

## **[To Beg I Am] / Gospel of Luke 16:1 – 18**

~ The parable of the unjust steward is a section of Scripture that is wildly misunderstood. If we only afford it a cursory glance, it appears the Lord is commending a crook and saying "thank you" to a thief. Well, I assure you that is not what's happening here. Our Spiritual Safari deals with this rather difficult parable in this report – and I only say 'difficult' because most people make it difficult – by thinking the subject is some sort of hero-thief or something. Well, we're talking about an outright thief. We see another scoundrel in Scripture; a fiend in theology – a bad-boy of the Bible who is nothing but a crook of Christianity. My friends – there are a whole lot of them today.

Luke is the only Gospel writer that gives us contrasting parables; and this is another one of them. Most parables are of comparison; and that's the strict definition of the word "parable." Well, here comes a man from the world, and he brings the principles that a lost world follows with him. Jesus saith, "you know that if the world hates you, they hated Me before." If you were of the world the world would love its own. Jesus chose us out of the world and, therefore, the world hateth you! The genuine child of God doesn't belong to this world in any shape, form or fashion. The child of God does not live by the principles of the things of this world.

Romans 12:2 *And be not conformed according to this world ~*

Presently, Satan is called the god of this world. Paul speaks to the Galatians about deliverance from this present, evil world. We are told very specifically not to love the world nor the things that are in the world. Now, our safari keeps things real, and we have to deal with a very real law of life here. The number one rule of law in the world is: self preservation. By that standard, if someone chooses to rob me and kill my family in order to preserve their family's well-being, then, that's okay. That is the bottom line of atheistic evolution, too. Survival of the fittest. Thin the herd. Shady deals are winked at; questionable practices are countenance amongst that crowd. The cleverest crook is commended by a congratulatory band of thieves. Bonnie and Clyde are still glamorized. The modern day Al Capone

operates freely. The law is on the side of the criminal because the criminals are the godless rich segment of society. Let's not kid ourselves.

In this country, there is a presumption that every man is innocent until proven guilty in our criminal courts. God's court takes the polar opposite approach. When you come before God, you better be prepared to plead guilty and throw yourself on the mercy of the court. For those of you reading that think I can't possibly mean that: read carefully: all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We never become innocent, but we certainly had better become justified! There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, but you better make sure you understand what it really means to be in Christ in our day-to-day routines. When we trust Christ, we are justified by faith. There's no other way in the world we could be justified. So, are you REALLY trusting Christ with your day-to-day affairs and mundane activities? ~

***1 And he said also unto the disciples, There was a certain rich man, who had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods.***

~ Abraham had a steward who had charge over his goods, you may remember. That steward went on a mission to Haran to find a bride for Isaac - and he took a whole lot of Abraham's goods and money with him. He was a faithful servant. David also has a steward in first Chronicles chapter twenty-eight verse one. The responsibility and control of all chattels and property were delegated to subordinates. Even the children of the master were subjected to the steward. Well, it was pretty important that a man in the position of steward be found faithful. This parable is the equivalent of the president or CEO of a corporation who has been caught embezzling....

***2 And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward.***

**3 And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, seeing that my lord taketh away the stewardship from me? I have not strength to dig; to beg I am ashamed.**

~ A man who's too ashamed to beg but not too ashamed to steal has some real contradictions in their mind, friends. I think there are a whole bunch of people like that, too, by the way. This man may have been older and honestly not fit to dig a ditch. Digging that ditch might have truly killed him. I think he was honest when he says he could not be a common laborer....

**4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.**

~ This man was lightning quick to form another scheme in his mind; and he has no intention of repenting and turning to the Lord. He shows no regrets or remorse, and he doesn't take any responsibility. The world calls this man "clever" and winks at the behavior - until he gets caught. Then, they suddenly hate him. These people have no shame about their dishonesty; and this case is egregiously doing more than simply breaking the law – this quickly became a conspiracy to falsify and defraud in retribution AFTER the fact of larceny. Whenever a man steals from you, he will always try to hurt you more if there is any opportunity to do so. If you are involved in a transaction with a dishonest partner, and they are discovered, they will, without variation, attempt to turn the tables and blame you for everything. It's sad but it can be frightening because this is where murder easily comes into play. Here, however strangely, we don't see any 'crime doesn't pay' lesson....

**5 And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?**

**6 And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty.**

**7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy bond, and write fourscore.**

~ Notice how one man received a better criminal deal than the other. Both cases are the same theft. I think this speaks to the totally unjust disbursement of goods one would receive when dealing with the man of the world. So, to put the next statement by the Lord Jesus right up against this makes it a shocking statement of approval from the rich man. I guess the rich man became rich using the same principles. When this account says the unjust steward did wisely, that means wisely according to the wisdom of the world – not according to the Wisdom of God. We’re talking about those who say, ‘welcome to the jungle’ – the asphalt jungle that is the dog-eat-dog business world and survival is of the fittest; “fittest” being defined as the most successful con artist of all con artists, of course. This is a world that hates Christ, and they make their own rules. So, this worldly rich man commends his worldly servant according to worldly wisdom and his worldly dealings....

