

Stewardship, Money, and Eternity

Jesus, during a Sabbath meal at the home of a Pharisee, turned the conversation toward two uncomfortable topics for many people: money and hell. Even though these subjects make many squirm, Jesus spoke about them openly. And personally, if you know where you're headed because of Jesus Christ, there's no reason to fear either one.

The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–13)

Still at the same Sabbath meal described in Luke 14, Jesus shifted His focus directly to His disciples. He told them a parable about a rich man and his steward (manager). This steward was accused of wasting the rich man's resources. So the master summoned him and said, "Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."

Facing unemployment, the steward thought to himself, *"I'm not strong enough to dig ditches, and I'm too ashamed to beg."* Then he came up with a plan: he called in his master's debtors and discounted their debts, hoping they would later owe him favors. One owed a hundred measures of oil; he told him, "Take your bill and write fifty." Another owed a hundred measures of wheat; he told him, "Write eighty."

Strangely, the master commended the dishonest steward—not for his corruption, but for his shrewdness. Jesus explained, *"The sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light"* (Luke 16:8 NKJV).

The point? The steward knew his present situation wasn't going to last, so he used his current opportunities to prepare for his future. In the same way, Jesus was telling His disciples: *Use your present resources wisely, knowing that this life isn't all there is. Use money for eternal purposes, investing in God's kingdom, so that when you leave this world, you'll be welcomed into everlasting habitations* (Luke 16:9).

Personal Application:

Everything you have—your money, your time, your talents—belongs to God. You are a **steward**, not an owner. And like the steward in the parable, you will one day give an account to God for how you managed His resources.

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV), *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

The question is: Are you using what God has entrusted to you to make an eternal impact?

Jesus urges us to lay up treasures in heaven now. Money is not evil in itself. It can be used for tremendous good—or wasted on temporary things. It's the wise and faithful steward who uses money to further the kingdom of God, to support missions, ministries, and to help others come to Christ. And one day in heaven, you may meet people who will say, *"Thank you! You helped send the one who shared Jesus with me."*

Bottom Line:

Take advantage of your opportunities *now* to set yourself up for *eternity*.

The Principle of Faithfulness (Luke 16:10–13)

Jesus continued:

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." (Luke 16:10 NKJV)

If you can't be trusted with small things like money—which is temporary and fleeting—how can you expect God to entrust you with true, eternal riches?

You can't serve two masters.

"You cannot serve God and mammon (money)" (Luke 16:13 NKJV).

You must choose: God or money, not both. Divided loyalty will eventually reveal itself.

Jesus Confronts the Pharisees (Luke 16:14–18)

The Pharisees, who loved money, sneered at Jesus' teaching. Jesus answered them sharply, saying, *"You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts"* (Luke 16:15 NKJV).

They looked holy on the outside but were full of greed inside.

Jesus reminded them that the Law and the Prophets pointed to the coming of the kingdom of God, and now that the kingdom was here, it demanded a wholehearted, agonizing (agonizomai) striving to enter it (Luke 16:16).

He also pointedly addressed their casual attitude toward divorce and remarriage, stating that whoever divorced and remarried without biblical grounds committed adultery (Luke 16:18)—a hard word they did not want to hear.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31)

Then Jesus told a story—not a parable—about two real people:

- A rich man who lived in luxury
- A poor beggar named Lazarus (not the brother of Martha and Mary) who sat at his gate, sick and hungry

Both died.

- Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom (a place of comfort for the righteous dead which existed before Jesus' death and resurrection).
- The rich man was buried and found himself in torment in Hades (hell).

The rich man, in agony, begged Abraham to send Lazarus to cool his tongue with a drop of water. But Abraham said, *"Son, remember..."*—pointing to the rich man's lifetime of comfort and Lazarus' suffering, and explaining that now their roles were reversed.

Between them was a great gulf, fixed. No crossing back and forth was possible.

Realizing his hopelessness, the rich man pleaded that Lazarus be sent back to warn his five brothers. Abraham answered, *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."*

The rich man insisted, "But if someone rises from the dead, they will repent!"

Abraham replied, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead." (Luke 16:31 NKJV)

Personal Application:

Hell is real. Hades (temporary hell) is described here by Jesus Himself—conscious torment, regret, no crossing between comfort and torment, and no second chances after death.

God never intended hell for people. Scripture says hell was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). But God respects human freedom. If someone refuses His free offer of salvation through Jesus Christ, then by their own choice, they will experience separation from God forever.

You and I must choose where we will spend eternity.

You will not get another opportunity after physical death.

And you already have enough light—the Word of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ, the witness of His resurrection.

If you reject the Word, no miracle will convince you. Belief is a choice, not the result of more evidence.

Final Thought:

Jesus loves you enough to tell you the truth, even when it's uncomfortable.

He speaks frankly about hell, not to scare you, but to warn you and rescue you.

You don't have to end up like the rich man.

You can end up like Lazarus—comforted, at peace, embraced in the everlasting arms of God—if you put your faith in Jesus Christ today.

Question to reflect on:

Are you using your life, your resources, and your opportunities to prepare for eternity?

Where will you be when this physical life is over—comforted with Christ, or separated from Him?