

Kingdomnomics Part Two
You're Better Than That!
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Luke 16:1-3
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•BACKGROUND SLIDE #: Man comes to his Lutheran pastor and asks if he will do a funeral for his favorite dog.

“No,” said the pastor. “We Lutherans don’t do funerals for animals. Why don’t you try the Baptist church down the street? They will do anything for money.”

“Well, can you give me some sort of guideline about how much to give to the church in honor of my beloved dog? I was thinking about \$10K?”

“Well, you didn’t you say your dog was a Lutheran!”

Well, we are thinking about money this morning.

Let’s chat a bit about one of Jesus’ parables about how to buy happiness.

Close your eyes. I want you to imagine you are on the hillside with Jesus. Listen to what he says.

•SLIDE #: READ LUKE 16:1-8 FROM THE MESSAGE.

Sounds like the Las Vegas Guy who wastes all the Master’s money. Jesus is going to treat him like the 1 talent man who hid his talent and say, “You wicked servant....cast into outer darkness.”

Describe the hinge moment in verse 8.

•SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:8a: The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.*

This is a shock! He is commending the dishonest cheater.

But look at what he is commending. He does not commend him for stealing, cheating and conniving or his shrewdness in outsmarting his master.

He is a bad guy who did a wise thing.

He commends him for making provision for the future after he is fired.

Now, before I read you what Jesus says next to his followers I want to tell you two stories.

Here is the first.

George Will: “This ump has vision and conviction.” Bruce Fromming in his last of 37 seasons of major league umpiring—after 13 years in the minors—50 years of big league umpiring! He has worked 5,127 games, 46,000 innings. Been behind the plate for over 370,000 pitches.

“Is it true that umpires give great hitters and pitchers the benefit of the doubt on close pitches?”

“Not one bit.” (This is not the NBA.)

“Does your attention ever flag during, say, a late inning in an August game in front of a small crowd in Tampa Bay?”

“Never.” He insists. “Every pitch is important to someone.”

Early in his career, working behind the plate in a game involving Bob Gibson, the Cardinal regal and ferocious Hall of Famer, Fromming made some calls that displeased Gibson. At the end of an inning, as he walked past Fromming, he quietly said, “You’re better than that.”

Fromming said, “I remember it like it was yesterday.”

The second story.

6100 Peeler: “you aren’t worth minimum wage.”

“You’re better than that” motivated Fromming to change his ways and focuses on being the best he could be.

“You’re not worth another dime” still stings every time I think of it—it brings me memories of a failure coupled with a stinging, hurtful rebuke. I was not motivated. I was hurt and depressed.

In this parable Jesus didn’t like how many of His followers then or now handle their money. Instead of investing it in Heaven and preparing for their eternal future, they were spending it all on themselves.

•SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:8b: For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.*

Jesus could have said: “I am so disappointed in you guys! You aren’t worth a dime more!”

Instead, looked around at His followers and said, “Come on. You guys are better than that.”

Now, let’s examine the parable a little more closely.

•SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:1-2: Jesus told his disciples: There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.”*

This wealthy man hired a manager to oversee the affairs of his estate. One day he got a report that his manager was stealing. “If what I hear is true, then I am going to fire you. I am going to have a complete audit of the books.”

•SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:3: The manager said to himself, “What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg—”*

The dishonest manager faced a crisis—the sudden and unexpected loss of his job. He knew that he was guilty and that the audit would confirm it. He frantically began to search for a way out of his dilemma. “Whatever I do, I am not going to beg and I am not going to do manual labor.

In order to secure his financial future, the dishonest manager commits one more act of dishonesty.

Rapidly and secretly he approached each one of the men who owed his master money and offered them the opportunity to settle their debts for a sharply reduced amount.

•SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:4-7: “I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.” So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, “How much do you owe my master?” “Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,” he replied.*

•SLIDE #: *The manager told him, “Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.” Then he asked the second, “And how much do you owe?” “A thousand bushels of wheat,” he replied. He told him, “Take your bill and make it eight hundred.”*

His plan was to gain the good will of these men so that when he lost his job, they would invite him into their homes out of gratitude and give him food, clothing, and shelter.

