

BIBLE CLASS 20.06.2024 THE PARABLES STUDY LUKE 16:1-9
THE UNJUST STEWARD

Luke 16:1 And Jesus 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. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of you? Give an account of your stewardship; for you can no longer be steward".

Then the steward said within himself, "What shall I do? For my lord takes away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses". So he called every one of his lord's debtors and said unto the first, How much do you owe to my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take your bill, and write eighty.

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. 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. (Luk 16:1-9)

Jesus did not commend the unjust steward. It reads as if he did; but a due regard to the context will shew the matter in a different light. The statement, "the lord commended the unjust steward," is spoken by the Lord Jesus. **It is not Luke's record concerning Christ.** It is Christ's own statement about the lord of the unjust steward. Read the parable through, and you will see this. Having stated that the steward's master spoke well of his servant's prudence in securing the friendship of his customers in prospect of his own ruin, Jesus adds his comments: "And I say unto you, make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." This obscure exhortation is explained by the context. The forethought of the unjust steward is the first feature from which a lesson is sought to be enforced. He

saw ruin verging upon him, and he arranged for his safety. Jesus commends this in saying “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” The children of light, or those who know the truth, are not always equally logical in their actions. True believers know that destruction awaits “the things which are seen,” and yet they too often cling to them, instead of acting in relation to them in a way that will secure the everlasting habitations God has prepared for those that love Him, these are only to be earned by pleasing God, who has them at His disposal as the apostle Paul confirmed to the Corinthians, “...as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1Co 2:9 KJV). Jesus exhorts the children of light to emulate the example of the unjust steward, so far as this feature is concerned; **but he does not commend** the way the steward adopted to get at this end. His precept on this head is in directly the opposite direction. “He that is *faithful* in that which is least, is faithful also in much.” (Luke 16 verse 10.) “If you have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” (verse 12.) An opposite method is instructed to reach the same result of safety. But the question is: How can the mammon of unrighteousness be so manipulated as at last to yield everlasting habitations? Paul supplies the answer: “Charge them that are rich in this world . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, *laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come*”—(Tim 6:17–19). This is using “mammon” in a way that turns it into a friend, and leads to everlasting habitations, instead of clinging to it and finding it “the root of all evil,” and the way to perdition at last. Christ’s words amount to an exhortation to “lay not up treasure on earth,” but to use what we receive now for the development of benefit afterwards. He adds (and this is the key to his meaning): “*No man 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. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON”—(Luke 16:13).

Returning to Luke 16 we notice that there is a response to the instruction Jesus gives, “you cannot serve God and Mammon” reading on v14 “And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.(ekmugterizo- meaning to turn the nose up, to sneer, to scoff at)

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

¹⁶ The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it. (Luke 16:14-16)

The translator Bullinger suggests that verse 9 should be a question, i.e. “and I say unto you, make to yourselves of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations? No! He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in that which is least is unjust also in in much.

Brother John Thomas on the subject:-

Christ says (Luke 16:9), ‘Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.’ Now, ‘the mammon of unrighteousness’ in the Scriptures signifies riches; so it amounts to this—Make to yourselves friends who, when you fail, shall enable you to enter into everlasting habitations. Well, we naturally ask, How can riches be used, so as to influence the only parties that can give us an introduction into everlasting habitations? Well, the apostle Paul, in his letter to Timothy, tells us how that may be done. In 1 Tim. 6:17, he says, ‘Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.’ Charge them ‘that they do good, that they be rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time (or age) to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.’ That is the way that, scripturally, the rich man can make use of his riches, so as to make to himself friends who will be able to give

him eternal life, or an introduction to the everlasting habitations. Well, who are those friends? There are but two friends in the universe that a man is able to make, that will be able to introduce him into everlasting habitations; and these are the Father and the Son. There is no one who can give us eternal life, but He who has given authority to the Son to give life to whomsoever he will; and if we can secure the friendship of the Son, we are sure, also, to secure the friendship of the Father; and we thus have two very influential and important friends; and when the time comes for those that are here called the rich, to make a report of their stewardship, and to show how they have used their means in connection with the truth, if they have used them well, they will be rewarded. If their riches are not used in connection with the truth, they may as well throw them away into the river, as expect any eternal life from the use of their riches, apart from the truth, for it is only in relation to the truth—in its belief and obedience—that their gifts are sanctified. By their making use of their temporalities in this way, in accordance with the scriptural injunctions, they commend themselves to the Father and the Son; and when the time shall come to adjudicate every man's case—when men shall be judged according to their works—they will have a common invitation with the poor into the possession of the kingdom of God, when Jesus shall say, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Thus, then, although the rich man may in the present state impoverish himself, yet, when he considers to what he has attained in his relationship to Deity, and to the great recompense of reward hereafter to be manifested at the coming of Jesus Christ; that although he may be the subject of reproach; although he may have the cold shoulder turned upon him by those who formerly delighted in his society, because he could honour them, and they him, and because there was a mutual interest in the things of this world; he says, as Paul said, that he counts all these things as loss, that he may win Christ; that although he may have lost his position among the higher orders of society, yet what is that compared with that new position to which he has attained by a belief and obedience of the

truth? Suppose he were a duke, earl, viscount, or prince royal, and he disrobed himself of all these titles and honours which came from the breath of a sovereign's nostrils; when he considers such titles and honours as those, and then considers that, having been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, he will be able to sing the new song, 'Thou hast loved us, and washed us in thy blood, and thou hast made us kings and priests unto God; and we shall reign on the earth.' What is the title of a duke or an earl, compared with that of being a king or priest for God, and of reigning, to carry out the Deity's purpose among all the nations of the earth?"

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