

In 1815 Napoleon was defeated in the battle of Waterloo... and the hero of that battle was the Duke of Wellington. ... The duke's most recent biographer claims to have an **advantage** over all the other previous biographers. ... **His** advantage... was that he had found an old account ledger... that showed how the duke had spent his money... ... that... says the biographer... was a **far** better clue... to what the duke thought was **really** important... than reading his letters or his speeches.

Can you imagine that? ... If someone wrote **your** biography on the basis of your checkbook... or your income-tax return... what might it say about you... your loyalties... your focus... and about whom you serve?

Last week as we opened the subject of finances with the first part of Luke chapter 16... we saw that the Lord uses money as a **test**. The way you handle mere **finances** ... will determine whether or not things of far greater value... Spiritual Resources... will be assigned to you.

### **Luke 16:10-12**

In Luke 16... Jesus is talking to Pharisees... who were lovers of money. ... Let's pick up with the next verse from where we left off last week in our study through Luke's Gospel.

### **Luke 16:14**

In the passage before today's... Jesus had told them the parable of the unrighteous steward. ... You may remember from last week... how Jesus taught... through **this** parable... that the way you use your money (He calls it "unrighteous mammon") ... will have definite effects on your eternity.

Believers are to be as **creative**... and at least as energetic as a businessperson who only invests in **temporal** things of this generation.

### **Luke 16:8-9**

Use your money to advance the cause of **Christ** in the lives of others... rather than using it to advance **your** comforts and your status symbols... That is the point of verse 11: "*If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?*"

In other words... the possession of money in this world... is a test run for eternity. ... Can you pass the test of faithfulness with your money? ...Does the way you use it... **prove** that what you really enjoy is **things**... not God?

Verse 14 says the Pharisees hear all this and **scoff** at Jesus... because they are lovers of money. ... Jesus touched a raw nerve of their lives. ... More than anything... they love money... and what it brought them. Jesus saw it and nailed it. ... The Pharisees tried to justify their attitude... but Jesus stopped them.

### **Luke 16:15**

In spite of their strict religious practices... the Pharisees loved money and cultivated values that were **godless**. ... The Pharisees prided themselves in their faithful obedience to the Law of Moses... They professed to trust God.. but they **measured life**... ... by wealth and possessions... the same as the unbelieving worldly crowd.

*Far too many professed Christians today are making the **same** mistake. ... With their **lips**... they honor the Lord. ... They say that everything they own*

belongs to the Lord. ... "It is all His!" But with their wealth... they are trying to **impress** people. Deep down they **really** believe that their possessions are why people accept... and give them respect. ... They **live** like the world. ... And that is the way they give their respect to others... greater amounts of respect and honor is given to those who own more.

The Pharisees needed to stop "drifting" with the crowd and start "pressing into the kingdom." ... Because they were drifting with the crowd... the Pharisees had **rejected** the ministry of John the Baptist... and permitted him to be killed... even though they **knew** he was God's prophet.

When your life is drifting with the world... and especially if it is controlled by the love of money... you open the door to every kind of sin... Self pleasure... and self-preservation become your life **focus**. ... Here the Pharisees are called out by Jesus... because they knew full-well who John the Baptists was... But because they focused on themselves ... and their self-preservation... they allowed him to be unjustly killed. And because of their selfishness and focus on self-pleasure... it effected their views on divorce and remarriage. ... (Listen! ) The way we handle our finances is quite a **test**... for the way we handle so many other areas of our life! (So Jesus... diverts for just a moment to mention two areas where it had affected these Pharisees...)

### **Luke 16:16-18**

Verse 16 says... The Law and the Prophets were "until John." ... This hope that the Pharisees had... in order for them to be in right standing before God... was no longer the means to be made right with God. John

introduced the Savior to the nation... and announced the arrival of the kingdom. ...and everyone is forcefully urged into it.

