

FROM 6-26-04
LESSONS FROM THE UNJUST STEWARD 4-9-17

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

Luke 16:5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

Luke 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

This past week God impressed upon my heart to preach a message about this unjust steward. This is a great parable, but very perplexing to many people. What is the lesson Jesus is trying to teach?

As we read the story, all seems straight forward and simple.

Here we have a steward who wasted his Lord's goods. A steward is sort of a business manager, a person who sees that rent is collected and manages the affairs of his boss. He doesn't own anything, he is just a manger of someone else's property.

He is accused of having wasted his master's goods.

What was it he did? Maybe he was slothful in his duties. Maybe he was embezzling money and goods. He was involved in mismanaging things.

So a reckoning day came where he would be called into account.

The master said, give me an account, show me what has been owed, what has been collected, and where it was spent, and for what purposes.

When the unjust steward knew he was going to have to give an account, he resolved to quickly make friends with his Lord's debtors, hoping that when he was cast out of his stewardship they would show him some favor and kindness.

What is most baffling in this whole account is why did his lord (his boss not the LORD GOD) commend him when his day of reckoning come? And then our Lord Jesus uses this incident as an object lesson for us to learn from.

Consider the obvious lessons the Lord wants us to learn from this parable:

I. Lesson #1 EVERY STEWARD IS NOT THE OWNER OF WHAT HE IS ENTRUSTED WITH BUT IS RESPONSIBLE TO SOMEONE GREATER

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

A steward is accountable to the one who appointed him steward.
He is appointed as a steward.

The word steward may be awkward for us in our say and age. We can think of a steward as a property manager, or a guardian, maybe even a grounds keeper, a person employed to look after someones property. A caretaker etc.

This is an illustration of the day that Jesus used to teach a spiritual lesson. The lesson is addressed to his disciples.

We are all stewards of God. Everything we have is lent to us by God.

We are not our own, we don't really own anything. People have this idea that they have power and authority over things pertaining to us in this life.

We are only lent these things by God.

CONSIDER ALL THE THINGS GOD HAS MADE US STEWARDS OVER:

1. YOUR BODY HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU AND YOU ARE TO BE A GOOD STEWARD OVER IT

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

I Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

I Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

2. YOU ARE STEWARDS OF ALL THAT GOD HAS ENTRUSTED YOU WITH MATERIALLY

Every material thing that you have has been lent to you of God.

There is a great missionary story book that we used to read to our kids when they were young. It was entitled the Pineapple story. It was a story about a missionary who planted a pineapple grove in Dutch New Guinea and the natives kept stealing the pineapples. He kept getting angry at them, threatened to close down the medical clinic and missions store. But it was to no avail. The natives kept stealing the pineapples. Then he came to a Bible seminar on furlough and was challenged to surrender everything he had to God. Realizing that it was not his pineapple grove but God's he went back on the mission field and surrendered his pineapple grove to God. When the natives saw that he no longer got angry when they stole his pineapples they asked him what happened. When he told them he surrendered his grove to God they got scared! They didn't want to steal God's pineapples!

It would make all the difference in the world if we really believed that everything we have has been given to us from God. It is not ours but it is only lent to us by God!

List everything you think you own and do you realize all these things have been lent to you by God.

YOUR HOME.

YOUR VEHICLES.

YOUR PROPERTY.

YOUR GOODS.

We are but stewards.

3. WE ARE STEWARDS OVER THE MINISTRY GOD HAS ENTRUSTED US WITH.

I Peter 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

All the talents and abilities you have, have been entrusted to you by God himself. These gifts we are to use for His work and His ministry.

Through the years I have seen people take these gifts and use them for worldly gain and neglect the ministry of the Lord. Someday God is going to hold us accountable for this neglect.

Before I was a Christian I used my musical gifts to play the music of the world, in places of the world, never to sing God's praises and honor Him in God's church. In fact before I was a Christian my family would ask me to play the organ in church and I would say no! I don't do that kind of music.

After I got saved, it was not long afterward that I realized that I needed to dedicate that gift to the Lord. Now I use this gift for the Lord and if someone asks me to play music for a worldly activity I say I don't do that kind of music. I only play church music!

God gives certain gifts to his servants to be used for ministry. We ought to dedicate these gifts to the ministry and not desecrate them for worldly endeavors. It amazes me how so many people prostitute the gifts that God has given to them and use them in the world.

We are stewards of the gifts God has given to us. Use these gifts for ministering one to another.

God has entrusted me with a gift to communicate the Word of God. This has been entrusted to me after salvation. I use this gift for his service and ministry. The only reason anyone gets anything out of what I preach is because God gives me something to say.

