32:23

The rich man calls the steward and demands an accounting of his stewardship
Because...You're fired!

v3-4 What shall I do:

The steward, knowing he is busted and out of a job, wonders what he will do now.
He is too old to get a construction job, do manual labor
He is too proud to beg

Then he has a bright idea...another scheme

Ah! I know!

As I prepare my accounting, I will gain the favor of my master's debtors.
I'll scratch their back today and they will scratch mine tomorrow.
After I give an accounting of my "performance" and am let go,
one of them will hire me!

The unjust steward is not trying to save his job,
he's scheming to get another job;
he has no repentance for his stealing

v5-7 How much owe...write:

The unjust steward gathers his master's debtors and makes self-serving deals to
the detriment of his master – he steals yet again.

The art of the deal...to his master's hurt and to his gain
Cooking the books, "creative" accounting

Done quickly, since the master is impatient for the accounting

Dishonesty and stealing piled atop dishonesty and stealing
The unjust steward is even more unfaithful...consistent with his character

v8 commended the unjust steward:

The rich man is nobody's fool, he sees/knows what the unjust steward did...so he
commends/applauds the unjust steward who just ripped him off yet again!

Wait! What?

The thief did wisely?

The rich man acknowledged that his ex-steward is a clever little rascal...
because of his self-seeking, worldly wisdom:

The unjust steward shrewdly used circumstances for self-gain, to achieve
his personal objective

Such a scheme would not have been thought of by a just steward

The children of the world (Eph 2:1-3)

- of the darkness
- of the devil
- of disobedience
- of God's wrath

are wiser in the ways of this fallen and cursed world than are the children of light

- of God
- of the kingdom of Light
- with a radically different worldview
- new creatures in Christ, the Light of the world and the Light of men
- no longer conformed to the world but transformed by the renewing of their minds – think and act differently
- of Godly wisdom, which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17)

To the unjust, all is fair in love and war and business

Not so to the just

So when a “game” is being played by the rules of the world, the unjust
“have an advantage”, and will take full advantage of the just

Now the moral/point of the parable

v9 Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness:
I say unto you...Thus saith the LORD

[record player scratches the record]

Again...Wait! What?

What is Jesus teaching?!

Are we to be like children of the world/darkness/devil/disobedience/wrath,
money-loving, money grubbing, everything is all about the money?

Are the children of the holy God NOT to be holy?

Clearly not, for that would be a major contradiction of Scripture

Scripture interprets Scripture,

man corrupts Scripture

Sound doctrine is the entire counsel of God,

doctrines from one verse are always errors

Covetousness of the things of the world is idolatry, to be dead in our lives
(Col 3:5)

We are to flee idolatry/covetousness (1 Cor 10:14)

Idolatry is of the flesh, which is contrary to the Spirit (Gal 5:16-17, 20)

Money is amoral, neither holy nor unholy
Out of the heart of man comes that which defiles a man
The love (covetousness) of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10)

Note: If this is your 1st time to worship here, ask anyone who has been around for a while how often I talk about money – only when it is what Jesus is talking about

The unjust steward was not commended because of his self-serving wickedness but because he took advantage of his present situation/opportunity to ensure his future.

So, Jesus' point is that with

- a new heart, a heart after God's own heart
- Godly wisdom

we are to use the money of this world/kingdom for the next world/Kingdom, when the just are separated from the unjust

If the teaching of Jesus sounds odd, remember:

Matt 10:16 I send you forth (into the world) as sheep in the midst of wolves, be therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves
meek and mild and gentle...in the midst of fierce and cunning hunters/carnivores
innocent but prudent (vs naïve or foolish),
aware of our surroundings

John 17:11a, 15-16 “in” the world but not “of” (belong to) the world

Ps 24:1 The earth and the fullness thereof (all money) are God's
1 Cor 4:1 It is required of stewards to be faithful

Deut 8:11-18a LORD is he that gives us power to get wealth

Therefore, use worldly wealth for eternal purposes, for the Kingdom of God, rather than for the purposes of self or this world, which is fading away

We are going the way of all the earth, we are going to die,
pass from this physical realm into the spiritual realm one way or another
Our time on this earth is limited to a number of days.
The children of the light are strangers here, just passing through.

So what are we doing to prepare for that future?
Are we taking advantage of the opportunities that we have now to set ourselves up for eternity?

v10 faithful...least...much:

He that is faithful with that which is least...money...
is also faithful with much...the heavenly things of God

The flip is as true...not faithful with money is not faithful with heavenly things

In God's heart and mind, man's precious money is...the least (not the end!)
And man needs a new heart and a renewed mind to agree with Him

v11-12 faithful...unrighteous mammon...another man's:

In His application of the parable to His disciples,
Jesus asks two very penetrating questions:

1. Therefore, if you have NOT been faithful (God's heart and mind) with unrighteous/deceptive money, why would I trust you with true riches?