•SLIDE #: LUKE 16:8a: *The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.*

Studied Greek words—literally—“You clever rascal. I’ve got to hand it to you. What a slick plan!” He didn’t commend him for his management or for his honesty, but he did commend him for his clever ability to work out a plan to secure his future.

•SLIDE #: LUKE 16:8b: *For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.*

Jesus was said, *Come on, you can do better than that.*”

“You ‘Children of Light’ ought to be just as shrewd at securing your future in eternity as these folks are at securing their future here on earth.

•SLIDE #: Jesus Made A Recommendation, Shared An Attitude And Gave A Warning.

•SLIDE #: The Recommendation: Luke 16:9: *“I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”*

Check from Casas’ couple for third bus of \$12K for Stepp teams in Mongolia. Track record from that team of over 200 conversions each three-month trip.

Those new followers of Jesus Christ will welcome Allain and Rachael Larson into the very gates of Heaven. (572-1414)

•SLIDE #: The Attitude: Luke 16:10: *“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.*

Glenn’s three jars from last Sunday were all about attitude!

•SLIDE #: Live, Save, Give

•SLIDE #: Live, Charge it, give up

•SLIDE #: Give, Save, Live

We are so prone to reason, “If I just had a little more money, I could finally be in a position to get the right attitude and do the right thing: Give, Save, Live.

If I could just get these debts paid off, if I could just get the kids through college, I could finally tithe!”

Nine Dollar bills Illustration. If not already giving 90 cents, if we get another dollar will we give 10%. How about \$11? \$12? \$13? No more than likely we will spend it all on ourselves.

Jesus: “Come on you are better than that.

Barna Research Group Survey: The average American adult believes he or she needs an additional \$8,000-\$11,000 per year to live comfortably. Tracking studies show, however, that

even when adults reach or exceed income levels to which they aspired, they still claim they need another \$8,000-\$11,000 to live comfortably.

Tell two stories that contrast the right attitude.

There was once a fancy banquet in a high-class New York hotel. A famous author sat next to a very beautiful and gracious woman. He was awestruck by her beauty.

As they sat through the meal and talked, he finally asked her if she would spend the night with him for \$100,000.

She blushed, looked down, and finally said, yes.

He said, "Would you do it for ten dollars?"

She protested "What do you think I am?"

He replied, "We've already established that; now we're working on the price."

Do you get the message? It isn't the price that's the issue. It's what you are in our hearts.

Some of us have sold out our spiritual hearts and eternal future for things we cannot hold on to.

- SLIDE #: *LUKE 16:11: So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?*

"True riches" here means rewards and treasures in heaven – that is all it can mean.

- SLIDE #21: *LUKE 16:12: And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?*

Notice – "property of your own." That is fascinating because according to the Scriptures, we do not own anything in this life. We are just managing God's assets for Him.

But in the life to come we actually become owners of wealth.

- SLIDE #: *The Warning: Luke 16:13: "No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money."*

- SLIDE #23: "Money" is perhaps a very poor rendering of the Greek word "Mammon," μαμωνα. Mammon is a rival god.

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-19 IS A SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGE in which Paul describes our fight and victory over the rival god, Mammon.

- SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain"
This is perhaps the most succinct statement of the Biblical philosophy of money.

- SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:7: For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

Millionaire told wife, "I am placing a briefcase full of money in the attic. When I die I intend to grab it on my way up to heaven. See to it that no one touches it until it is my time to go."

Soon after he died his wife could hardly wait to run up in the attic and see if it were still there. Sure enough, there it was right where he'd placed it.

"I knew he should have put it in the basement."

The only things we can take to Heaven when we die are the gifts we have invested in the Kingdom of God—to benefit others.

- SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:8: But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

- SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:9: People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

That is a pretty strong verse, isn't it?" In other words, those who set a goal in life of accumulating wealth fall into a trap that leads to ruin and destruction.

- SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:10a: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Have you ever heard, "Money is the root of all evil"? The Bible doesn't say that! It is the "love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil." Attitude thing!

