

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 16:1–13

Introduction

- <https://mymodernmet.com/declaration-of-independence-found/> - The find of a lifetime! We all want to “find” something that sets us on a path of financial independence.
- What would you do if you came into a lump sum of cash? Pay off your house? Buy a new car? Go on that dream vacation?
- Maybe better question - if you came into a large sum of money, what would your newfound wealth demonstrate about your heart?
- Jesus talks about money a lot - Parable of rich fool - [Luke 12](#) - Approx. 40 parables of Jesus in Gospels - 11 deal with money in some way. Why? We struggle with how to manage wealth.
- Do you struggle with money? What does the way you spend your money reveal about your heart? About your relationship with Jesus? About what matters most to you?
- Of the 11 parables that deal with money, this one is the hardest one to understand. Difficult but helpful if you struggle to use what God has given you for His purposes.
- Three lessons from this parable to help us live shrewdly for God’s Kingdom purposes in a wicked world.

The Parable

- Jesus speaks to His disciples - He's called them to give up everything to follow Him. They'll follow Him in a world that is obsessed with stuff.
- Jesus just told a story to the Pharisees/tax collectors/sinners about waste. Another story about waste, but this story is much different than the story of the prodigal sons.
- The story of the prodigal sons - a story with unexpected twists and turns. The story of the dishonest manager - maybe even a more unexpected story from Jesus. A story that has caused Bible scholars to scratch their heads for years in an attempt to figure out why Jesus told this story.
- A rich man had a manager who oversaw all of his possessions and business transactions. Common in an ancient world when wealth tied up in land and possessions. A "financial manager" - a cushy job - trusted by the owner. Owner never looked over the manager's shoulder.
- Over time, manager begins to squander owner's possessions. "Wasted" his possessions - same Greek word used in story of prodigal sons. Owner wants an account of what manager has done with possessions - fires him.
- Manager begins to panic. Tough to get fired from a job - especially a cushy job. Going to be a hard to find a job like the one he had. Not strong enough to dig - shirt and tie kind of guy - hasn't hit the gym in quite a while - he's going to struggle with a manual labor job. And... too proud to beg. Doesn't want to humiliate himself.
- Instead, a plan to secure his future. Goes to the homes of people who were in debt to his master and begins striking deals. Strikes one man's debt in half, knocks 20% off another man's debt. Ingenious plan with a problem: Acting on behalf of the owner but doesn't have the master's permission to cut the debt. Dishonest manager simply looking out for his best interest and not the interest of his master. Once he's without a job,

he'll come back to these homes and they'll welcome him in because he has cut their debt.

- vs. 8 - UNEXPECTED. The master praises the dishonest manager! You would think the master would be furious! NOTE: the master does not praise the manager because he's dishonest. Jesus doesn't tell this story to condone dishonesty. The master praises the man for his shrewdness; his ingenuity. In a really bad situation for the manager, he figured out way to secure his future. He didn't whine. He didn't beg for his job back. He put his head down and devised a plan to make sure his future was taken care of.
- Jesus to the disciples (vs. 8) - The people of this world are more shrewd than children of light. The point: Many lost people are often thinking about their future - how to get ahead - how to make a buck - how to secure the things they want. Many lost, and Christians, act shrewdly to get what they want out of this fleeting world. However, many Christians don't think at all about their eternal future and how they should live shrewdly for the eternal Kingdom of God.
- Eternity is at stake for the lives of so many people. Followers of Jesus, put your hand to the plow and get to work. Be more concerned with the eternal business of Kingdom of God than you are the temporal business of this world. Three lessons:

Eternal business is more urgent than earthly business.

- Eternity is at stake. It's at stake for you. Have you settled your own eternal destiny by placing your faith in Jesus Christ?
- Does the way that you live out your faith demonstrate that you believe the eternal business of God is more urgent than earthly business?

- vs. 9 - “Make friends for yourselves by means of worldly wealth... that they may welcome you...” The shrewd manager used what he had to make friends for his future. How are using what you have to build everlasting relationships?
- Or, use the resources you have to affect lives for eternity so that when you step into eternity you will be welcomed by people whose lives you have invested in.
- Three heart questions:
 - **What future are you most concerned about?** Your earthly future or eternal future? Most every decision you make demonstrates what future your most concerned about. Jesus: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” [Luke 12:34](#).
 - **What gets your shrewd efforts?** The future you are most focused on is the future that gets your best efforts. If the future your focused on is a future of financial success/freedom worldly success, that will get your best efforts. What gets your best creativity? Your best ingenuity? The best of your talents? Things for your gain or things for Kingdom gains?
 - **Does the way you invest in your relationships demonstrate that you care about their eternal future?** Do you use people to get what you want out of life, or are you investing the Gospel in the lives of people?

