

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP**  
**MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY**

**Study Series:** Speaking in Parables

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

**Lesson 13:** The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-8)

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**Overview of How to Understand the Parables**

The standard principles of exegesis (interpretation of scripture) should also be used for interpreting the parables. It is essential to ask what the parable meant to the original listeners of Jesus and the original readers of the Gospels. These principles are particularly appropriate to the parables, which contain a complete story with characters and a plot.

1. Look at the parable in its proper context: what led to the parable? Was it a question, a problem to solve, or an issue to resolve?
2. Know that parables usually have one central point: Parables are not allegories. An allegory is a more detailed story in which all, or nearly all, of the details, have significance in the message of the story. On the other hand, parables contain a central message; there is no need to read into every element of the parable.
3. Parables are not secret codes; they focus on telling people about the nature of the kingdom of God.
4. Remember the cultural gap: Some images and metaphors have rich meanings to people in Jesus' time that are not as easy to recognize for those living in the 21st century.
5. Some of the parables were already interpreted by Jesus; no need to add to the interpretation.

**The Parable: Luke 16:1-8**

*He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was [a]wasting his goods. 2 So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' 3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' 5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So, he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So, he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. (NKJV)*

**Questions:**

- What title will you give this parable? \_\_\_\_\_

Shrewd: having or showing sharp powers of judgment; to be astute.

Synonyms of the word shrewd: sharp, intelligent, wise, sharp-witted, far-sighted, sagacious, observant, alert and savvy. Jesus wants us to be Shrewd when it comes to our attitude towards money and the matters of the Kingdom.

- Who are the audience of Jesus in this parable? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who are the characters in the parable? \_\_\_\_\_

- What is different about this parable compared to the other parables we have studied?
- Why did the master commend the unjust steward? Luke 16:8

### **Luke 16:9-13 - Application**

*“And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous money so that when it fails,<sup>[b]</sup> they may welcome you into eternal dwellings. <sup>10</sup> Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much. <sup>11</sup> So if you have not been faithful with the unrighteous money, who will trust you with what is genuine? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup> No household slave can be the slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t be slaves to both God and money.” (NKJV)*

### **Questions:**

- What is the central message of this parable? Why did Jesus share this Parable?
- What does Jesus mean by the statement in verse 9 *“And I tell you, **make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous money so that when it fails, they may welcome you into eternal dwellings**”*

**Luke 16:8-9 MSG** *“Now here’s a surprise: The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is right—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you’ll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior.”*

### **Conclusion: Have the Right Attitude towards Money**

This parable is one that can easily go in different direction of interpretation, however based on Jesus application of the parable in verses 9-13; The key lesson I believe Jesus was teaching his disciples from this parable is about the attitude they should have towards money and anything that has the potential to provide financial opportunity to them, e.g., jobs, business, investments, etc.

1. Be Wise. Luke 16:9, Proverbs 10:4, Proverbs 6:6-8
2. Be Generous. Luke 16:9, 1 Timothy 6:18-19
3. Be Faithful. Luke 16:10, 2 Corinthians 9:6
4. Be Honest. Luke 16:11-12, Proverbs 13:11, Proverbs 11:26
5. Do not be obsessed. Luke 16:13, Matthew 6:19-21, 1 Timothy 6:10

Our attitude towards money is very important to God. God wants to have a healthy relationship towards money. We should not be obsessed with money neither we should be slave to money but rather we should recognize that God is the source of the money we have.

We must not be wasteful with our money; we must not manipulate others to get money or take advantage of people. We should handle money wisely by showing prudence and generosity in our dealings with money. We see money has a tool that God has given us to advance his agenda here on earth. 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Proverb 22:7