

# The Shrewd Use of Possessions

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning. It's good to be in the Lord's house on the Lord's day with the Lord's people.

Because it's all about the Lord. I need to be reminded of that. It's all about the Lord. Because sometimes I drift into thinking, maybe it's about me.

Or I want it to be about me. The Lord keeps showing me. It's not about me. Take out your Bibles with me, please.

And turn to the book of Luke, chapter 16. Gospel of Luke, chapter 16. We will look at the first half of the chapter or so.

The chapter has two parables in it. In verses 1 through 8 or 1 through 7 is the first parable.

[ 1 : 02 ] And then Jesus' explanation of the parable. Verses 14 to 18, Jesus is dealing with the Pharisees.

Who are ridiculing Jesus for the parable he just told. So then he in response tells another parable in the second part of the chapter.

So the chapter is framed by two parables. Begins with a parable. Ends with a parable. In the middle section, which we'll deal with, Lord willing, next week. Is a confrontation of the Pharisees who are lovers of money.

So that kind of sets the stage for what these parables are about. They're about money. The right use of them.

The wrong use of them. So I want to read. We're just going to look at verses 1 through 13. Which is enough because this is perhaps one of the most difficult and perplexing parables Jesus tells.

[ 2 : 03 ] And every commentary you read disagrees with the other commentaries. So thankfully I'm here and I can tell you what the right understanding is. Just teasing.

Okay. If you're able, please stand as I read from Luke chapter 16, verses 1 through 13. He, being Jesus, also said to the disciples.

There was a rich man who had a manager. And charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

And he called him and said to him, what is this I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management. For you can no longer be manager.

And the manager said to him, what shall I do? Since my master is taking the management away from me. I am not strong enough to dig.

[ 3 : 04 ] And I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what I, I have decided what to do. So that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their homes.

So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, how much do you owe my master? He said, a hundred measures of oil.

He said to him, take your bill and sit down quickly and write 50. Then he said to another, how much do you owe?

He said, a hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, take your bill and write 80. The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

[ 4 : 08 ] And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth. So that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much. And one who is dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much.

If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your

own?

No servant can serve two masters. For he will either hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. The Pharisees who were lovers of money heard all these things and they ridiculed him.

[ 5 : 26 ] So it reads. Let us pray. Father, give us your mind. Give us your words. Help us to see what you want us to see.

Help us, Lord, grant the words to communicate what is true. And that we don't spend much time on that which is debatable.

Give us clarity in what seems at first glance a perplexing story. So we ask for your help today. We want to honor you.

We want to honor Christ. We want to hear what he has to say for us today. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. I don't know if you heard this story about Larry.

Well, his name's changed to protect somebody. Larry lives in San Luis Obispo, California. And he was sick of the world.

[ 6 : 39 ] Sick of COVID. Trump. The MyPillow guy. Russia. China. Global warming. Street crime. Fentanyl. Illegal immigrants. Racial tensions.

And the rest of the disturbing stories that occupy the media headlines. Larry drove his car into his garage. Larry drove his car into his garage. And then he sealed every doorway and window as best he could.

He got back into his car. He wound down all the windows. Selected his favorite radio station.

Started the car and revved it up to a slow idle. Five days later, a worried neighbor peered through the garage window and saw him in the car.

She notified the emergency services and they broke in, pulling Larry from the car. Surprisingly, a little sip of water.

And he was in perfect condition. But his Tesla had a dead battery. Larry.

[ 7 : 48 ] That's not his real name. According to the thing, it said Bill. So I changed his name to Larry. Larry was not prudent.

Was not shrewd. He did not think through everything with foresight. In Luke 16, Jesus tells the parable of the dishonest manager or the unrighteous manager.

It is a parable that is perplexing. It is, as scholars say, for them even, it's one of the hardest to understand. It seems to be Jesus using the example of an unrighteous person.

A negative example. And it seems that he commends him for us to emulate.

So, it is about what Jesus calls unrighteous mammon. So the word mammon, it's usually translated either money or wealth, possessions.

[ 9 : 06 ] It's an Aramaic word, mammon, meaning, you know, things that we use to exist. Things we use in this world to live.

