

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 11

Mistakes of the Unjust Steward

AIM: to teach my pupils the importance of stewardship.

POINT OF CONTACT: Bring a little house that you can assemble, or draw a house on the chalkboard. This may be used as follows: The word “steward” comes from two words: One means a “house” or a “family,” and another one means “I administer.” Hence, stewardship is administering another’s house and another’s family. To illustrate this better, someone has said, “This world is a house. Heaven is the roof, the stars are the lights, the earth with its fruits is a table spread, the master of the house is the holy and blessed God, and the man is the steward into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered.” As you can see then, we are stewards of God’s house. God’s house is the world.

As you draw this house, use the aforementioned things as the different parts of the house and then represent us as being the caretaker or steward of the house or God’s world. This parable deals with what we do with what God has given us. Let us notice the mistakes of this unjust steward mentioned in this parable found in Luke 16:1-13.

- I. “HE HAD WASTED HIS GOODS,” Luke 16:1c. Notice the dishonesty of this steward. The words, “...he had wasted his goods,” means he embezzled them or misapplied them or, through carelessness, lost or damaged his lord’s goods. All we have is a gift of God—our money, our talents, our looks, our abilities, our assets. We are to use them all for Him. Anything that we have or anything that we are that is not used for the glory of God makes us guilty of embezzling or misappropriating God’s possessions. (Ask the pupils to tell you something that God has given them. Lead them in each case to use that something properly as its steward.)
- II. HE DID NOT DO HIS BEST. The words in Luke 16:2, “How is it that I hear this of thee?” imply that his master expected better things of him. The master speaks as one who is disappointed in his steward and had to dismiss him from his service. In other words, he disappointed his master. When we do not use that which God has given us, we disappoint our Lord. What a tragic thing it would be to be disappointing to Him!
- III. HE PERHAPS DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT HE MUST GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIS STEWARDSHIP. Notice in Luke 16:2b the words, “...give an account of thy stewardship.” Each of us must face the Lord and give an account of what God has given us. If we have the ability to sing, we will give an account of whether we sang for God or for the world. If we have the ability to make money, we will give an account for whether we used our money for God or for worldly means. If we can play an instrument, we will give an account for how we played the instrument—to glorify God or for secular purposes. At the judgment seat, each of us must give an account of what we have done while being in possession of God’s house.
- IV. HE WAITED LATE IN LIFE TO BE CONCERNED. In Luke 16:3, notice the words, “I cannot dig.” What a tragic thing it is that so many people do not give their youth as good stewards! After they have wasted the Lord’s substance and have wasted the opportunity to do God’s perfect will, they give themselves to God. Of course, if a person is no longer a youth, the only thing he can do is give the rest of his life to God. Far better it is to start young and use our talents, money, energy, etc. for God while we are young.
- V. HE WAS LAZY. Look at the words in Luke 16:3, “I cannot dig.” This fellow had lost his stewardship and now had to make a living. He says he cannot dig. He was not accustomed to digging. He was not about to make his living by hard work. In other words, he was not too old to work or too lame to work, but in truth, he was too lazy to work. Laziness certainly will be accounted for when we face the Lord Jesus Christ.

- VI. HE WAS TOO PROUD TO BEG. Notice he says in Luke 16:3, "...to beg I am ashamed." To be sure, begging is not the most honorable living in the world, but far better it is to beg than to be a cheat and a crook. His pride in his position to keep up with the Joneses and keep his present status led him to make money wrongly.
- VII. HE WAS DISHONEST IN HIS DEALINGS. Read Luke 16:4-7. Read the story very carefully here, and notice the terrible thing that he did. He was dishonest with his master's money. Certainly we should stop and think of tithing here. (If you teach little children, teach them the importance of tithing from their youth up. Show them the dishonesty of refusing to tithe. Do not teach them that they would simply be better Christians if they tithed. They are not good Christians if they are not tithing, and not tithing is being dishonest and misappropriating God's funds.)
- VIII. HE RECEIVED A HOLLOW COMMENDATION FROM HIS MASTER. Notice Luke 16:8. Many have misconstrued this commendation to teach that God was pleased with this man. This was not true at all. Succeeding verses will teach us that he was commending him only for his shrewdness to take care of his physical needs. The lord of the steward was saying, "You've been pretty sharp. It's too bad that you are not that sharp in eternal matters." This is the general attitude the master had. Actually, his mistake here was that he was more interested in earthly things than in eternal things. He was more interested in physical comfort than in eternal rewards. What a tragic shame it is that most of us spend most of our time, life, money and talents satisfying the physical, which is here only for threescore and ten, rather than the spiritual, which is eternal!
- IX. GOD TELLS US HOW WE SHOULD HANDLE OUR SECULAR AFFAIRS. Luke 16:9 says, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." This statements means that we are to do right in our earthly, secular affairs. We are to work hard, to expect a fair wage, to give a fair wage, to be honest, and to pay our debts. Christian people are certainly to be honest and fair and to consider important their earthly and monetary relationships. Then we are to transfer this diligence, honesty, etc. into spiritual matters. This man had been diligent only in matters concerning mammon and earthly affairs but had thought nothing of the spiritual affairs. In Luke 16:8, the Lord says something about the children of this world being wiser than the children of light. He commends to us the diligence that people have in making money, and oftentimes the hours, days, weeks, months and years spent on shrewd deals, while we who do God's business do it so half-heartedly. He is saying, "What a shame it is that Sunday school classes are not run as effectively as school classes! What a shame it is that the preachers are not as zealous in their work as a bootlegger would be in his!" He is saying that God's business should be run just as effectively, wisely and efficiently as the world's business. What a shame it is that the advertising of the world, the works of the world, the planning of the world, the diligence of the world, and the zeal of the world to make money often surpasses ours which is an eternal business with eternal rewards!

CONCLUSION: Let each of us consider the world as a house and ourselves as the stewards. Let us take inventory of what God has given to us and what we are doing with it.