

Message #78**Luke 16:1-13**

Two people were called at the same time to face Jesus Christ. One was a middle-aged man, who appeared to be successful and rich, and the other was an older woman who appeared to not be successful and very poor.

In what seemed to be a very strange request, Jesus Christ asked each person to see their bank books and portfolio. The man immediately produced his and it was impressive. He had been very successful in his business; he invested in property; he had multiple houses; he owned many stocks and bonds and his total net worth was staggering. The old woman fumbled in her purse for a few moments and then raised her eyes to meet the eyes of Jesus and said, "I don't have any portfolio." Jesus tenderly smiled and said, "I know, you didn't have much and what you did have you used for Me."

It came time to hand out eternal paychecks. The old woman was called first and when she looked at hers, it was astronomical. Her eternal paycheck was so large it made that man's savings and portfolio look like nothing. The Lord said to this woman because you were very faithful with the little you had, you are now rich and you have tremendous wealth.

Next, He called that rich man to receive his paycheck. He was excited to learn what his paycheck would be. When he got before the Lord, the Lord didn't hand him any paycheck. The Lord looked the man in the eyes and said you spent most of your life for yourself. You hoarded your wealth; you saw many people with needs and you refused to tap into your vast reservoirs of money to help them. Therefore, here in eternity, you are broke and get nothing.

Now you may ask, where did you get some story like that? From Luke 16! **Luke 16 is a chapter in the Bible from the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself that deals with the subjects of money, greed and eternity.** This is one of those subjects that would hit a Pharisee hard.

A very curious man once asked how much money John D. Rockefeller left behind and one of his top aides said, "All of it." When we get into eternity, the main issue will not be how much we saved for ourselves; but how much did we use for God. What Jesus teaches here is this:

ALL STEWARDS OF GOD WILL BE CALLED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HOW THEY USED THEIR MATERIAL POSSESSIONS AND THOSE WHO USED THEM FOR GOD WILL RECEIVE GREAT ETERNAL WEALTH AND THOSE WHO DID NOT WILL RECEIVE GREAT ETERNAL POVERTY.

When we go through this chapter, we cannot help but conclude that it is not a hoarding spirit that pleases God; it is a giving spirit that pleases God. **Notice verse 1, He aims this discussion straight at His own disciples.** This was money talk for the believer. Jesus Christ never wanted His disciples to become Pharisaical in their concept of money. There is nothing wrong with money, but Christ wants His disciples to view it the right way.

What Christ does here is tell a story and is comprised of six parts:

PART #1 – There was an accusation brought against a squandering manager to the owner. **16:1**

In this story, a “rich man” had given a manager great responsibility over his possessions. Someone reported to the rich man that his manager was squandering his possessions.

The word “reported” is a very negative word which speaks of a serious, negative accusation against the manager. In fact, this word is often used for making malicious and false allegations (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 105).

Now the participle “squander” is present tense which means the accusation is that this manager is continually and habitually in the process of wasting and dispersing all of the possessions over which the rich man had made him manager.

This manager is being accused as one who continually and habitually wastes all the owner has entrusted to him. Now we are not told who is making the accusation, but we certainly know that one who does make accusations against God’s people is Satan (Rev. 12:10).

Before moving on in the story, let’s make some Biblical observations:

- 1) Everything we have as a believer is from God. I Chron. 29:12-15; Prov. 22:2
- 2) Every believer is a manager for God over that which he has been given. I Pet. 4:10
- 3) When believers are not faithful, Satan may make accusations against them. Rev. 12:10

PART #2 – There was an owner’s call to accountability of the squandering manager. **16:2**

The owner called the manager to give an account of how he managed things. The reason he called him is because of what the owner was hearing about him.

Every manager is accountable to God. Every manager will have his day of accountability in the court of God. Every manager will give an account of everything before God (I Cor. 4:2-4).

Now it is not wrong to enjoy life, but we make a fatal mistake if we think we should just be about pursuing our own happiness without a thought of responsibility or accountability to God. Our lives are management entrustments from God. Everything we have is management entrustment from God. We are all responsible to manage our lives in a way that pleases God.

If we do not use our time, money, possessions, talents and gifts for God, we are making a big mistake because there will come a day when our owner will call us to accountability.

PART #3 – There was an awareness by the squandering manager of pending judgment. **16:3**

No one had to tell this steward that he had done wrong; he knew it. He knew he was guilty. He was acutely aware of the allegations which could be brought against him and he does not attempt to deny them.

(Reality #1) - He was in the process of losing his management status.

(Reality #2) - He was too weak to dig. He was too old and out of shape for manual labor.

(Reality #3) - He was too ashamed to beg. He was too proud to sit and beg for money.

This manager had a major problem and he knew it. He knew he had squandered everything and he knew his time was running out until he would have to give an account. He was too weak to physically work to try and get back everything and he was too proud to beg others or even beg the owner for another chance.

The manager apparently still had a little time left and he was in a real jam. Time is ticking away for every one of us. Either by death or rapture, we will be called to give an account to God. There are two ways we may face Jesus Christ: 1) With confidence; 2) With shame (I John 2:28).