It's called unrighteous because there's nothing really, I mean, money's neutral or things are neutral. It's how we use them or maybe how we get them that could be unrighteous.

If we depend on them and look to them as our value, then they become unrighteous. So he calls it unrighteous. In a sense that it's not, it doesn't have a godliness to it.

So what is the right use of possessions? I titled this the shrewd use of possessions. Or the wise use of possessions.

How do we use them well? And this is, I think, what the story's getting at. So Jesus, I believe it's Jesus who is the master commending the shrewdness of this unrighteous person.

[ 10 : 15 ] He's not commending his unrighteousness. He's commending his shrewdness. That he, anyway, okay, I'll try to explain that.

Here's the other thing. Notice this begins, verse 16, chapter 16, verse 1. He said to the disciples. Now Luke keeps telling us back and forth.

Jesus is talking to the disciples. Then he's talking to the Pharisees. Then he's responding to the crowd. So Luke is careful to tell us who Jesus is teaching or working with.

Here is an instance where he's speaking to the disciples. This is not a message for the crowd. It's not a message for the Pharisees, although they overhear it and ridicule him for it.

So he's got another parable for them later. But this one is for the disciples, okay? And we see Luke doing that on a regular basis, kind of going back and forth.

[ 11 : 21 ] So I thought, let's just look real quickly. What has Jesus said specifically to the disciples? What is it that he's wanting to train them in?

What is important to know? For those of us who follow Jesus, what are the subjects? What are the issues he wants us to learn and to think about and absorb, okay?

So I went back through and just kind of traced. What did he specifically say to the disciples? So we go back to chapter 6. The great sermon on the plain. Different from the sermon on the mount.

Luke 6 is the sermon on the plain. He came down from the mount and preached to his disciples there. Gave that message about blessed are, right? Who are the people of the kingdom?

The blessed people of the kingdom are the poor and the persecuted. And remember in that message, remember that was a tough one. He calls his disciples to love enemies.

[ 12 : 20 ] Love his enemies. Because other people do everything else. He's calling them to the higher standard. Love enemies and live in integrity. Then in chapter 8, he tells the parable of the sower.

And remember the disciples, that was the first time. And so the disciples come to him alone and say, Why are you teaching him parables? These stories. And so Jesus explains why.

Because he's separating the crowds from the disciples. And so he's telling parables to the crowds to hide truth. He's not telling stories to make it clear.

He's telling stories to hide the real pearls. Because then the disciples will come to him afterwards and say, Okay, we heard the story. Now explain it to us.

Right? So he explains the sower. What's the meaning? What's the deeper understanding? So he says the secrets of the kingdom are for the disciples, not the crowds.

[ 13 : 23 ] So in the parables, they're to the crowds, but they're hidden truth for the disciples to discover as they come to him. And he explains them.

Okay? In chapter 9, Jesus tells just them, he foretells that he will suffer, be rejected, he will die, and he will be raised on the third day.

Chapter 10, he sends out the 70. Remember, he commissions and sends them out to preach and heal. Chapter 11, Jesus teaches them how to pray.

Not just how to pray, but what to pray. Right? And then chapter 12, so we basically have from chapter 6 through 12, he is training disciples regularly.

So in chapter 12, the whole thing is really to the disciples. He warns them about hypocrisy. He focuses on fearing God, not man. He warns them about covetousness.

[ 14 : 22 ] So there's that picture again of dealing with money. He warns them about covetousness. And then he urges them to not worry, to trust God, right?

To seek the kingdom first, and all these things will be added to you. So that's what he's trained the disciples on so far. So it's chapter 6 through 12. Now chapters 13 to 15, who we were just dealing with, is mainly focusing on crowds and Pharisees.

Okay, all of chapter 15, the three parables we looked at last week, the lost coins, the lost sheep, and the lost son, right? The prodigal son.

All of those were in response to the Pharisees. Okay? Now it's specific. So chapter 16, we have the next lesson.

So what's important for those who follow Jesus to know? What does he want us to know? So he's talked about, right, kingdom. He's talked about the secrets of the kingdom in the parables.

