

Kingdom Stewardship and Eternal Riches (Lk. 16)

I. THE PARABLE OF THE FOOLISH RICH MAN (LK. 12:16-21)

- A. A man asked Jesus to make a legal ruling related to his inheritance—dividing their family estate. Jesus addressed his greater need—to understand how money related to God’s purpose for his life. Our life does not consist in our possessions. Our fulfillment now and our life story in heaven are not based on gaining more money or honor. Neither will be part of our life story in the age to come.

¹³...“Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”...¹⁵And He said..., “Beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” (Lk. 12:13-15)

- B. Jesus taught the parable of the foolish rich man (12:16-21) to emphasize that it is possible to gain treasure in heaven (12:21) and that only what is “invested” in obedience to God lasts beyond death. God defines a fool as one who only enriches himself without laying up treasure in heaven.

¹⁶He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully ...¹⁸So he said, ‘...I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops...¹⁹I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’”²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; ...’²¹So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” (Lk. 12:16-21)

- C. By using our money in kingdom purposes that express love and generosity it can be exchanged for treasure in heaven. Salvation is by grace alone, but the Lord rewards our voluntary love. Jesus taught on eternal rewards more than anyone else in Scripture did (Mt. 5:12; 10:42; 16:27; 19:28; 25:21-23; Lk. 6:23, 35; 12:8, 21, 33; 16:11; 19:17-19; 22:29-30; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 22:12).

- D. We can have treasure in heaven that never fails (12:21, 33). All of our money and possessions fail in the sense that we lose them on the day that we die. The “exchange rate” is very high in this age.

³³Give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail... (Lk. 12:33)

- E. Jesus taught a parable about inviting the needy to dinner—those who cannot repay you (14:12-14). He challenged them to invest in those who were not able to return the favor, knowing that God will repay or reward them in the age to come. They were to act in the opposite spirit with generosity.

¹²... When you give a dinner...do not ask your friends... your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. ¹³But when you give a feast, invite the poor... ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection... (Lk. 14:12-14)

- F. Generosity and faithfulness in giving money does not depend on the amount of money that is used.

²He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. ³So He said, “Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; ⁴for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.” (Lk. 21:2-4)

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF USING OUR MONEY TO GAIN ETERNAL RICHES (LK. 16:1-13)

- A. Jesus taught the parable of the unjust steward who was commended for being “shrewd” for preparing for his future after he was fired (Lk. 16:1-8). This message is for us to make choices with our money now that will enrich our life and relationships in the age to come.

¹...*There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods ...* ³*The steward said..., “What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away...”* ⁵*So he called...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.”* ⁷*So he said to him, “Take your bill, and...write fifty.”* ⁷*Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?”* ⁸*He said, “A hundred measures of wheat.”* ⁸*And he said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.”* ⁸*So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. (Lk. 16:1-8)*

- B. Jesus applied this parable to the lifestyle of a genuine disciple (Lk. 16:8-13).

⁸*For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.* ⁹*I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home...* ¹¹*If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* ¹²*And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? (Lk. 16:8-12)*

1. **More shrewd:** Jesus’ point was that unbelievers are more shrewd or wise in preparing for the world that they believe in (16:8). The sons of this world (unbelievers) live for this life and invest only with this life in view. They are more earnest in pursuing earthly things that perish than believers are in pursuing divine things and heavenly riches that never perish.
2. **Unrighteous mammon:** This phrase is idiomatic for “worldly wealth” (NIV). It does not mean that all money is gained or acquired by unrighteous. Money is in itself neutral yet is often tainted with unrighteousness, and it often attracts and promotes unrighteousness in contrast to eternal riches which never promotes unrighteousness nor is ever handled in an unrighteous way. The *possession* of worldly wealth is neutral—it is the *use* of this worldly wealth that matters.
3. **Make friends:** Jesus called us to make friends for ourselves that when our money fails, at the time of our death, people in heaven will receive us into their everlasting homes (16:9). The day of our death is the day of our dismissal from our stewardship in this life. We are called to invest our money to advance kingdom purposes and to help people in need.
4. **True riches:** This refers to heavenly treasure and rewards (12:21, 33; 18:22). If we are not faithful in our use of mammon, the Lord will not commit to our trust *true riches*. So, the possession of money in this world is a test run for eternity (Piper).
5. **What is our own:** Our money is on loan from God as a temporary stewardship that ends at our death. In this age, we cannot really possess anything that is permanently “our own” because we will lose it when we die. But we will possess our true heavenly riches forever. In this sense, they are “our own”—because they will never be taken away (Lk. 12:33).