Lk. 16:1-13 (LD 42) "Faithful in Little Things"

For the Children: Some people think about money all the time. No matter how much they have, they always want more. To them, money is a big thing. Others just spend it without thinking about it at all – unless they run short of it. God's children are not to care much about money. But we are to care about what we do with it. We should be thinking about how we can use it to give honour to God. **Questions:** What does it mean to be a "steward" of the money and possessions God has given us? In what way can money be dangerous? What are some ways in which we can use money and possessions to serve God?

Introduction:

First Point: Our View of Wealth
1) It Belongs to the Lord: Wealth, like every other thing – including property, possessions, time, gifts, and people themselves -, belongs to God. See v. 12. This truth, along with the fact that our neighbour is made in God's image, is the basis for how we deal with the property of others. We will eventually have to give the Lord an account of how we have done so. This will also show whether we are focused more on this age than the one to come.

2) It Is a Little Thing: The point of the Parable is that the servant was shrewd with the money he had at his disposal – albeit in a dishonest way; how much more should believers be good stewards since we have far better motivation. This implies that money is, in itself, relatively speaking, a "little thing" (v. 10). But how we use it shows up something important: how we regard God and our neighbour. If we use it to honour God, that suggests that we will also strive to honour Him in bigger things. He may then give us more responsibility in this life, and (by grace) great riches in the next life. Having this view shifts the focus from money as unduly important, in itself, to something that finds its importance more in how we use it.

3) It Can Be a Dangerous Thing: Vss. 9 and 11 refer to "unrighteous wealth." This does not mean that money is, in itself, evil. The undue love of it is the problem – a problem from which God's people also often suffer. There is also very often some unrighteousness in the way it is acquired. These problems are so common that money-making in this life can be characterized as "unrighteous." The danger should make us careful as we deal with money. The believer, however, is to acquire and use his money in a way that reflects the righteousness of Christ, to whom we are joined. Then, for His sake, we will enter God's Kingdom instead of being excluded as idolaters.

Second Point: Our Use of Wealth
1) To Serve Our Master: Since we are committed to serving God through the Lord Jesus, our use of our money and possessions should reflect this. For we cannot serve 2 masters. God is a "jealous" God – He demands total allegiance. Using money and possessions to serve God means acting according to His Word, motivated by the desire to show His glory and promote His cause – including His church and kingdom. Even what we spend on ourselves is to reflect these goals.

2) To Show Whose Welcome We Want: The steward in the Parable tried to make friends by effectively giving away his master's money. This was for selfish reasons and temporal advantage. Our motivation arises from friendship with Christ. We do not use money to buy our way into heaven – as if that were possible – but we do desire Christ's welcome into the "eternal dwellings" (v. 9). Again, how we use our money will show our connection to Him, because of which He grants us (by grace) eternal life.

3) To Help Our Neighbour: Knowing Christ also leads us to help our neighbour with respect to His property – rather than harming or stealing what is his. This is especially true when dealing with brethren, with whom we are one in Christ. It also implies care for the needy, who "represent" Christ to us (Mt. 25:31f). Even when we deal with unbelievers who are well-off, we recognize that God has given them their possessions. The unrighteous steward helped others for base motives; how much more should we help our neighbour from godly motivation.

Conclusion: