

The Shrewd Manager
Stories to Live by – part _____

Luke 16:1-15

March 20, 2016

DAY 1: Shrewdness

1. This week we look at one of the “strangest” or least understood of all Jesus’ parables.

Luke 16:1 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. ² And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

2. What has the steward done?

3. What are the consequences of the steward’s actions?

Luke 16:3 And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

4. As the steward sizes up his future, what dilemma faces him?

Luke 16:4 'I have decided what to do, so that people may receive me into their houses when I am put out of the stewardship.'

⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶ He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'⁷ Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

5. What plan of action did the steward carry out before his firing became official?

Luke 16:8 The master commended the dishonest steward for his shrewdness; ...

6. And here is the twist in the story! The rich man, who just lost a truck load of money, commends the steward for his shrewdness. What is important here is to look carefully at what is said and not said!

a. Let’s start with what is **not** said. The rich man (nor Jesus) commends the steward for his morals, ethics, faithfulness nor business practices. Note Jesus called him the “dishonest” steward.

b. What the rich man (and Jesus) do commend is the character quality of “**shrewdness**.” In our current usage, this term is used with contempt. But historically, shrewdness has meant to **be perceptive about life situations and then to act with wisdom**.

7. How could you use this quality in your life?

DAY 2: Shrewd: being proactive

Luke 16:8 The master commended the dishonest steward for his shrewdness...

1. As we saw yesterday, though the master was not pleased with the steward he was impressed in one regard; for his shrewdness.

2. Shrewdness, here, is used in this way: immediate action was vital. He could not dilly dally around. He needed to act quickly and in such a way that made for a better future.

3. Think of everything the steward did not do! He didn't procrastinate, he didn't lollygag around, he didn't twiddle his thumbs, he didn't pout or sulk or throw in the towel.

4. Jesus compares how God's people compare to people of the world with regard to shrewdness.

Luke 16:8 (Jesus speaking) ... for the sons of this world are shrewder in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

5. I am not really a "world traveler" but I have made trips to China, Kenya, Israel, Jamaica and Mexico. While I have met missionaries in each of these countries, I have also seen a lot of American companies selling their products there.

6. These American businessmen are shrewd in the same sense Jesus observes in the unfaithful steward. Astute businesspeople:

- a. Observe possibilities,
- b. Envision what could be done,
- c. Research what needs could be met,
- d. Create capital with which to invest, and once their homework is done they
- e. Act decisively.
- f. Sacrifice present comforts for future prospects.

7. What strikes you about this quality?

8. How could you use this quality in a positive way?

DAY 3: Temporal money; eternal blessings!

1. Jesus launches into applications of the principle of shrewdness and how we should use money. The first principle is: being shrewd with money can achieve for us, not just temporal goals, but eternal ones!

Luke 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations.

2. “Unrighteous mammon”

a. “Mammon” – not just cash, but also property and possessions. It has potential to do great good but it also has potential to be destructive in your life.

“When it fails” – Here, Jesus reminds us that death will separate us from our possessions and property.

3. Read Luke 16:9 again. What things do you think He is saying in this verse?

4. Christians have an incredible opportunity to influence their eternal joy by the wise stewardship of their money in this life!

5. Jesus paints a rich picture of “coming attractions” for you. He envisions you in heaven. You are going to meet other believers for the first time who are in heaven, partly due to your generosity of giving to the gospel!

6. The question from this parable: How can I maximize my money for the kingdom of God? Force yourself to think ahead, plan ahead. Envision yourself in heaven someday and watching people come up to you and ask, “Are you Doug? You don’t know me yet, but when you gave at Pacific Church, part of what you and PCI gave got sent to a missionary couple in China. They shared the gospel with me, and here I am, in heaven! Thank you so much for giving!”

7. The irony is this: though money is only temporal, it has the power to be of eternal benefit to you! It all depends on how you use it.

8. What goes through your mind as you ponder today’s verses?

DAY 4: 3 principles of stewardship

1. Jesus lays out more principles and applications regarding stewardship.

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

2. Have you ever said, "If I had some lottery winnings, you better believe I'd tithe on that!"

3. After reading Luke 16:10, what is the likelihood of someone tithing if they have hardly ever given anything?

4. Faithfulness with money has very little to do with amounts. It has everything to do with character.

Luke 16:11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?

5. The next principle of stewardship is this. "Before I entrust you as a steward to shepherd *people* let's see how you steward something far less important, money. You tell me you're interested in making a difference in people's lives. Great. It shows up first in how you steward the money I entrust to you."

6. What strikes you about this principle of stewardship? (16:11)

Luke 16:12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

7. What strikes you about this principle?

8. Which of the principles from today's verses strikes you the most? Why?

9. Is there some way you need to adjust how you use the money God has entrusted to you? How?

DAY 5: The dangers of money

1. Jesus wraps up this parable with one more lesson. After encouraging us to use money shrewdly and wisely, He finishes by warning us about the subtle danger of money.

Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

2. As Christians, we're tempted to "ride the fence" with God. The temptation with money is to give it too high a priority in our lives. When it becomes a greater priority than following God, it **takes the place of God** in our lives!

3. As you look in the mirror, how much of your heart is really, really riveted on what money does for you or will do for you?

4. Which is truer of you:

- a. God owns my money.
- b. I own my money.
- c. My money owns me.

4. The religious leaders who heard this parable and the applications Jesus taught responded to Him:

Luke 16:14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him.

5. They scoffed at Him. What they could not see about themselves was the diagnosis made of them. They "*were lovers of money.*"

6. Put words to their scoffing. What do you imagine they thought in response to what He taught?

7. Jesus responds to the Pharisees.

Luke 16:15 But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

8. What is Jesus saying to them? What is He saying to you?