

Earthly Wealth Now and Later: Luke 16:9 8 NOVEMBER 2020

Your attitude toward material wealth, and your actual use of material wealth are shaping you for time and for eternity far more than you realize. Money is an excellent servant, a terrible master.

I. **His crisis and your crisis: 16:1,2. (Steward is a custodian; one with custody)**

A. Still employed but leaving soon: prepare to turn over the job to someone else. What now?

B. Two options ruled out: one on physical grounds, the other on social/moral grounds.

C. Note the wise resolve is to make use of the brief time he has left at his position of influence: feather his nest—by making friends—for a comfortable landing when he gets ousted.

1. **He makes an assessment: I'm going to be out of a house soon.**
2. **He forms a plan: to be received favorably by others.**
3. **He carries out his plan for his own sake—he made friends with his material influence.**

II. **What he did for himself, you must do for Jesus' sake, and other's sake, and your sake**

A. Don't forget the three previous parables. You know why Jesus ate with the sinners, why the angels rejoiced; and why the father said, “let us eat and be merry.”

Note his **thoroughness**: vs. 5 “...he called everyone...” Note his **diligence**, he is urgent vs. 6 “...sit down quickly...”

1. This would amount to about 300 days of labor (50 bathes—9 gallons each) vs.7 the wheat came to 220 bushels—400 days worth of labor.

2. Limited commendation: The master calls him an *unjust steward* who *did wisely*. Clever fellow! He shrewdly looked out for himself.
3. GOD REJOICES TO SEE THIS ATTITUDE AND ACTION PRACTICED: II Corinthians 9:7

vs. 8 The children of this world show more sense in material things than Christians show in spiritual things. “The diligence of worldly men about the things of time and money, should put to shame the coldness and sluggishness of professing Christians about eternal salvation.” J.C.Ryle

Summary:

1. **Christians are stewards.** The man in the story handles no wealth of his own. We are handling God's property.
2. **This stewardship of ours is temporary: “it shall fail”.** Ours will come to an end: either death or the return of Christ will end this stewardship.
3. **The money and material things that we handle here are shadows.** The riches of the unseen world are real. This is the meaning of Jesus contrasting unrighteous mammon with true riches.
4. **In the other world we shall have that which is our own. Here you are handling what belongs to Another.**

III. **What is temporary and what is permanent? vs. 9-12 (“everlasting habitations”)**

A. **Faithful in little...faithful in much vs. 10** “A master does not elevate to a higher position the servant who has abused his confidence in matters of less importance.” F. Godet p.168

B. **Applying this to believers:** the *unrighteous mammon* is God's money which man *unjustly* takes as too much his own. Faithfulness consists of employing that money in the service of God. Death brings deprivation of mammon. We go. It stays. Through lack of faithfulness, “...we establish our incapacity to administer better goods if they were confided to us—therefore God will not commit them to us.

C. What are “true riches”: vs. 11? “Earthly goods are called another's *good*, that is to say, a good which strictly belongs to another than ourselves (God). As it is *faithfulness* to God, so it is *goodness and justice* to man, to use them with a view to our needy neighbor.”

D. “That which is our own” means the good for which we are essentially fitted, the normal completion of our being; fitted for the coming kingdom—the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

What Jesus means here is this: “God commits to man, during his earthly pilgrimage, during his state of probation here, goods belonging to God, which are of less value (earthly things). Your use of them, faithful or unfaithful, just or unjust, which you make of material wealth, settles the question whether our true inheritance (the goods of the Spirit, of which believers receive in earnest—a down payment, a comparatively small amount) shall or shall not be granted him or her above.

Compare Luke 14:13,14. Matthew 25:31-46 Proverbs 19:17
Revelation 14:13

There is a fire in every believer's future: I Corinthians 3:11-16.

Let us consider this well for it is our employment here; There are everlasting habitations. You and I are to introduce people to our holy, gracious forgiving Savior and King.

What is mammon in your case? It is money-- all of us have some. It is from God to sustain our needs and many wants—but not only that.

You have a house or apartment that represents a large investment in most cases: you can use your home; evangelism, hospitality.

You have valuable skills; this is just like giving people stacks of money. We have been on the receiving end many times.

Bring tracts to the restaurant, bring them everywhere.

Give systematically. Think missions.

Your stewardship in this matter has undreamed of significance:
Matthew 25:31-46.

Dear young people, if you marry an unfaithful steward relative to material wealth, I promise you it will affect every part of your life together—it will very likely be bitter and joyless.