[ 15 : 27 ] He's talked about prayer, fearing God. Now what? Now comes a very hard lesson to discern. Because he tells a perplexing parable that I'm not sure any of the commentaries agree on.

So should we just skip it? Should we? No. No. I think we can, if we don't get bogged down in the details, I think we can kind of take a big picture look and see what Jesus is doing.

So learning from a dishonest steward. Can we learn from people who are dishonest? So can we have a negative example and learn positive things?

Yeah. So here we have a dishonest person, a person who's been unfaithful, right? He's getting fired from his job, right? He's done all the wrong stuff. In the verge of being fired and being too feeble to work and too proud to beg, he's got to figure out a future.

So now he finally thinks. And that's what shrewd means. He becomes wise. Wise means to think ahead, to think through, to consider the consequences.

[ 16 : 48 ] You read the book of Proverbs. It's about wisdom. It's all about thinking through the consequences. Making wise choices because this choice leads to this, which will lead then to that.

So wisdom is considering thinking through. That's what shrewd is. So I see two applications here. One is the telling of the parable. We have the parable from verses 1 through 7. Verse 8, I believe, is Jesus speaking and transitioning to what that story means.

And then in verses 9 to 13, he gives three specific applications. Three very pointed implications and applications from the parable.

Okay? So in verses 1 through 8 is the parable with the insight or the implication about thinking ahead, about foresight. Right?

[17:50] Everything else that this dishonest manager does, he does one thing right. Even though it's selfish, he's still doing something right.

He's using wisdom to get himself a future. Okay? And Jesus is saying, okay, see, see the sons of the world, they figure out, they're shrewd, they're wise.

Even though it's selfish and it's earthly, they're still using wisdom. They're more wise in applying wisdom to earthly things than the sons of light are. And so he's going to take this negative example and apply it in a positive way.

How should the sons of light use wisdom? Right? We can actually learn from the sons of the world who are more diligent and careful and thoughtful than the sons of light.

So Jesus is kind of saying, hey, learn from this. So, okay, let's break it down. So I would summarize verses 1 to 8 this way.

[18:56] Use prudence. Another word for shrewdness. Use prudence or use wisdom, which involves a bold and decisive foresight to secure a future home.

That's what this man does. He is bold and decisive and he uses this prudence. He's got foresight to secure a future home.

He's doing something to make sure he has a place to go when he's fired. Got it? Okay. So we see in the first three verses a problem.

He's called a manager. Verse 1. A rich man had a manager and charges were brought to the master that this man was wasting his possessions.

He's squandering the man's property. It's actually the same word. He's squandering the possessions. The same word that was used of the prodigal son.

[20:00] Remember, he took his father's wealth and then he squandered it. Right? He spent it all. And so this man has dispersed or scattered all of his master's possessions.

So it came to the master's attention who must be away from him, not present, must be away. And he's found out, what have you done? Right? Verse 2. So he confronts him. Calls him, what have you done?

Turn in. You're done. What have you done? You're done. Turn in the, I'm coming and you're going to give an account. We're going to look at the books and see what you did. But you will not be employed after that.

So he's called to account. He's mishandled things. He will be fired. So he asked, verse 3, what do I do? I'm not strong enough and I'm too proud.

Right? So he's still kind of a weasley guy. You know, he's still kind of, you know, what can I do? You know, so he's not a likable guy. He's a jerk.

[21:05] He's a lazy man. He's just kind of, he's kind of dispersed all the possessions. All these, apparently the owner has now all these debtors out there and he's not bringing the money in.

So what shall he do? Verse 4. Here's what I'll do. I'll do what I'm supposed to do. I'll do my job. I'll call the debtors and get them to pay. That's what he was supposed to be doing all along.

So what I think what he's doing is not, not dishonest. I think he's doing what he's supposed to be doing. He hasn't been doing his job. Now do it. I'm in trouble. Got to do it. So at least I can look good in the eyes of the debtors, even though I'll look bad in the eyes of my Lord.

So at least I can secure a future. Hopefully. Maybe one of these guys will look on me favorably and give me a place to stay where I can serve him. Okay.