Perhaps your Bible has a footnote at the end of verse 16... as mine does. The original language of the New Testament gives us two equal options for translation... because of the way this is worded... Most of our English translations read: “everyone forces his way into it.” ... “*Since then the good news of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it...*” ... But **that** sounds like we obtain salvation by our own forceful efforts. ... However the other option... and in this case I think the **footnote** got it right... (I believe it was Luke’s intent)... can just as easily be the translation from the Greek. It says: “everyone is forcefully urged into it...”

I think Jesus is telling these Pharisees who justified themselves by the Law that the Law has been replaced by the Gospel... and everyone is now forcefully urged into it... rather than basing their confidence in the Law. (This makes better sense and fits the context much better. I don’t know **why** most translations don’t choose for this better option and make the **other** a footnote...) ... The Jesus goes on and says... the Law has **not** been discredited or destroyed... the Law has been fulfilled by His coming - this newly announced Kingdom... that John proclaimed.

A major obstacle... which kept the Pharisees resisting the forceful urging of them into the Kingdom... was their love of money and wealth. John the Baptist announced a new system – the Kingdom – which threatened to take away their livelihood. They loved their means for obtaining their status and wealth... they preferred it over the undeniable truth they **knew** about John

the Baptist... ... So Jesus tells another parable... in an attempt to have them understand the problem of loving wealth - too much.

### **Luke 16:19-23**

I wonder how the Pharisees reacted at this point... because Jesus just made it clear that simply being Jewish did not **save** a person. The rich man calls out "Father Abraham!" Now... if he acknowledges Abraham as his father... he is recognizing that he is Jewish... and yet... here he is in Hades (another name is Hell.)

### **Luke 16:24**

So the rich man in the parable is one of those who presumed to say, "*I am secure as a child of Abraham.*" I don't have much doubt that Jesus directs this parable along these lines... because He is responding to the mockery that the Pharisees threw at Him... which we saw in verse 14. ... I can almost hear them **sneering** at Christ... "*We are the children of Abraham! ... Don't threaten us that the use of our money might change our eternal destiny.*"

John Piper... in a sermon that he preached on this passage... said that there is a counterpart to this attitude... in the **church** today. ... Piper says that it would be professing Christians who read these parables and say, "*I am an eternally secure child of God. I am justified by faith alone. Don't tell me that the way I use my money could jeopardize my eternal destiny.*"

The response that Abraham gives the man... in the very next verse... is just as good of a response to those who reject this teaching that the way

we use our money NOW... while on earth... can jeopardize our eternal state.

### **Luke 16:25**

In other words... if during our time on earth... we pursue after "things" instead of **God** — if we primarily go after luxury for ourselves... instead of primarily pursuing a love for others — then those earthly pleasures we enjoyed will be it... THAT'S **ALL**... Those temporal pleasures will be our **only** satisfaction. ... It will be the **extent** of our heaven... and eternity will be our hell. ... But if during our time on the earth **God** is our treasure... then **earth** will be the extent of our **hell**... and eternity will be our heaven.

### **Luke 16:26**

Death is very **final**. ... We don't have **any** other chances. Purgatory is completely unbiblical... it is a man-made concept that **contradicts** Scripture. The bed we make in **this life**... we sleep in forever.

But lets be very... very... clear! ... This parable does **not** teach that... by using your money for good works... that you can buy a spot in heaven. I certainly hope that you are not understanding this parable... or anything I've said about it... to mean that! ... Not... ... at... ... all!

(LISTEN!) ... The way you use your money... shows whether your **heart** has been **changed**. ... In order to go to heaven... you must be... without exception... the kind of person whose heart has been **changed** by Christ... and it **now** shares... the **same** compassion for people and things... that **Christ** is concerned about. ... This is not a system of good

works that I am advocating... in order for you to earn your salvation. .... I am trying to say this in the clearest way possible - The way you use your money **reveals to you**... if change has been **real** in your life. ... .. As we saw in verses 10-12... it is the Lord's test.

