

Message Summary

All of us are managers. Everything we have – our time, money, gifts, education, abilities, family, friendships, knowledge, etc. – are given to us by God for a purpose: to manage and steward for kingdom purposes. All of us are called to faithfully manage, and all of us have to some degree failed to fully leverage all our resources for kingdom purposes. In Luke 16, Jesus uses a parable about worldly greed to teach his disciples how to be faithful kingdom managers. As he does so, he prepares us to see Christ's perfect stewardship on our behalf.

Jesus' parable begins with a rich man who hires a steward to help manage his assets (v. 1). While details about the rich man are scant, the character of the manager is clear: he is greedy, selfish, deceptive, and cunning. When his master entrusted everything to the manager, the manager in turn wasted his master's possessions (v. 2). Called to account for his mismanagement, the steward was fired. But this manager was shrewd. He called in his master's debtors and discounted their debts to the master, one 50% and one 20%. His purpose was to make the debtors feel indebted to the fired steward rather than the rich master (vv. 3-7). Though it was his own resources being lost, the master commended the fired steward for his shrewdness.

Jesus wants His shrewd in their dealings with worldly resources as that dishonest manager, with two differences. First, instead of employing dishonest means, Jesus commands us be pure and innocent as doves (Mt. 10:16). Second, instead of using worldly resources to pursue worldly gains, we must use worldly resources to pursue *kingdom* purposes. Jesus' parable is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If this dishonest manager is masterfully shrewd and cunning for no higher purpose than his own self-fulfillment and greedy consumption, *how much more* ought followers of Christ be shrewd and cunning to serve the Creator Himself for eternal joy. Jesus clarifies exactly what this eternal joy focuses on: making friends with the world's resources to be received into eternal dwellings. We are to use our worldly goods to spread the gospel message to as many as we can find, so that in eternity they (and many more!) may share in the joy of the Creator because of the part God privileged us to play in bringing many to himself.

Though all of us are managers, none of us is perfectly faithful. None, that is, except One. Jesus was the manager with no debts, but who took 100% of the debt our sin owes on himself, so that those who trust him will receive his inheritance as a gift. Our standing before God depends not on our performance, but on his perfect stewardship. Thus, we labor not to earn our salvation, but because He has given us such a great salvation that leads us to fruitful lives (Eph. 2:8-10).

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

How did the Forbes magazine article highlight the vanity of pursuing riches in this life?

How can we be even more shrewd, hardworking, and ambitious than unbelievers ("the sons of this world," v. 8) in our dealings with the world, but for radically different purposes? Consider especially Mt. 10:16.

Paul was by every account a faithful steward of God's resources. What drove Paul's shrewdness and ambition for kingdom purposes? Consider especially Rm. 15:15-21; 1 Cor. 15:9-11; Phil 2:12-18.

How does the hope of "eternal dwellings" drive us to make friends with worldly resources (v. 9; i.e., invest worldly resources into people and lasting relationships)? Consider especially 1 Cor. 15:58.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to examine what the sermon and its text mean, to apply the Word to your life, and to guide how you pray. Please note that you don't have to use all of the questions. These are just options (along with the digging deeper section) to help you frame the family/small group discussion.

1. In what areas of life has God entrusted you treasures to steward (e.g., family, friends, abilities, education, finances, skills)? Are there any especially significant or unique endowments God has entrusted to you that mandate a special stewardship?
2. How can you more faithfully steward at least one of those treasures for kingdom purposes this week?
3. Are you seeking faithful in small things as well as big things? Are you neglecting faithfulness in small things but wishing God would entrust to you bigger resources?
4. Do you humbly acknowledge God as the source of every good thing you have in life (Jm. 1:16-17)? Or do you pridefully act as if you have earned your resources apart from God's enablement and are therefore entitled to them?
5. Is laziness a hindrance to your kingdom stewardship? How can you be more hardworking and ambitious this week?
6. Is the love of money preventing faithful stewardship of God's resources? Do you trust in money and make it your god?
7. Like the manager who prayed to himself (v. 3: "And the manager said to himself..."), do you trust in yourself and your resources?
8. What worldly ambitions can you pursue less this week? What people around you can you pursue more this week?
9. Are you trusting in your own work of stewardship, or Christ's stewardship on your behalf? Are you working *for* salvation or *from* the salvation Christ has purchased for you?

Prayer

- Pray for Our Church:
 - Thank God for the perfect stewardship of his Son, who cancelled 100% of our debt (Col. 2:13-15) and worked a perfect stewardship for us on our behalf.
 - Pray that CFC would fully trust in Christ and receive the inheritance he gives us in the gospel.
- Pray for Our Community:
 - Pray that God would grant CFC the wisdom and vision to use worldly resources to make friends for ourselves through eternity.
 - Pray for the upcoming International Student Cookout, that the Lord would bring many international students and believers, and that long-term gospel relationships might be forged.
- Pray for Our World:
 - Pray for the Jacksons' recent medical missions trip to Honduras, that the gospel shared in word and deed might bear much fruit through the many lives it impacted, and that the Lord would give grace to the local Honduran churches to follow up with connections made.
 - Pray for Wycliffe Bible Translators, that the Lord would use this organization to translate the Bible into many languages, and that the translated Word would bring knowledge of salvation to unreached people groups all over the world.