Since the time God saved me, I have been trying to invest all that God has entrusted me with to further his ministry. So we are all stewards and have been entrusted with His goods.

ALL THAT WE HAVE.
ALL THAT WE ARE.
ALL HE HAS GIVEN US.
ALL HE HAS ENABLED US TO DO.
ALL THE GIFTS HE HAS ENTRUSTED US WITH.

WE ARE STEWARDS!!

There are many abilities God has given to us and all it would take is one little thing to cause us to lose these gifts.

Imagine Samson, the strongest man in the world, lost his great strength with one wave of God's chastening hand.

II. LESSON #2 EVERY STEWARD WILL HAVE A DAY OF RECKONING WHERE WE WILL BE JUDGED TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE DONE AS STEWARDS.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship;

The Lord over this steward set up a day of reckoning. A day of accountability!

WE ALL WILL HAVE TO STAND BEFORE OUR LORD, THE ONE WHO ENTRUSTED US WITH ALL THAT WE HAVE!

Someday we are going to have to give an account of our stewardship!

1. The unjust steward sought counsel within himself. Think it through. He knew in that day he was going to be in trouble!

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

He thought of his options, he knew he did wrong.
He knew he was guilty.
What was he to do.

In his mind there was no way to remedy the situation but to plan ahead as to how he would provide for himself, when his master relieved him of his stewardship.

Some say his was a thief, but if he was a thief than why was he worried about where he was going to live? He would be thrown in jail. He was unjust, wasteful, and neglectful.

It was not that he was a thief, it was that he was negligent.
He was wasteful and slothful.

NOTE: He said I cannot dig. Why not? He could not dig because he was lazy.

Note: To beg I am ashamed He was proud, and no doubt this is what led to his destruction. He thought himself above what he was. He was worthy of his position and secure.

2. He resolved to make friends and please those who may receive him. What was his concern?

Where he would live?
How he would be provided for?
Where he would get employment?

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

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How did he have the authority to determine amounts that can be written?

He called the debtors of his lord and gave them discounts on their debts.

I read this was the custom of the day.

A man who was a tax collector receives a benefit for receiving taxes.

He gets a commission and often in that day men who were not just would exact more than they should.

This is why tax collectors were so hated.

Maybe all that this steward did was forfeit his commission and made himself look good in the eyes of his creditors, and made his lord look good also.

Who is the good guy and who are the bad guys? The unjust steward was a bad guy turned good in the eyes of a bunch of people.

Mussolini was loved one day hated the next. When things were on the up he was loved, and when they were down he was hated.

What was the ruin of Truman's chances to win a second term as President?
He fired an American Hero, Douglas MacArther.

CONSIDER:

A steward has a lot of freedom to make choices about what he does with those things that were entrusted to him. He for many years wasted the goods that were entrusted to him. He did not look over them properly. He misused his position and stewardship. He was neglectful of his duties.

So too, we can abuse and misuse and neglect the gifts, talents and goods entrusted to us. We can start thinking that there will be no reckoning.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

This unjust Steward was able to get away with squandering and neglecting his duty as a steward for so long he thought there would be no day of reckoning.

So it is with sin in our lives. God will let you do what you want to do. The roof is not going to cave in, there is no eviction notice given. He doesn't just strike you dead. You neglect your duties as a steward gradually. Good habits as a good steward must be developed gradually over time. Bad habits as a bad steward are also developed gradually over time.

God wants you, as a steward, to be accountable. The church is His book of accountability. Through the church you are constantly reminded that you are nothing more than a steward. You are reminded to maintain accountability.

- A. **By tithing:** You are reminded that every dollar you make is given to you by God. He says I want to keep 10% of it for my purposes. This shows your stewardship.
- B. **Through Sobriety:** You are reminded that your body is not your own. You are going to be held accountable for what you do with it. Christians should abstain from drinking drugging, and immorality. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.
- C. **BY ASSEMBLING YOURSELF TOGETHER:** You are acknowledging that you are but a steward of your time. You are responsible to God.

III. THIS UNJUST STEWARD MADE UP FOR LOST TIME AND DID WISELY

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

1. Why was this unjust steward commended?

ONE COMMENTATOR WRITES:

The "Parable of the Unjust Steward" has been disconcerting to many Christians because of its apparent approval of dishonesty. Before we look at the Lord's application in verses 9-13, let's try to clear up some of the misunderstandings of verses 1-8 that have surrounded the story itself. First of all, it is important to notice that in verse 8 it was the master in the story, not the Lord Jesus Himself, who praised the unrighteous manager. The use of the word "lord", which can be confusing, but notice that the "l" is not capitalized.) Furthermore, the unrighteous manager was

not praised for his shady accounting procedures or squandering his boss's money. He was commended only for his prudent foresight in looking out for his own future.