So he brings in one by one these debtors. You know, one guy owes a hundred measures of oil. That's a liquid measure. It's a bath of oil, which comes to about 875 gallons in our language, which would take several years salary to pay for a regular worker.

[22:22] But apparently whoever this debtor is, is also a rich person to afford that kind of a debt. That means his Lord is super rich that he can give that much out to just one and then another hundred of wheat to another guy.

And those are just the first two examples. So he's starting to gather. So he says to him, what do you owe? He lets the debtor tell him what he owes. And so the first guy says a hundred measures of oil, a liquid measure.

And so then the manager says, well, write 50. And then another guy with wheat, I got a hundred measures of wheat, dry measure.

Okay. Then pay 80. So what's going on there? One guy only paid 50 of a hundred. The other guy pay 80 of a hundred. Something's different there.

Why 50% of one and 20% of another? Well, he's discounting, right? He's discounting. And according to R.C. Sproul, okay, scholar, other scholars have, well, maybe it's this, maybe it's this. [ 23 : 34 ] Maybe he's cutting, you know, his compensation. Maybe he's cutting, right, out of his master's pocket.

You know, what is he doing? Yeah. Well, it's a surplus. So Sproul says it's a surplus. So, I mean, a surcharge.

You know, you ever get a bill and you got, you know, remember the old phone bills? And all this surcharge, this surcharge. You know, we had to move paper, that cost you a dime. You know, I don't know.

We don't even know what all those surcharges are, right? So this is like a surcharge. So for a liquid measure, there is, the owner takes a risk of spoilage when he's taking and delivering.

So he charges a surcharge. Another 50% or 100%, whatever, from 50 to 100. Because the owner's taking all the risks.

[ 24 : 35 ] So that's the cost. And so what the manager's doing is within his right and authority as a manager. He's just cutting the surcharge out.

I'll give you at cost. You ever met somebody, you bought something, you met somebody, says, I'll give it to you for cost. That's what he's doing. And you're thinking, that's a good deal.

Is it really cost? It's cost after the, no. So perhaps that's what he's doing. I'm thinking, up to that point, he'd been unrighteous.

All of a sudden, his life's on the line. I better do something that I can do to earn favor for the next place.

When my owner shows up, when my Lord shows up and cuts me off. So he had a little bit of time.

Okay. So that's what he does.

[ 25 : 43 ] So what's the point? So verse 8, here's the confusing part. Okay. So that's the story so far. Here's the confusing part. What is written in the ESV is the master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

For the sons of the world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. Who's saying that? Is it the master in the story commending his servant?

Or is the master, which is the same word kurios for Lord, is it the Lord Jesus saying this? The last part of verse 8, you have to say, only makes sense as the words of Jesus.

The explanation for the sons of the world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. I tell you, verse 9, application.

That's Jesus. So if the end of verse 8 is Jesus speaking, it doesn't make any sense unless Jesus is speaking the beginning of that verse. Because grammatically, they're connected.

[ 27 : 01 ] Not that big a deal, is it? Well, if you're going to understand the text. When Luke uses the phrase, the Lord, without any modification, the Lord of mine or the Lord of the...

Just the Lord, that's Luke's way of saying, Jesus is talking. Okay? So it still leaves us with a bit of a perplexing issue.

Why is Jesus commending this man? Why is Jesus praising this man? Look at the word, verse 8.

The master, the Lord, commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

Again, look at the words carefully. He's not commending dishonesty. He's commending shrewdness. Or, shall we translate it as the rest of the New Testament translates this word?

For his wisdom. Only the ESV and the New American Standard translate this word shrewd.

[ 28 : 12 ] King James has wisdom. Why did they translate it shrewd? Because it seemed like this guy's a little crafty, eh?

But if this is Jesus speaking, what is he commending? He's commending his wisdom. He's not commending the way the man managed the place.

He's commending what the man did in order to secure his future. He finally did his job. He finally thought ahead and did what he needed to do to hopefully secure some future home. So he's not on the streets. He did that selfishly. He did that in an earthly way. That's not what Jesus is commending.