***8 And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.***

***9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.***

~ Today, you don’t dare ask the rich how they got their money. That question is taboo in upper society. Well, notice verse eight says this is all in a generation. The bottom line is that the children of the world are wiser in business than the children of light! Then, for the Lord to say we are to make friends with mammon would be the most shocking statement of them all. Money is not evil in and of itself, though. It’s the LOVE of money that is the root of all evil – not the physical possession of said money. Money is morally neutral. It can be used in an entirely spiritual way - for either good or bad. The Lord Jesus Himself tells us to gather unto ourselves treasure in Heaven; and that the things of this world are but a shadow of things to come....

**10 He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.**

**11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true [riches]?**

**12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?**

~ We are stewards of the materialistic things that belong to God and we are given by God in this world - which means we personally own nothing down here. Everything under our commission is subject to audit on demand by God. Where we give is just as important as how much we give. Check out Mr. Businessman on his way to the stock exchange: that man won't invest in anything unless the value is going up. We have been over Christian giving, and it is as appalling and as sinful as ever in today's church. Most people act as if they're 'playing their money' and just seeing what will work and what will fail. Most Christians are just not smart in the use of their money. That is the blunt reality.

Very few people actually support the proper, correct and complete teaching of the Word of God. Someone will come along with a sob story or a sensational story about reaching a million children with a Bible in their hands and everyone sends them a dollar. Friends, it does no good if the information in the Word of God is not taught sincerely. In fact, it harms. Very few programs reach out to people with the true Gospel and sound doctrine of the apostles. If you support that program, then God will hold you responsible. You are giving to that which is wrong; and that giving is your sin! If you don't give, then God will hold you responsible for that, too; but there will be more people in trouble with the Lord for what they DID give – and you can just write that down!

I become quickly impatient hearing how people gave to this program or that missionary - when I know firsthand that the particular organization that they are talking about is as wrong in its theology and motives as it could possibly be. Most are run only for the self interest of one individual. Some national and well recognized charitable organizations run as high as

ninety percent overhead. That's shameful! With a ninety percent overhead, you would have to donate one hundred dollars to send a net ten dollars in "relief" or "aid" or "sponsorship." God is not blessing that, my beloved. That's fraud. Those people are con artists, you may be sure.

There is something radically wrong in contemporary Christian giving and support. It has become positively blasphemous, particularly in this country, but around the world, too. Christianity has been so maligned by false religion that I don't think it will experience revival again. I could be wrong. I hope I am wrong; but - I don't think I am. The world never invests in anything unless they are absolutely sure about its success. It's what the world labels 'smart money.' How much smart money do you have? Are you really using your money to support a program that teaches the Bible in sound doctrine - or a program that does a whole lot of nothing? If you do not get out the Word of God to the entire world - and support the man who does, then why do you think God is going to trust you with Heavenly riches? When we shine the light at this angle, money becomes absolutely spiritual; and how you use it is a direct reflection upon your heart! You're responsible for that giving AND the WAY in which you give....

***13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.***

***14 And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him.***

***15 And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.***

~ What are you doing with the money, my Christian friends? Are you making any? Where do you get it and what do you do with it? You don't have to answer to me - but you do have to answer to God. These are critical questions for anyone who claims to follow Christ. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out who your master is when we answer those questions. You cannot serve God and Mammon both. That got the attention of these

Pharisees so they, naturally, insult Him as a way out. An insult as a rebuttal ALWAYS indicates guilt. When Jesus said God knew their hearts - that stung. God knows every bit of your heart, too, friends - and He knows mine, too. We can put up a front with each other - but not with Him....

***16 The law and the prophets [were] until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it.***

***17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.***

***18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.***

~ God places the entire basis for all human reasoning as far as we can understand thoughts squarely on the Word of God in verse seventeen; and then He gives a single verse that, if it were the only verse we had on divorce – there would never be another Christian divorce amongst the church. Flip back to the nineteenth chapter of Matthew and first Corinthians chapter seven to consider this correctly. We must consider ALL Scripture of a particular theme.

In our next report from our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God, we are coming to the account of Lazarus and the rich man and, friends; this is going to become the Serious Safari. For some of you, it will become the critical wasteland of life. The Lord Jesus never made up a parable. They are all something that happened exactly the way it says it happened in real life. Well, the Lord is going to give us a lesson that gets down to the nitty gritty. When the Lord said a sower went forth – the people listening had seen a thousand sowers on a hundred hills that very day. Most of them were farmers. That got their attention.

We're going to explore a realm that you and I know nothing about as we move from one parable into this with no break or set up at all. We aren't going to see magic, either. Jesus is going to bridge the doorway of life and

the doorway of death and He will take us by the hand across that great gulf fixed. He's going to do this without any strain, stress or undue sensationalism whatsoever. When man is left to his own imagination, he seeks many inventions. When left to our own devices man will turn speculation into a form of distorted reality from their wildest dreams. Imagine freezing the body of a world leader in a desperate attempt to speak to continuing life? When man uses his own imagination, he gets in disgusting predicaments.

The next parable with Lazarus will swing back the iron curtain of impenetrable death. We're going to the funeral of a rich man that fared sumptuously while the dogs lick the sores of a poor man at his gate. The only thing that will be important is what the Word of God clearly says. There are only three men who ever spoke with any authority from the other side of the doorway of death: Jesus, our Authority; John, the eyewitness and Paul who was called up to the third Heaven but restored. A full consideration of this parable will be quite sobering and deeply troubling  
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