Some managers will not deal with sin and they will give the same excuses. I am too weak to get victory; that is just me. I am too ashamed to beg God to give me victory. I am too proud to change.

PART #4 – There was specific action taken by the squandering manager in view of pending judgment. **16:4-7**

When the manager realized that final judgment was nearing, for the first time perhaps in his entire life, he did something right. **He started to think about the future.** Had he thought about the future in the early days, he would not be in this terrible bind. Frankly, as we near the coming of Jesus Christ, we all should think more about the future.

The manager came up with an ingenious plan:

- 1) He summoned each of his master's debtors. **16:5a**
- 2) He found out how much each owed to his master. **16:5b**
- 3) He gave each debtor a great reduction in what was owed. **16:6-7**
 - A. The first man received a 50% reduction payback. **16:6**
100 measures of oil equals 800 gallons which means pay back 400 gallons
 - B. The second man received a 20% reduction payback. **16:7**
100 measures of wheat equals 1,000 bushels which means pay back 800 bushels.

By doing this, the manager is gaining back some of the money for the owner so that the owner might look favorably upon the manager.

PART #5 – There was a positive assessment of the manager by the owner. **16:8**

The owner commended the manager for his ingenuity. The manager was “unrighteous” but he was “shrewd.”

He is not commended for his dishonesty, but he is commended for his creativity in coming up with a plan to provide a portion of what was owed to the owner.

Years ago, there was a robbery of a Brinks vehicle. The robbers actually came up through a manhole underneath the floor and robbed the vehicle. Now you don’t admire the robbery, but you do admire the ingenuity.

PART #6 – There was a specific application made by Jesus Christ Himself. **16:9-13**

It is not left to us to determine how to apply this story because Jesus Christ applies it Himself. He makes five applications for His people:

Application #1 - Use of money in regard to others does have eternal ramifications. **16:9**

Jesus says use wealth to help others. Make friends with others so that when the wealth is gone, how you used it for others will be to your benefit. One can use unrighteous, worldly money to actually prepare for an enhanced eternity. It is possible to store up treasures in heaven.

Application #2 - Use of money determines one’s faithfulness or unfaithfulness to God. **16:10**

On God’s scale of priorities, “money” is a “very little” thing. Most people in this world view money as the most important thing; but with God it is least important. **What is most important to God is faithfulness to Him and His word.**

Our faithfulness or unfaithfulness is determined in part by how we view money and how we use money. If we view money as a little thing and are faithful to use what we have for God, we think as God would have us think and will be rewarded. If we view money as the biggest thing and are not faithful, we will lose rewards.

Until people are faithful in the little God gives them, He will not ever entrust them with much. It is possible to have much in this world and have poverty in eternity. It is also possible to have little in this world and have wealth in eternity. It all depends on how we view money.

Five questions to answer:

- 1) Do we view money as the most important thing in our lives?
- 2) Are we faithful in giving a portion of our money to God?
- 3) Are we faithful to regularly and systematically give money to God?
- 4) Do we sacrificially give money to God?
- 5) Do we generously give our money cheerfully as God has prospered us?

God knows the answer to those questions about every one of us.

Application #3 - Misuse of money will cost one eternal wealth. **16:11**

The clear point Jesus Christ wants to make here to His disciples is this: **Eternal wealth will never be given by God to one who is not faithful with his temporal wealth.**

If we are not faithful in what God considers to be least esteemed on earth—money, He will not entrust us with what He deems to be most esteemed in eternity.

Although this idea is often misused, the truth is God does keep records of what we have and what we give to Him. He apparently will use those records to determine eternal rewards.

One could have a huge savings account worth millions on earth and have an account worth nothing in heaven. It comes down to how we think about and use money.

Application #4 - Unfaithful use of money will cost one rewards in eternity. **16:12**

This is a very sober point Jesus makes. God has entrusted us with everything we have and specifically that which is monetary and material. If we use what we have for Him, we will be rewarded. If we don't, He will not give us rewards we could have had.

God gave us our jobs, our incomes, our house, our cars, our stocks, bonds, CD's, pensions and 401 K's. He has granted it all to us and we are responsible to use it for His glory. God can give and God can take away.

Wise are those who give God the "first fruits" of everything (II Cor. 9:6-8). God should never be given leftover crumbs, He should get the best.

Now look carefully at what is stated here. This text clearly teaches that if we are not faithful with what He has given us on earth, He will not give us our "own" rewards.

Application #5 - One is either a servant of God or money. **16:13**

This text coming from Jesus Christ is an either/or proposition. It is one or the other. There are no in-betweens here. We either have God as our master or we have money as our master. We either love God or we despise God and love money.

There can only be one true master of our heart. It is impossible to serve God and wealth at the same time. Our heart is either dominated by God or money.

Money is not to be idolized or despised; it is to be used for the Glory of God. Paul said we are to set our affections on things above, not on things of this earth (Col. 3:2).

We are all managers of who we are and what we have and we will all give an account to God.