He's not commending the motives. He's commending that he used wisdom. Okay? He's commending that he fought through and fought through the consequences and did something that secured a future for himself.

[ 29 : 23 ] And then he's going to make a comparison. He's going to say, see, here's one of those sons of the world. He's doing it in a worldly way.

He's doing it for worldly reasons. He's, you know. But how, what he used to do that is commendable. And that's what the sons of light should be doing.

That's what he's saying. The point is, the sons of light also must make use of wisdom. They also should be thinking through the consequences and thinking toward the future.

Toward securing a home. Not in this world. That's what he's going to say in verse 9. But to secure an eternal dwelling.

Store up your treasure in heaven. Not on earth. Now this man, he's just all about earth. Okay? But he's commending the wisdom he used to do that.

[ 30 : 34 ] He thought ahead. So here's this word. What in the ESV translated shrewdness. Does anybody have a different translation that has a different word? What do you got?

Astute. Astute? Astute. Yeah. Okay. What translation is that? Oh, okay. It's a Christian.

Something we've never heard of. A Christian standard Bible. Okay. Okay. Okay. Nobody has King James? It's got wisdom.

It's got wisdom. I believe NIV has wisdom. Okay. It comes from the word group though. This word. It's not the normal word for wisdom.

It's actually another word that's attached to all the words that have the idea of thinking. Of a mindset. Of a mindset. To think ahead.

[ 31 : 30 ] To use your noggin. One. One of the things we got used to in the book, in the gospel of Mark years ago when we went through the gospel of Mark, Jesus kept asking them, do you get it?

Have you connected the dots? Have you thought this through? He's wanting us to think, right? He doesn't want to just give us the answer so we can write it down and we got the answer.

He wants us to think through with wisdom, to think through the implications. So that's what he's doing. So why is this shrewdness or wisdom commended?

Here's another place where it's used. The same word is used in Matthew 7 where Jesus says, the man who built on the rock is not a foolish man, but he is a wise man.

He's shrewd. He builds on the rock. Right? The same word is used by Jesus where he says, be wise as serpents. Same word. It's used again in Matthew 25 here that I'm going to read.

[ 32 : 33 ] Jesus tells a parable about the 10 virgins, right? Five foolish and five wise. So Matthew 25, then the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish and five were wise or shrewd. Same word. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them.

But the wise, what did they do? Because they're thinkers. Because they're wise. What'd they do? They took their flasks of oil with the lamps. Why? Because they're thinking ahead.

They're thinking ahead. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. But at midnight, there was a cry. Here's the bridegroom.

Come out to meet him. Then all the virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out. Why are their lamps going out?

[ 33 : 33 ] Because they're foolish. They didn't think ahead. They didn't plan. They're not ready. But the wise answered, saying, since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.

Take care of your own business. You know, like the dishonest manager. Do what you're supposed to do in the first place. And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came.

And those who were ready, the wise, those who were ready, those who had planned, those who had thought ahead, those who had thought through the consequences, prepared for a delay. Those who were ready went in with him to the marriage piece.

And the door was shut. Afterward, the other virgins also came, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered, truly, I say to you, I do not know you.

I do not know you. I do not know the person who does not think ahead. I do not know the person that does not use their wisdom, their thinking process.

[ 34 : 41 ] So, prudence. Jesus commends prudence. Which is, in the case, example of this man, it was bold, decisive, foresight for the future.

So, the question is, okay, what does that mean for us? How does that look in the Christian life? And now we turn to verse 9 through 13, where Jesus gives three applications of this parable.

Remember, he's talking to the disciples. So, he gives to the disciples the secrets of the parables, right? The parable is just the story. It's kind of like, what does that mean? How do we?

So, Jesus is going to tell us in verse 9 to 13, this is what I meant. This is what I wanted you to get. Now, don't worry about all the little details. I always want you to get these concepts.

Verse 9, I want you to get generosity. Use that mammon. Use that mammon. As unrighteous as it is, use that mammon, your possessions, your money, your resources.

[ 35 : 49 ] Use them to make friends. So that when the mammon's gone, when the money's gone, they will welcome you into not an earthly dwelling, but an eternal dwelling.

