

PP 360° Giving: Give Outward: Making Friends for Eternity

Luke 16:1-13

2/14-15/2015

Illus Denise I arrived here in 1996, and my annual salary was \$26,800 and we wondered how we would make it. We lived on Southside Easton renting a small house, and things were pretty tight. I went out to our mailbox one day, and pulled out a letter postmarked Lehigh Valley, but no return address. Curiously, I opened it as I walked back to our home, and inside was \$800 cash! I still to this day do not know who gave us that money, but it will be one of my endeavors in heaven to find who did and finally say Thank you. Whoever it was has made 2 friends for eternity!

And we have been able to bless others in the same way, for the most generous people in this world ought to be Christians
 Not stockpiling treasures for ourselves on earth, meaning not having more than we can use, more than we need, for stockpiled treasure is a vulnerable commodity
 Instead, we can send treasure ahead of us into eternity, where nothing can touch it
 We ended last week by seeing that giving to people and God's Word, the only two indestructible things on this planet, are how we lay up treasures in heaven
 We'll see this again as we look at **Luke 16**, the most difficult parable in this gospel to understand
 And it begins with Jesus teaching His disciples: *"He also said to the disciples..."*
 But there is another audience there and we meet them in **verse 14**, *"The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed Him."*
 Pharisees were among the wealthy elite, like the Preachers from LA, and they don't like what they're hearing

PP 1-The Parable Explained

"There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you?'" **Luke 16:1-2**

Similar to many businesses today, an owner had properties some distance away and he hired a manager to oversee them: think Joseph who managed Potiphar's house
 But he begins receiving reports that his manager was a *mismanager*, *'wasting his possessions'* and he summons him to the office

PP The word *'wasting'* actually means *to separate, to scatter to the wind*, used to refer to threshing wheat as you would throw it in the air and the breeze would scatter the chaff away while the heavier kernel of grain fell to the ground

A fool and his money are soon parted is a saying that perfectly fits this manager, and not only the manager, but also the rich owner

We aren't told whether he was fraudulent or incompetent, but when confronted by his master, he puts up no defense and he is fired

"Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager." **16:2**

Hearing those words, *'You're fired'*, well, even if you're sure it's coming, it's still startling when you hear the actual words

I've been fired once in my life, on a Friday, fortunately rehired on Monday
 But it was shocking to be fired, I spent the weekend in a daze, even though I deserved it
 The Owner fired him and gave him one more task to do, get the records and bring them back
 This is likely a distant landowner so while the manager travels home, he thinks about his future
“What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg...” **16:3**

He's a white collar worker and the thought of digging-*the hardest work there was*-was too much
 Sitting at the city gate or town well begging for a handout was too shameful for him
 The nonbiblical book of Ecclesiasticus says *“It is better to die than to beg”*

So the manager schemes and says to himself, ***“I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.”*** **Luke 16:4**

In other words, I'll be kind to them so they will be kind to me when I am in need
 So he calls in the first of His master's debtors, who owed his master 100 measures of oil
 A measure of oil was 8.75 gallons, making this debt 875 gallons of oil, worth about 1,000 denarii
 The daily wage for a day laborer was 1 denarius a day, so this is over 3 years' worth of debt
 The manager reduces it by half, to 50, taking a year and a half off the man's debt
 The next man owed his master 100 measures, or around 1,000 bushels of wheat
 It takes about 1¼ acres to yield a bushel of wheat, so we are looking at for example, farming 100 acres and ten years to pay off this debt
 The manager reduced it 20%, to 800 bushels of wheat, knocking two years off the debt
 He could do this as his position gave him the right to manage the owner's possessions

Incredibly, ***“The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.”*** **16:8**
 How could the owner commend this ***‘dishonest manager’***, and how could Jesus even say that?
 Some try to explain that the manager simply cuts out his own commission, or the illegal interest rate the owner exacted, selfless in the first and morally right in the latter
 Or that the owner would have enjoyed the sudden influx of cash rather than waiting years, as if less now is better than none ever

PP But the point of the parable isn't the manager's dishonesty, but his ***‘shrewdness’***, the means to do something cleverly that brings about your own advantage
 Jesus isn't endorsing fraud, or saying it's ok to cheat people, or that dishonestly is the best policy
 He is simply showing how clever worldly people can be when they act in their own interest
 This manager turned a bad situation to his own advantage and the owner found it commendable

The parable is over and Jesus says to the disciples, ***“For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.”*** **Luke 16:8**

The sons of this world, unsaved are shrewder in dealing with each other than Christians
 Look at the investment world, money management and financial experts...its mind boggling
 They are seizing the times, getting ahead, using their money to make friends and earn favors
 They are building it up and sending it forward to their retirement
 They are doing it shrewdly to their advantage, but their advantage ends on this earth with their own deaths, their future on this earth is all they have to look forward to
 The ***‘sons of light’***, Christians lack that shrewdness, they aren't seizing the advantages, they aren't sending their treasures ahead beyond death, into eternity
 They are entering eternity redeemed paupers
 To help us understand this, Jesus gives us three applications of this shocking parable:

PP 2-The Parable Applied

PP Parables have one main point and it is this: *God's faithful managers will use His money shrewdly and provide themselves true riches for eternity*