The fact that the rich men do not appear in a favorable light in the rest of our Lord's dialogue in Luke 16 (see verses 14 and 19-31) may be a contextual indication that the rich man here does not represent God. Specifically, verse 8 seems to indicate that Jesus is not drawing a parallel between the rich man and God because he concludes that the people of this world (both master and manager) are very shrewd in their dealings and maneuverings with one another--specially when it comes to money.

He was commended because he did wisely, not because he did right.
He made himself look good in the eyes of the people and made his lord look good.

Remember, don't get this lord confused with the Lord. God did not commend him, this rich land owner did. No doubt he, himself, was a typical rich man.

How often it is that wicked men tolerate other wicked men because they further their own unjust causes. One thief is often a partner of other thieves.

Salvation Army, fellow in the band gave \$75.00 for a badge and a uniform and collects 200-300 in a day.

2. *What does Jesus say we should learn from this story?*
Jesus adds this commentary.

For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Matthew Henry Says:

There are 2 parables here that are not found elsewhere. The parable of the steward who used his position to further his selfish ends is another parable by contrast. The children of this world are clever and crooked in the use of money. They do it for their own selfish purposes. In contrast, the children of light do not exercise the same wisdom in the use of money for the cause of Christ in the world.

Make yourselves friends.

Jesus says, take note of how wisely this unjust steward acted for his own preservation and benefit.

He is saying, should not God's people look out for their eternal preservation and security and welfare, should we not be concerned how we will fare with our eternal master when we are called into question for our stewardship?

God's people go on their merry way in self security and a false sense of everything is all right with their stewardship.

IV. *Jesus uses this unjust Steward as an object lesson for his disciples to learn from.*
Lessons to learn:

What is the whole point of this parable?

It is talking about proper stewardship and how we handle money?

1. Jesus said to use your money to win the favour of those who can receive you into everlasting habitation.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Use your money and the power you have in your hand to give it away, etc., to procure the friendships of those who will be a benefit to you in heaven some day.

Some day we are all going to fail, we are all going to be called into question someday for the things we have done in the flesh.

Zacchaeus is an example... Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Luke 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham.

How we go on our merry way thinking all is fine:

THE UNJUST STEWARD DID NOT OWN A THING.
EVERYTHING HE HAD WAS HIS LORD'S AND HE WASTED IT.
HE USES WHAT STEWARDSHIP HE HAS LEFT TO DO SOME GOOD FOR HIMSELF BY SECURING THE FAVOR OF HIS LORD AND THOSE HE WAS GIVEN STEWARDSHIP OVER.

- A. HE WASTED IT BY BEING NEGLECTFUL OF HIS DUTIES.**
- B. HE WASTED IT BY NOT INVESTING PROPERLY FOR HIS LORDS BENEFIT.**
- C. HE WASTED IT BY NOT SEEING THAT BUSINESS WAS TRANSACTED PROPERLY.**

Maybe he thought all would be well because he was not stealing.
All was well because he wasn't abusive.

I see no sign here that he was going to be thrown in jail.
He was not going to be killed.
He was just going to be relieved of his duties as a steward.
He was going to suffer loss and humiliation.
His life was going to be hard.

But while there was still time and power in his hands to do something, this unjust steward made good for himself.

He wisely came up with a plan to provide for himself when the day of reckoning came.

- D. WHEN HIS RECKONING DAY COMES. HE RECEIVED A COMMENDATION, TO EVERYONE'S SURPRISE.**

Why was he commended?

He was commended because he did a wise thing.

He was commended because he made his lord look good in the eyes of his debtors.

He was commended because he made himself look good in the eyes of the people.

2. *Unlike the unjust steward Jesus teaches his disciples to be just.*

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

3. *We are to be stewards of our money so that we can be trusted with eternal riches.*

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

4. *Who do we serve?*

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Application Invitation:

We as children of light ought to take notice of the wisdom and diligence of this unjust steward in order to secure an earthly habitation. He sacrificed his commissions.

He seeks the favor of his Lord's servants and seeks to invest what stewardship he has left to secure himself a habitation for earth.

How about us? Are we concerned for our habitation in heaven???

We should be.

How are we investing for eternity?

Are we securing the favor of our Lord? How do we do this?

By making our Lord look good, and through your giving.

Matthew 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.