What is he saying there? See, it's generosity for the future. And it's not just for earthly future. It's for heavenly future. You're storing up treasure in heaven.

You're giving it away here on earth, being generous with it here, not using my mammon all for me, but I'm making friends. I'm making friends. I'm using my mammon, my possessions, my money, my resources to help people in need.

That stores up. That shows that I'm not a slave of money. Okay, and then faithfulness in the present.

Verses 10 to 12, he talks about faithfulness or unfaithfulness. And then verse 13, he gets to the bottom line. One master, you can't serve two. All right, so he's got three applications.

[ 36 : 59 ] First one in verse 9, I kind of already explained it. Generosity for eternity. Applying foresight for eternity.

So, I think Paul says the same thing over in 1 Timothy 6. He's talking to the rich. He tells them to not trust in their riches, but to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.

Thus, storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. So, he's telling those who are rich, don't depend on your riches.

Give it away. Do good works. Share. Be generous. Be generous. And by your generosity, you store up treasure for a good foundation in the future, which is heavenly foundation.

Foundation. That's what the wise man does. So, that's how I look at verse 9. I know verse 9 is a little difficult. Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth.

[ 38 : 07 ] So, what's unrighteous wealth? That sounds like, oh, the wealth that I got in an unrighteous way. I don't think that's what he means.

I think he just means unrighteous in the sense that it's wealth, it's possessions, it's money that you have that's not necessarily right. It's not. It's worldly stuff.

If you depended on it, if you use it only exclusively for yourselves, then it's used in an unrighteous way.

He's not talking about doing something unrighteous. He's talking about using something that can be unrighteous. That make sense? Maybe not.

That was my stab at it. That's a hard phrase. But in terms of when you look at the rest of what Jesus says and the rest of the New Testament, that's the only way I can square it.

[ 39 : 16 ] In a couple of chapters, we're going to get to Zacchaeus. Remember Zacchaeus? Wee little man, a wee little man, was he? He's only about two and a half feet tall.

No, I don't know. I won't use this example. But remember, Zacchaeus wants to meet Jesus. Jesus says, hey, we're going to have lunch.

Come into your house. And Zacchaeus is so excited. He's been looking forward to Jesus. And he says to Jesus, hey, everyone I've defrauded, I'll pay them back four times, you know, and I'll give away all this stuff.

All this stuff that he's gotten in an unrighteous way. He's going to give it away. He's going to give it away. And he's going to give it back. And he's going to make restitution.

Remember what Jesus said to Zacchaeus? Salvation has come to this house. Even though all that stuff he acquired in an unrighteous way, cheating, extorting, whatever he did as a tax collector, which is why they're despised.

[ 40 : 21 ] Right? He's giving it away. He's using it to make friends for an eternal home. I don't know.

That's kind of how I'm looking at it. I think Jesus is saying, you know, what you did maybe unrighteously even. Or maybe just meaning the wealth that is just by itself not righteous. It's just worldly. Use it for eternal purposes. All right. I don't have to persuade you on that one. Sorry. Like I'm in seminary class. I've got to explain. Secondly, verses 10 to 12. This is easier, okay? He talks about faithfulness in the present, being faithful now.

Verse 10. One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much. One who is dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much. In other words, faithful is faithful. If you're faithful, you'll be faithful.

[ 41 : 25 ] If you're not faithful, you won't be faithful. And what's the measure? Well, if you're faithful with little stuff, little stuff. It might be like, you know, we can cut a corner here.

We can skip that. If you're faithful in even the littlest stuff, then you'll be faithful and trustworthy and reliable in the big stuff.

Oh, I don't need to be faithful with the little stuff. I'm looking for the big stuff. And Jesus is saying, no, you're either faithful or you're not faithful. You're either faithful and reliable and trustworthy. And whatever you do, even the littlest thing, then you'll be faithful and trustworthy in the big stuff. So how's that hit you? You okay?

Did you survive that one? That's a tough one, isn't it? Because all of us can go, have I been faithful in all the little things? Who has?

[ 42 : 25 ] So it's a call to us to say, okay, yeah, it's about character. Okay, faithful. And he goes on. So using reason here, if then you've not been faithful in unrighteous wealth.