PP a) *Give outward and make friends for eternity*

"And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings." **Luke 16:9**

'Unrighteous wealth' isn't ill gained money or evil money, but rather the world's money Jesus tells us to use money shrewdly, for money can make friends for ourselves in eternity These ***'friends'*** are those who owe their salvation and their welfare to our generosity You send emergency aid to disaster victims, give to that ministry that brings God's Word to the unreached, support ministries to homosexuals and for ministries that protect the unborn from being killed in the womb, or sacrifice financially to care for orphans You pay for a wheelchair for a handicapped woman, or buy lunch and eat together with a homeless man, or medicine for malaria You open your home for the family that lost theirs until they get back on their feet There are two indestructible things on earth, invulnerable commodities: people and God's Word Christian, you are making friends when you generously toward people

PP ***Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys."*** **Luke 12:33**

PP ***"But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*** **Luke 14:13-14**

You may not see here on earth the effectiveness of your generosity, but when you die, and you enter glory, the first to greet you will be Jesus Christ He will welcome you home, and He will walk you into glory, there to see an incredibly surreal scene...dozens, maybe hundreds, for some, thousands and millions who have come to greet you, your 'friends' that your giving has made, welcoming you into glory It's one thing to anticipate reunions with family members and friends and biblical or historical saints, but another to imagine that as you walk into eternity a parade of ***'friends'*** on either side of that street ***"receive you into the eternal dwellings."*** Thanking you for using money to help them come to know Christ, to ease their suffering Christian, give outwardly, lay up heavenly treasures, friends for eternity!

PP b) *Give faithfully and be entrusted with more*

Fear of giving is huge. My biggest fear was not being able to afford life alone. But I had determined to tithe no matter what happened. Since my husband left me, my income has increased \$25,000! Then, the thought of my son going to college and we having to somehow come up with close to \$200,000 has been more than scary. Again, I had the voice within saying to stop tithing and again I determined to keep on tithing. A month ago my sister's estate had finalized and the one sister handling it sent me a check for \$10,000 even though I wasn't in the

will. Now, that was fun figuring out how to use it for college & gift it! When fears come, I have to remind myself how God has supplied so far even more than I could have imagined.

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?” 16:10-12

Did you catch the end of verse 12... ***“who will give you that which is your own?”***

PP ***“Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.” 2 John 1:8***

Christian, we can lose our reward, not salvation, but our reward through unfaithful stewardship of what God has given

There are a couple of different ways to understand what Jesus means here in verse 10
One is that the person who is faithful with the little that God gives, is trustworthy to receive more
Proverbs 11 shows us this principle: ***“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another***

PP ***withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” 24-25***

PP And Paul did teach the church at Corinth that, ***“You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God.” 2 Corinthians 9:11***

So there is good biblical footing here that when we give generously from the little we have, God knows we will give generously even when we have a lot, and will give us more
And if we haven’t, then it directly affects what ***‘true riches’*** we have in heaven

But there is another way to understand this and I believe it is the way Jesus intended here
Making money is a small, or little thing in the grand scheme of life
It’s temporary, a thing of earth, which is less than an eye blink in the face of eternity

PP ***“Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.” Proverbs 23:4-5***

It is necessary to live, to provide what we need, but it’s only of this world, its value ends here on earth, it’s a little thing

Regardless of how much money we have, on that final day of our lives, it’s meaningless
“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” Mark 8:36

Yet the key to being faithful with money is found in the words ***‘entrust’*** and ***‘give’***
Giving generously begins with a mindset that we are the manager or steward, not owner or master

PP ***“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts.” Haggai 2:8***

Every cent we have belongs to God, and we are to use in a way to profit Him

Even the ability to make money is given by the Lord: ***“You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth” Deuteronomy 8:18***

The Christian who sees every cent as rightfully belonging to God the owner, as all ability to make money given by Him, will manage it in a way that will benefit God and himself
And it produces a life of devotion that Jesus ends His teaching with, one we saw last week

PP c) *Give with a manager's mindset*

"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." Luke 16:13

As the parable inferred, God is the owner and has set us as managers over His estate
Yes, we steward our time, our talents, this earth, but here we see money and possessions in the crosshairs of His teaching

When we understand God is the Master, owner and Lord, we will look at money differently
In short, we will have open hands, rather than closed hands

PP Deuteronomy 15:9 tells us that if we do not give to a Christian in need, ***"and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin"***

Obviously, the irresponsible believer should not necessarily receive our monies, yet the accusation is against the stingy, closed-handed Christian

The charges of the poor will reach the ears of God just like the charges were brought to the owner in verse 1 of our parable

Christian, be shrewd, use money to your advantage, Christ tells us to!

Use it to gain friends who welcome you into eternity because you helped them in this life now
Be faithful in the money you have now, use it to benefit God's redemptive purposes, bringing salvation to the lost, help to the impoverished, justice to the oppressed

Christian, direct your money toward what will be done in the name of Jesus, or it will end at the grave and you will enter heaven a poor pauper in comparison to those whose hearts were set free from the god of money to serve Jesus with all He gave them

And on that day He summons you home to be with Him, you will enjoy your treasures forever!

Christian, give generously, to people, to the Word of God and ministries that teach it, live it
God will provide for you, you will have more to give of what the Lord owns
Amen?

Pray!