1 Tim 6:6-10 money

- breeds discontent
- stays behind, in this world because is of this world
- temptation and a snare leading to destruction/perdition
- deceiving, bringing sorrow vs joy

Ps 37:16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked.

Ps 49:6-7 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him

Prov 11:28 He that trusts in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Ps 62:10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*.

Prov 23:5 Wilt thou set your eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

Eccl 5:13 There is a sore evil *which* I have seen under the sun, *namely*, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

vs

Eph 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ

Prov 8:18 Riches and honour *are* with me; *yea*, durable riches and righteousness.

Prov 11:4 Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Prov 13:7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet *hath* nothing: *there is* that maketh himself poor, yet *hath* great riches.

Prov 22:4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.

2. If you have not been faithful with My Father's stuff, why would He give you your own stuff?

Rom 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;

Matt 16:27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be

v13 No servant can serve two masters:

Without exception...even Jesus!

Matt 4:8-10 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve**

No one can serve both God and mammon (false god/idol of material wealth)... it is impossible!

So which is it going to be, before whom will we bow?

Are we stewards of the Living God, faithful with His stuff to be used for His glory?
Are we slaves to money?

This is part of counting the cost of following Jesus and forsaking all for Him
(Luke 14:27-33)

v14 Pharisees...covetous:

The Pharisees were eavesdropping on what Jesus was saying...as always

They are lovers of money...idolatrous
They were self-indulgent, not faithful to God or in God's house...unjust stewards

And they "turned their nose up at" what Jesus taught

v15 justify yourselves...highly esteemed among men...abomination:

And Jesus calls them out on their wickedness

You religious elites justify your luxury and great wealth to the commoners you lord over with your

- white-washed outward appearance
- "holier than thou" self-righteousness

But you are not fooling God, only them and yourselves

God's truth: That which man esteems/worships
(Context: money, with its power and indulgences)
is an abomination ("idolatry") to Him

And it is seen/evident in our stewardship of all He has entrusted to us

James 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God

Eccl 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole of man

Application

Money, worldly wealth, is both power and bondage

The more money you have the more power you have

- over others
- to do what you want to do

The more money you have, the more money you want

The more stuff you have, the more you are in bondage to the stuff

Prov 30:7-9

Have known financial stress?

Have known times of plenty?

Both can lead to spiritual stress if money is mis-prioritized above the Lord

Mal 3:8-10

unjust stewards, stealing from their Master, challenged to “test” God

Not selfishly giving to get (heart of man), but selflessly giving to worship (heart of God)

Example God gave: 1st and Best/perfect (offerings)

All pointed forward to His gift, His First and Best/Perfect to us – His Son

1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us

And the example holds –

we give our 1st and best freely, willingly, in thanks of His First and Best

Jesus is our example and “Follow Me” is the call to every disciple

Matt 6:19-21

God’s perspective is eternal; save up eternal treasure

Be a just steward, not an unjust steward/Pharisee

Phil 4:17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account

Matt 24:42-47

Matt 25:21

Therefore, take advantage of present opportunities in this world to prepare for eternity

Invest in eternity now, while you have the opportunity, for there will be no such opportunities in eternity to invest!

Now is the only opportunity to invest in eternity

The Lord of all is calling His disciples to have His heart and mind regarding money
He is giving us the opportunity to invest (His money entrusted to us) in His kingdom
This is His “Retirement Account”...far greater ROI than any such account on earth

This calls for a lasting change in how we view and manage our finances –

- by faith
- with thanksgiving

That means being a faithful steward of our Father’s things:

- the first and best of our increase (which comes from Him)...
not the scraps or leftovers or nothing at all

“Finances” box in the Bulletin in context

- Why do we have Agape boxes?
 - NOT to pay our bills, which we do have
 - NOT out of obligation or debt
 - We worship the Lord of our increase with the 1st and best of the increase He has provided
If we don’t, we worship Self as our provider!
 - To be a part of what He is doing here, in this Body, this household of faith
Just like a father does with his child, our hand on His (Phil G story)
- investments
 - Egypt
 - Honduras
 - etc
- e.g. Jerry D and Egypt mission trip in June

Righteousness/Faithfulness

- knows no degree –
 - we are or we are not
 - quantity is not the issue
- declared by how we handle God’s stuff (everything)
- on trial here on earth...the ROI/rewards are in heaven!