Again, there, if you haven't been faithful in the worldly kind of stuff, dealing with earthly possessions and monetary stuff, if you haven't been faithful with that, who's going to make you, who's going to give you and trust you with the real stuff, with the true stuff?

So I think unrighteous wealth is used in the sense where, in contrast with what's true, what's real, what's really valuable, and the unrighteous is more like, that's the temporary.

It's not the real stuff. It's just what we use on earth. It's not necessarily bad in itself, but it can become real bad, right? If you depend on it, if you make that your God, then, okay?

So if you're not faithful with that, who's going to give you the real stuff? And then verse 12, and if you've not been faithful with somebody else, is another word, working for somebody else, serving somebody else, if you're not faithful there, who's going to give you your own stuff to manage?

[ 43 : 47 ] If you're hoping someday to be independent and work for yourself, right? If you're not faithful, working for others. So it's faithful is faithful, in other words. You're either faithful or you're not.

Jesus sets the bar high, doesn't he? You either are or you aren't. And then in the bottom line, verse 13, here's something that nobody can do.

Here's something that absolutely nobody can do. No one, no one can serve two masters. No servant, no house servant can serve two masters. Just can't do it.

He'll either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. He'll be divided. His heart will be divided.

And then he summarizes what two masters are we talking about. At the end of verse 13, you cannot serve God and money. God and money have different values. God and money are different.

[ 44 : 47 ] And so you can't serve God and money. You can't serve the real, true, satisfying, all-fulfilling, keeping his promise all the time, and serve this lesser God that can get you what you want right now, but will fail you in the future.

You'll either love the one and despise the other because they're in conflict.

You can't serve both because their values clash. Their draw clashes.

Their promises clash. And it's interesting. He says, no one can serve two masters.

You cannot serve God and money. He's not saying you shouldn't. Notice. He doesn't say you shouldn't. He says, you can't. You just can't do it.

[ 46 : 01 ] You might want to. I want to have both. And Jesus is saying, he's not saying you shouldn't have both. He's saying, you can't. It just won't work. It's an impossibility because they're not on the same plane.

But Jesus is saying, you can use money. There's a right use of it. that can serve others. There's a right use of it that can end up welcoming you into eternal dwellings. Storing up treasure. So, if money is unrighteous, should we just get rid of it all?

No. He doesn't say that. He only told one person to do that. And that's because that was the guy's idol, right? But he does say, be generous with it.

[ 47 : 15 ] He does say, give it away. You know, back in chapter 12, it says, don't be like the man that hoarded it all, right? And he's going to build bigger barns and he's going to be all, have retire and be all great, right?

And he's all about himself, right? And he was the fool because that's all he thought about was himself. So, it wasn't that he had wealth and could build bigger barns. That wasn't a problem. It was that he wanted to be able to kind of just, you know, relax and retire. Thinking about, anybody thinking about retirement?

Considered retirement, right? Already retired, right? So, that's the scary thing. You start thinking, okay, do I have, can I make it? Can we, you know, because of health stuff, we've been looking at that kind of stuff and it's like, okay, I don't know.

I'm not retiring. There's just, but I have to think ahead. Right? Now, all of a sudden, the health stuff's going on. I'm going, okay, what if? Right? So, so, so it's kind of scary.

[ 48 : 21 ] So, this is really challenging to me. What's enough and still give away? Right?

Not all for me, but what's enough, you know? And only you before God can answer that. I can't answer that for you.

No book can answer that for you. Only you before God can answer that. What's right for you? What's okay? And the Bible does talk about, you know, taking care, we take care of our parents, right?

We're supposed to be taking, we take care of our children in the future. So, we are to think ahead in those terms. It's, it's not that we're not to have anything, but that we're to be careful and wise, but also generous as we can be.

So, when you, when you give, whether you give to the church, whether you give to others, whether you give to, to missionaries, whether you give to, you know, programs in the, in the community.

[ 49 : 26 ] I mean, all, all those are good things to give to. The question we go before the Lord with is, you know, how much? Or how little can I keep for myself and give?