### **Luke 16:28-29**

People ask... "*How can a loving God even permit such a place as hell to exist, let alone send people there?*" ... But in order to ask that question... you must not understand... either the love of God... or the wickedness of sin. You see... sin is **rebellion** against a holy and loving God. ... God does not "send people to hell." ... They send **themselves** there... by turning away from... refusing to **regard** His love... and believe Jesus. They won't have anything to do with God's written word... the Bible.

The rich man had lived for the "good things" of earth... and had experienced abundant temporal blessings. ... He had his reward. He had determined his own destiny by leaving God out of his life... and now neither his character nor his destiny could be changed.

Then the rich man prayed for his brothers. Evidently the rich man knew that they were pursuing the same kind of life he was and were doomed. ... He did not say, "*I'm glad my brothers will also come here. We'll have a wonderful time together!*" ... Occasionally you hear a lost person say, "*Well, I don't mind if I go to hell. I'll have a lot of company!*" But there is no friendship or "company" in hell! ... Hell is a place of torment and loneliness. It is not an eternal New Year's Eve party at which sinners have a good time doing what they used to do on earth.

Verse 29... *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."* In other words, God has already provided **sufficient** information... and evidence... about the necessity of love... and the danger of judgment. He is not obliged to give any more than what he has given in the scriptures of the Old Testament.

But the rich man knows that his brothers do not listen to the Scriptures. They may attend synagogue once a week... go to the Temple every now and then... drop a few dracmahs in the collection plate... but he knows that their whole mindset about money is shaped by the world not God. ... And so the rich man advises Abraham (from hell!) about how to get his brothers to repent: *"No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent."* ... *"Ya know... If there could just be a spectacular miracle... I know... a resurrection from the dead — something really startling... some attention getting miracle — then they would wake up and repent. They would forsake their selfish luxury and start to live for others to the glory of God..."*

Perhaps... to some degree we have all felt that way. ... *"You know what would really make me a strong follower... a more obedient disciple of Yours, Lord...? A miracle! If I could just see an undeniable miracle... then I would know for sure and devote my life more completely to you. ... I would never sin again!..."*

Abraham's utterly stunning statement in verse 31 is to us as well... *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead."*



Isn't that incredible! ... If a person is so in love with money... that he is deaf to the commands... and warnings... and promises... of God's written Word... then even a miracle as spectacular as resurrection from the dead... will not bring them to turn and serve God. (Moses and the Prophets was the term they used in Christ's day... when they spoke of the Bible. They did not use the word Bible... or Old Testament... they either said "Holy Scriptures"... or "Moses and the Prophets." ... "If they wont pay attention to the Bible... then neither will the most spectacular of miracles phase them..."

O, they might be utterly knocked out of their senses by the miracle of an irrefutable resurrection. ... But... will they be knocked out of their **sins**? ... Will they **repent**? ... Abraham says" no." ... They will not repent. Why not? In the case of this rich young ruler... what kept him from receiving Jesus... was... the love of money... the love of things.

The two parables of Luke chapter 16... the parable that we looked at last week... and the parable in today's passage... both teach the same thing. What they teach is summarized in verses 9-13... Money is a test of our faithfulness to God: if we don't use it in a way that shows God is more precious than things... then there is no reason to think that we will ever be entrusted with the true riches of heaven. ... The use of money will make or break your eternal destiny.

And if our love for money and things is so deep... that the writings God has provided us in His written Word do not change our values... then nothing **ever will** change us... even if it was a spectacular miracle !

So now we go back to our opening question: If someone wrote **your** biography on the basis of your checkbook... or your income-tax return... what might it say about you... your loyalties... your focus... and about whom you serve?

The answer from today's text is that the heart must be freed from an improper love of money and things. What do we have to convince us...? We have the Scripture. We need to deeply consider what God has given us in His Word. If This doesn't convince us... nothing ever will.

**Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)**

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24 (ESV)**

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

**1 Timothy 6:7-10 (ESV)**

for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

Turn back from the broken cisterns of materialism... and drink freely this morning at the fountain of living water. May God use the words of Scripture (His Holy Word) to free us from any undue love of money...