

## Sermon 85: A Biblical View of Stewardship: Luke 16:1-13

**Text: Luke 16:1-13** "And he 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 thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh 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 unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto 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 owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. 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. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant 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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon..."

**Summary:** If people with poor character and a shortsighted perspective can act shrewdly toward what they are given, how much more should we act wisely with what we are given.

**Proposition:** God wants us to wisely steward the resource He has entrusted to us.

**Part 1: Christ's Audience: 16:1** "And he said also unto his disciples..."

- **There is a contrast between the audiences:**
  - **The three parables: 15:1** Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured...And he spake this parable unto them..."
  - **This parable: 16:1** "And he said also unto his disciples..."
  - **The next section: 16:14** "And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him..."
- **Why it matters:** Stewardship is a discussion directed toward Christians.

- **If you are not a Christian, your primary concern should be God's future judgment.**
- **If you are a Christian, your primary concern should be faithfulness with what God has entrusted to you.**

**Part 2: Christ's Parable: 16:1-8** "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 thee? give an account of thy stewardship..."

- **The man in Christ's parable had an unfaithful manager: 16:1** "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.
- **When he discovered his manager's laziness, he demanded a full disclosure of his work: 16:2** "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward..."
- **Since the manager was dishonest and lazy, he needed to figure out how to prepare himself for the inevitable: 16:3-4** "What shall I do? for my lord taketh 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..."
- **He used his temporary authority to settle debts at a reduced rate with the hope that his employer's debtors would be kind to him after he was fired and left with nothing: 16:5-7** "So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto 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 owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore..."
- **His employer commended his shrewd plan to protect his future: 16:8** "The lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely..."
- **What is Christ's point in this unusual parable?**

**Part 3: Christ's teaching: 16:8-9** "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..."

- **Christ's direct explanation:**
  - **Worldly people are often more practical than Christians: 16:8** "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light..."
  - **We should use temporal material possessions for the advance of God's eternal Kingdom: 16:9** "Make to yourselves

friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations..."

- **Those who do this will experience the benefits of that investment forever: 16:9** "When ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations..."
- **Christ's correlating teaching: 16:10-13** "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant 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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon..."
  - **Faithfulness is not determined by how much we have, but by what we do with what we are given: 16:10** "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much..."
  - **If we do not manage little things well, then we will not be given greater things: 16:11** "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"
  - **If we cannot manage resources with accountability, why would that accountability be removed: 16:12** "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"
  - **We cannot serve God and things at the same time: 16:13** "No servant 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. Ye cannot serve God and mammon..."

#### **Part 4: Applying Christ's teaching:**

- **God wants us to be practical in how we view the material world: 1 Timothy 6:17-20** "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; 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, that they may lay hold on eternal life. O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust..."
  - Do not be proud.
  - Do not put trust in uncertain riches.
  - Enjoy good things as a gift from our good God.
  - Use the good things He has given in eternal pursuits.

- Be a faithful and wise manager.
- **If people with poor character and a shortsighted perspective can act shrewdly with what they are given, how much more should we act wisely with what we are given:**
  - We know this temporal world will not last forever.
  - We know we are going to stand before the Lord and give an accounting of our stewardship.
  - Why are we not more diligent about preparing ourselves for our future?
- **We need a healthy view of material possessions.**
  - The things of this world are not to be loved and served, but rather used for eternal pursuits.
  - What we do with what we are given matters.
  - We will not be given greater opportunities if we fail to be faithful with what we are given now.
- **Through proper management, we can use temporal things to provide eternal blessings:**
  - **Our children:** Raising a godly generation.
  - **Our influence:** Shaping the next generation of church leaders.
  - **Our money:** Supporting eternally focused pursuits.
  - **Our homes:** Being given to hospitality.
- **May God help us to wisely steward the resource He has entrusted to us.**