

ETERNAL INVESTMENT

LUKE 16

BACKGROUND

- In this account in the gospel of Luke, Jesus challenges His disciples to be people who plan.
- As followers of Christ, we must have eternity in mind as we live within the temporary.
- In light of this, Jesus instructs His disciples and all those who follow Him to use what possessions we have now in a way that demonstrates our understanding of eternity.

BACKGROUND

- We must look forward to what is to come and let that inform how we live now.
- Jesus uses the account of a man who was put in charge of another person's wealth.
- It comes to the owner's attention that this manager is wasting away the owner's possessions and dealing unwisely with all that he has.

THE STORY

LUKE 16:1-7

THE STORY

- Verses 1–2 show that with no investigation needed, the owner fires the dishonest manager and asks for his records.
- The manager, refusing to dig or beg, takes matters into his own hands and finds a way to secure his wellbeing once he leaves his current post.
- The manager seeks out those in debt to his former employer and reduces their debts in order to safely secure his future.

THE STORY

- How did he reduce the debt? Scholars say there are three possibilities:
- (1) he either undercut the price they owed or he rectified the situation that got him in trouble in the first place;
- (2) he could have removed the interest payments on the amounts;
- (3) he could have removed his own commission.

THE STORY

- Though we do not know which of these methods actually occurred, the point is clear: the manager alleviated the financial burden for those in debt in order to get in their good graces after he was out of his job.
- Upon hearing what the manager had done, the rich man commended him for his shrewdness.

THE STORY

- It seems odd that Jesus would use someone like this as an example.
- Jesus isn't encouraging us to cheat employers when we are disgruntled or sin in order to get ahead.
- Instead, the parable has three applications.

THREE APPLICATIONS

LUKE 16:8-13

APPLICATION 1

- Use your financial resources to further the kingdom of God (Luke 16:8b-9).
- Jesus wants His disciples to strive to be wise with their resources, thinking ahead and utilizing money to make a significant and eternal impact.
- Verse 8 creates two categories of people: people of the world (such as the dishonest manager) and people of the light (disciples of Jesus).

APPLICATION 1

- What does a wise and thoughtful believer do with his funds? He leverages them to impact friendships, households, and communities.
- Use your money to serve others and introduce them to the hope that you have in Christ Jesus.
- Money is a tool. It is God-given and should be used for His kingdom, not hoarded or worshipped.

APPLICATION 1

- Jesus wants His followers to use the money they earn here on this side of His kingdom in such ways that welcome them into the kingdom that is to come.
- Use your resources to invest in things that pay eternal dividends. There is no better investment than to use something temporary to gain something that's eternal.
- Jim Elliot, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose."

APPLICATION 2

- Show yourself faithful with money, demonstrating that you can be faithful with greater things (Luke 16:10-12).
- The second aim of Jesus' parable is focused on faithfulness and character.
- Jesus wants the disciples to understand that how they handle small things is indicative of how they will handle larger things.

APPLICATION 2

- Jesus wants His followers to keep the future in mind.
- The Christian must remember that Christ is bringing about a future, coming kingdom and how His children live now has effects well beyond their life on earth.
- If money is the smaller issue, the spiritual realities are the larger issues that Jesus wants His disciples to see.

APPLICATION 2

- There is more to life than what we currently see and experience in the here and now.
- Stewardship is addressed in verse 12 where God describes a believer's resources as "that which is another's." God has entrusted us with all that we have and we are called to be faithful with it.
- True riches are those mentioned in verse 11; these are spiritual responsibility in God's kingdom and a heavenly reward.

APPLICATION 3

- Serve God, not money (Luke 16:13).
- Though we may have both God and money, we cannot serve them both.
- In verse 13, Jesus very plainly explains that we can have allegiance to only one King, and how we spend our money and use our possessions shows very clearly whom we ultimately serve.

APPLICATION 3

- This is where character plays an important role.
- How are we stewarding temporary possessions?
- Are we being faithful in the small things that God has given us?
- Are we seeking to serve both God and our wealth?
- Are we placing too much value on the lesser valued things, such as our material possessions?

APPLICATION 3

- Having money and earning a living are not sinful. Where our sin enters is what we do with what we've been given.
- The ways in which we use God's gifts reveal potential areas of selfishness and idolatry.
- This is a call for Christ-followers to steward the Master's resources with great diligence and faithfulness so that we might hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

THREE CHALLENGES

CONCLUSION

- Jesus teaches us the value of stewardship by showing us the value of planning for the future.
- If the world sees the value in planning for the future with worldly wealth and worldly investments, how much more should Christians practice the value of planning how to use their possessions, knowing what is true for their future with God.

CONCLUSION

- How we use our earthly possessions shows the level of faithfulness we will exhibit with eternal treasures.
- In light of this, we must live now in light of the future we know is coming.
- Because we will be given all things in Christ, what we have now can be given away for His sake and His name, instead of kept for our own desires and status.

CHALLENGE 1

- Reflect on God's generosity.
- One of the biggest antidotes to a selfish spirit is to reflect on the reality of Calvary. When we sit and reflect on what God has done for us in Jesus, we come face to face with His display of sacrifice and outpouring of generosity.
- God held nothing back to save us and draw us to Himself. We must follow His lead and hold nothing back as we live for Him in this world.

CHALLENGE 2

- Pray for a generous spirit.
- God is willing and able to grant us hearts that overflow with the generosity of Christ.
- Through God's Spirit, He can transform our selfish hearts into hearts that desire to bless others at every turn.

CHALLENGE 3

- Commit to tithe.
- The purpose of tithing—giving our first fruits for God's work on earth—is to teach us to put God first in our lives.
- Make a commitment to tithe and dedicate yourself to it. And more than anything, trust God and let Him prove His promises.

GIVING TESTIMONY