

Luke 16:1-13

Introduction: This seems to take place in late winter to early spring of 33 AD. It takes place just before the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-54).

- 1) Jesus teaches the need for acting prudently—16:1-8
 - a) The audience—16:1 ¹ *Now He also was saying to His disciples,*
 - i) This seems to be those who have repented and trusted Christ
 - b) The setting of the parable—16:1-2 (similar to a CFO today)
 - i) Dangerous, irresponsible behavior—16:1 *“There was a certain wealthy man who had a (often a slave acting as a) manager (of his affairs), and it was reported [διαβάλλω] (related to the word Devil) to him that this manager was squandering (carelessly wasting; cf. 15:13) his possessions.*
 - (1) The manager was apparently chosen because he was hardworking, zealous, competent, and faithful. (Rogers)
 - (2) The manager was accused behind his back. The point was to discredit the person being accused.
 - ii) Appropriate leadership—16:2 ² *So having summoned him, he said to him,*
 - (1) A question—*‘What is this I hear about you?’*
 - (2) A command—*‘Give an account of your management, because you are no longer able to be manager.’*
 - (a) The owner believes the accusations, and acts accordingly. But he does not send the manager to jail.
 - (b) The manager’s failure to defend himself seems to indicate he knew he is guilty.
 - c) The shrewd response by the manager—16:3-7
 - i) He plans ahead—16:3-4
 - (1) He thinks realistically about 2 options—16:3 ³ *Then the manager said within himself, ‘What should I do, since my master is taking away the management from me?’*
 - (a) Not capable of manual labor—*I am not strong enough to dig;*
 - (i) Been sitting behind a desk too long!
 - (b) Unwilling to beg—*I am embarrassed to beg.*
 - (i) Perhaps begging from people he used to do business with.
 - (2) He thinks prudently about a third option—16:4 ⁴ *I know what I will do, so that when I am dismissed from the management, they will welcome [δέχομαι] me into their houses.’*
 - (a) He makes a strategic decision that benefits him in the future. He uses his master’s resources to create a new life for himself. (Magill)
 - (b) He is networking to his own advantage.
 - ii) He acts accordingly, illustrated by 2 examples—16:5-7 ⁵ *So, having summoned each one of his master’s debtors, (more than the 2 illustrated)*
 - (1) Illustrated in liquid measurements—16:5-6 *he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’* ⁶ *And he said, ‘A hundred measures (875*

- gallons; 150 trees worth) *of olive oil.*' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and having sat down quickly, write fifty (438 gallons).' [50%]
- (2) Illustrated in dry measurements—16:7 ⁷ Then he said to another, '*And how much do you owe?*' And he said, '*A hundred measures* (1,100 bushels; 100 acres worth) *of wheat.*' And he said to him, "Take your bill and write eighty (880 bushels). [20%]
- d) The wise evaluation—16:8 ⁸ So the master commended (expressed approval of) *the unrighteous* [ἀδικία] *manager because he acted shrewdly* [φρονίμως];
- i) Why would he do that? *for the sons this age* (unbelievers) *are more shrewd* [φρόνιμος] *in relation to their own generation than the sons of light* (believers).
- ii) Jesus does not commend the steward for his unrighteousness, but for his shrewd use of another's resources for his own future good. (Magill)
- iii) The manager has made the owner appear very generous in the community and thus brought honor to him.
- iv) We must regularly consider the long-term effects of our stewardship.
- 2) Jesus teaches the need for generous, reliable, loyal service—16:9-13
- a) Jesus teaches regarding **generous character**—16:9
- i) A command—⁹ And I tell you^{pl}, make friends for yourselves by the mammon of unrighteousness [ἀδικία],
- (1) Be generous, merciful, and kind in how you handle the wealth God gives you.
- ii) The reason—*so that when you^{pl} fail* (financially), *they may welcome* [δέχομαι] *you^{pl} into the eternal dwellings* (i.e. heaven).
- (1) God will welcome you into heaven based upon how you have treated others in their need in this life. This is not works resulting in salvation, but works that demonstrate genuine salvation.
- b) Jesus teaches regarding **reliable character**—16:10-12
- i) Statement of contrasts that reveal a person's character—16:10 ¹⁰
- (1) ¹⁰ *The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much,*
- (2) *and the one who is unrighteous* [ἀδικος] *in a very little thing is also unrighteous* [ἄδικος] *in much.*
- ii) Questions concerning the consequences of your character—16:11-12
- (1) ¹¹ *Therefore, if* (1st class condition) *you^{pl} have not been faithful in the unrighteous* [ἄδικος] *mammon, who will trust you^{pl} with what is genuine?*
- (2) ¹² *And if you^{pl} have not been faithful in that which belongs to another, who will give you^{pl} that which is your own?*
- c) Jesus teaches regarding **loyal character**—16:13
- i) Real-life observation—16:13a ¹³ *No house-servant* [οικέτης] *is able to serve as a bonds slave* [δουλεύω] *to two masters;*
- (1) *for either he will hate the one and love the other,*

(2) *or else he will be devoted [ἀντέχομαι] to the one and disregard [καταφρονέω] the other.*

(3) People will make a choice when the situation demands a choice.

ii) Real-life application—16:13b *You^{pl} are not able to serve as a bondsman [δουλεύω] to God and to mammon.”*

(1) Money makes a terrible master. Money is not and cannot be the ultimate priority.

3) What this all means for us

a) Be generous—16:9

b) Be faithful—16:10-12

i) Your pattern of stewardship reveals your inner character.

c) Serve God first—16:13

i) This is the root of the first two. We always serve something. We are never neutral. When we genuinely serve God first, we will be filled with generosity and faithfulness. He is the One we must serve, and He alone will evaluate and reward our stewardship. (Bock)

ii) Dishonesty about money is a sure sign of a heart not right with God. (Ryle)

iii) The disciple of Jesus should use money not selfishly, but generously and faithfully, so that one may possess all the future riches God has for that disciple. (Bock)

iv) Pentecost says, “A foolish person lives only for the present and uses personal wealth only for the present. A wise person considers the future and uses personal wealth to reap benefits in the future....”