I don't know how you ask that. Okay. Does everybody feel, you know, you know, flayed yet? Because I, it's like, ah, Jesus does that to us. He kind of just, who could follow him?

I want to, I love to. Sometimes it causes great anxiety or perplexity.

Here's his call. So, how do we do this? Okay. So, how do I, how do I receive this message of Jesus about being generous as I can with the right use of my, of possessions and money that I have?

[ 50 : 37 ] You know, being as generous as I can, being faithful, faithful, faithful, even in the little stuff. And then making sure that there's only one God I serve. Because prudence is generosity and faithfulness to serve the one Lord.

So, how can I do that? Is it just that I need to resolve to do it? I just need to be, I just need to commit. I just need to really, you know, try harder.

No, that's not where the New Testament goes. Here's, here's how we do it. Romans 8. Romans 8, 5. Paul says, for those who live according to the flesh, set their minds, are shrewd, are wise, set their minds on the things of the flesh.

But those who live according to the spirit, set their minds, think ahead on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death.

To set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. Which do you want? For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. There you go. Can't serve two masters.

[ 51 : 47 ] The mind set on the flesh is hostile to God. For it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it's can't. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. They just cannot do it.

You, however, so how do I please God? You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. If in fact, the spirit of God dwells in you.

Okay, that's the first question asked. Does the spirit of God dwell in me? Because I can't do any of this if the spirit of God does not dwell in me. I can't please God. I can't serve God.

I, I, I can't. I don't have the ability unless I have the spirit of God. So, in the spirit, if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you, anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, which is the same thing as the spirit in you, although the body is dead because of sin, okay, the spirit is life because of righteousness, because of the righteousness of Christ, because Christ has covered our sin.

[ 52 : 52 ] He gives us the Holy Spirit, which makes us right. If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

There's your future reward. There's your eternal. So then brothers, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, not to set our minds and be shrewd about the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the spirit, watch this, if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the spirit of God and are sons of God. First question, does the Holy Spirit dwell in you? Second question, are you setting your mind on him, on his stuff, his things?

How do I do that? I walk with him. I talk with him. I read his word. And I ask him, tell me what I do with this.

[ 54 : 03 ] I'm led by him. And then when it comes to specific deeds of my body that are unpleasing to God, by the spirit, what does he say at the end there?

By the spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body. If by the spirit, you crucify, you kill, you suffocate, you extinguish the deeds of the body, you will live.

You'll experience life and peace. All those things, the deeds of the body you were hoping would give you life and peace and temporary joy.

If you crush them out by the spirit, then you'll experience life and peace.

How do we stay faithful? How do we be generous? How do we keep the Lord as the only Lord of my life? How can I use my money to share with others? Well, it's simple.

[ 55 : 11 ] It's not easy, but simple. Set your mind on the things of the spirit. Walk with the spirit. Live by the spirit. Talk to the spirit.

You cannot stay faithful in your own strength. If your mind is not engaged, you will not be able to do this. There's no cruise control with this.

You have to set your mind. You have to think. You have to be purposeful and tenses. You have to think so. That's why a lot of folks, first thing they do, they get up and they pray and they read and they're setting their mind for the day.

Maybe you do that at a different time. Whatever. Set your mind. So final question is the most important, who do you serve?

Sit back and consider that prayerfully. Who do you serve? Do you serve God? Or do you serve yourself for this world?

[ 56 : 25 ] Who do you serve? What about your future? Who do you serve? Who's it about? Who? Okay, that's enough.

Let's pray. Father, take this word of Jesus, Lord, and apply it to our hearts. Whatever in this message, whatever in this passage perplexes us or we feel like we don't get it or we don't follow, point us to what we can get.

Verse 13. Verse 10. Point us to those things that call us to be faithful, call us to serve you and you alone.

And then, Father, work on our hearts, Lord. Lord, when we see ourselves that we don't measure up to those things, help us to draw near to you because you make us able.

By your spirit, you make us able. You enable us, Lord, to walk and to wait.

[ 57 : 39 ] You enable us to trust when we're anxious. Amen.

You know what it is to work in our hearts in these very moments. We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.