Eternal business requires faithfulness even when you have little.

- vs. 10 - 11 - simple principle - No matter the resources God has given you, be faithful with them.
- Our assumption: “I’ll be faithful when I have more to be faithful with..” e.g., when I have more money, time, talents, etc.

- If you can't be faithful in the little you have now, you're likely not going to be faithful in the big stuff. E.g. - I can't give to my church right now because I don't make much money. Or, too many financial obligations. I have teenagers. I have to pay for school events, car insurance, etc. Or, I'm a college student. I just want a free meal. How can I give when I'm always looking for a free meal. Your lack of shrewdness in how you use your resources for God's Kingdom purpose isn't a cash flow issue. It's a heart issue. If you came into a lump sum of wealth, you're likely not going to start giving then because it's not where your heart is.
- Specifically dealing with money/wealth in this passage, but you can apply it to all the resources God has given you. E.g., if you're not giving your time to the Lord now, you're not going to give Him time when your schedule frees up. Or, if you're not using your talents/abilities for Him now, you're not going to use them when you have more opportunity to use them.
- Bottom line, if you're not faithful in the little things now, why would expect God to give you more resources?
- **Start investing in God's Kingdom business now.** What are you really waiting for? (Invest in His church, other ministries, individuals that need help, etc.)
- **Start investing shrewdly.** Do what it takes. Get creative. If you believe that eternal business is urgent, what can you do right now to free up resources to invest in His eternal Kingdom? What can you sell? Where can you adjust your budget? Where can you free up time? It's likely not that you can't use your resources for God's Kingdom, it's probably that you don't want to make the necessary sacrifice to honor God.
- **Trust that heart often follows habit.** Being faithful now means forming God honoring habits now. Walk in obedience now and see how God gives you a heart for generosity, for His Kingdom business.

Eternal business requires that you serve one master.

- vs. 13 - No servant can serve two masters... You cannot serve both God and money.
- How do you know if your master is the God of all creation or your stuff?
 - **What are you always thinking about?** Consumed with thoughts about your stuff? How to get more money? How to get out of the debt you've created because of your materialism? Consumed with how to maintain/care for all the stuff you have? Do you think more about the stuff you want than you think about your walk with the Lord? Than you think about holiness? How to serve Him? Could reveal that your master is your stuff.
 - **What are you always talking about?** Do you talk more about your stuff or God? Always talking about your house, that thing you want to get, that car you just bought, that thing you worked so hard to buy? Or, do you talk more about Jesus and His work in your life? What do the words you speak say about who controls your life?
- Here's what I've found out as I've been faithful with what God has given me and as I've allowed God to be the Master of my life:
 - **Giving keeps me humble.** Good reminder that what I have belongs to God. Good reminder that He has blessed me and been faithful to me.
 - **Give has become a desire.** As I've habitually given because of what God has given to me, I want to give more. I desire to give. It's not just a habit/discipline. It's a desire.
 - **Giving is fun.** It's a joy to be a blessing. "It's more blessed to give than receive."

- **I don't miss what I give.** I never say, "I wish I wouldn't have been generous." I don't miss it.
- vs. 14 - 15: to Pharisees who loved money: God knows your heart. God knows your heart as well. This morning, be honest. Maybe your love for wealth, possessions, and stuff shows that you have a master that controls your life, and it's not God. Maybe this morning, you need to turn to Jesus once and for all. You need to realize what He has done for you.
- [2 Cor. 8:9](#) - Jesus became poor for your sake. The One who had everything stepped into this broken world as a humble servant born to a virgin and a carpenter. Lived as a wandering teacher with no place to lay His head, and went to a cross, died in your place, only to be put in a borrowed tomb to rise from the dead. Jesus gave it all for you, so you could be born again.
- If Jesus has given everything for you, why wouldn't you want to give everything for Him? Will you trust Him today? Will you commit to open-handed living for Him today?