- SLIDE: 1 Timothy 6:10b: Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith

"The faith" here is the Christian faith. This is doctrinal truth as contained in the Bible. "Eagerness for money" will cause you to wander away from Christianity. "Distracted) from what is important.

Before we go on, let me explain that phrase "eager for money", is a Greek a word which means to stretch oneself out in order to touch or grasp something. It describes the Christian who is reaching out after material wealth.

How do I know? Well, let me give you some symptoms of what materialism can look like.

- SLIDE #30: Overspending
- SLIDE #31: Compulsive Buying
- SLIDE #32: Being discontent with the things we have
- SLIDE #33: Holding on to more wealth than we need (Hoarding)
- SLIDE #34: Failing to give God the top portion of our income
- SLIDE #35: Spending everything we make and saving nothing for the future
- SLIDE #36: Borrowing money for depreciating items
- SLIDE #37: Cheating on our income tax
- SLIDE #38: Using a credit card and not paying off or being able to pay off the balance completely at the end of the month
- SLIDE #39: Getting nervous or upset when the pastor preaches on money
- SLIDE #40: 1 TIMOTHY 6:10c. and pierced themselves with many griefs.

"Pierced themselves" is an interesting phrase. It literally means to put on a spit. You know what a spit is...you put a raw piece of meat on a spit and roast it over an open fire.

I want you to get the picture. Instead of putting a piece of chicken or beef on a spit, suppose you put a live human being on the spit and turn him over and over again and roast him on an open fire. (The materials used to start the fire are the things he was grasping after!).

Some of you are being tortured emotionally, mentally, financially, and physically...and if you trace it all back, it may very well lead right back to an unbiblical philosophy of money.

Paul is telling us that the unbeliever who is guilty of this sin will end up in Hell and the Christian who is guilty of this sin will end up with a ruined and defeated life.

•SLIDE #: 1 Timothy 6:18-19: Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

•SLIDE #: Unless we are involved in a continuous focus on the Give-Save-Live Attitude we will drift automatically into the grasp of Mammon.

•SLIDE #: The Priests of Mammon are everywhere - indoctrinating us with the idea that true life and happiness can be found if we just have a charge card and 18% interest!

We are being programmed to seek a higher standard of living than we now have . . . to borrow money for depreciating items . . . to spend now and save nothing . . . to buy things that we do not need. And it is happening automatically. We don't have to do a thing. It is all around us.

The only antidote for this is a continuous deprogramming-reprogramming process whereby the rotten, materialistic, human viewpoint in our minds can be flushed out and replaced by the divine eternal truth of the Word of God.

•SLIDE #: Luke 16:14-15: The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

Let me tell you one of my favorite wisdom parables.

A sailor shipwrecked alone on a South Sea Island. He was seized by natives, hoisted on their shoulders and set upon the throne!

Little by little he learned that it was their custom each year to make some man king for a year. He liked it and began wonder what happened to all the other former kings? Soon he discovered that every year when their kingship ended they were banished to a deserted island where they starved to death.

The sailor did not like at all the realization that he was king for a year. So he put his carpenters to work building boats and his farmers to transplanting crops and fruit trees to the island and carpenters to building houses.

And so, at the end of the year, when his kingship was over, he was banished, not to a barren island, but to an island of abundance.

People are always looking for good investments. People are asking, "Where should I invest my money to beat inflation? Should I buy stocks... gold... silver... bonds... real estate?" Those are difficult questions to answer because there are times when gold is a great investment... times when it is a bad investment... real estate goes up... then down.

But I want you to know that the only inflation-proof investment in the universe is the investment in the Lord's work. It is the only one.

And it all begins at the point of commitment when we decide to serve God instead of money.

Jesus said that it is impossible to serve two masters.

Now, many have tried since the beginning of creation and nobody has ever pulled it off yet. You and I will not be the first exceptions. We must make a choice. God or Mammon.

Some of us are dancing with Mammon. The pain is intense. We know who we are. Jesus would say a word of encouragement: "You're better than that."