

Luke 16

Luke 16.1-9

V1 – What was the job of the main character in this parable? A manager or a steward

-**What was he in charge of?** The finances of his master

-**But what had he done?** He had squandered his master's money

-**How did the master find out about this thievery?** Someone told him about it (so like human nature)

V2 – What did the master demand? An accounting of the finances

-**What did the master do?** Fired him as his manager

V3 – How proud was he? Too proud (and weak) to dig ditches

-**Why did he not want to beg?** He was too proud to beg

V4 – What kind of plan did he need? To make himself valuable, so that others in the community would welcome him into their houses

V 5-7 - What did he do? He made special deals with those who owed money and oil to his master (100 measures of oil to 50, 100 measures of oil to 80)

-**Why did he do this?** He was using his head (his brain) to take care of himself

-**Why did he write out a bill to these people?** He wanted a paper trail (so that he could not be blackmailed later) – A paper trail is always a good idea – he was shrewd!

V8 – Explain why the master admired him: He had acted shrewdly (he did not just sit around and let life destroy him, but he developed a plan and carried it out)

-**Why was this financial manager wiser than many members of the kingdom of God?** He used money as a tool to accomplish an end

V9 – What was the message of the parable for the children of God? Money is a tool that we also are to use wisely

-**Will it ever fail?** Of course it will – many times in this life and certainly in the life to come

-Therefore we are to use money in this life for the sake of the Lord's church

-Money is not evil in itself, but it is a tool at our disposal to use for good and spiritual things

-So we are to do good with our money and lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven

-We are to use our money to move the kingdom of God forward (supporting the local congregation, helping mission works, feeding the hungry, clothing the poor, etc.)

-All of these things take money – **Are we as wise as the man in the parable?**

Luke 16.10-13

V10 – How does God test us? He gives us a few blessings to see how we use them for his kingdom)

-Many years ago there was a program on TV called "The Millionaire" – it was about a very wealthy man who would give a million dollars to a total stranger (the money was given anonymously)

-Then he would watch and see how the person used that money

- Many times the person would selfishly spend it all on himself and the pleasures of this life, rather than spend it to help others
- In fact, in many cases, the gift ruined the life of the person, but it didn't have to end that way
- Think about Andrew Carnegie, who donated his vast wealth to building libraries across the U.S.
- There have been others who have donated huge amounts of money to help mankind
- What are we doing with our money? Are we using it for the good of the kingdom of God?**

V 11 – If we can't use real money in the right way, we will not be able to handle spiritual wealth (more blessings from God)

V 12 – **And likewise if the unrighteous steward could not have handled another person's money, how could he have been trusted with more money for himself?**

V 13 – **What is the message of this verse?** With money we have to decide if it is a tool to use in our service to God, or is it something that we can use to lavish the pleasures of this life on ourselves?
-Read 1 Timothy 6.3-10 – a very, very powerful passage

Luke 16.14-15

V 14 – **Why were the Pharisees scoffing at these words of Jesus?** Because they loved money and could see the message of the words of Christ

V 15 – The Pharisees wanted to look good before other people
-When something is admired by humans, what is God's attitude toward it? He detests it (this is just the opposite of the American way of life)

Luke 16.16-18

V 16 – **What was the attitude of the Pharisees toward the kingdom of God?** They were so powerful that they thought they could force themselves into the kingdom (when it came)

V 17 – **What was the only thing that could end the Law of Moses?** The will of God
-When did it come to an end? Read Colossians 2.13-15 – When Jesus was nailed to the cross
 -Remember that the veil was torn from top to bottom at that time – no human could have done that

V 18 – Applications to marriage-divorce-remarriage? **Read Matt. 19.9 and Matt. 4.4** – We must put all that the Bible says on a certain subject to arrive at the will of God
 -God allows divorce only on grounds of adultery, and then only the innocent person can remarry

Luke 16.19-31

Please note that this is not a parable

- Parables never use any proper names, but this one uses three: Lazarus, Abraham, Moses
- Out of the approximately 80 parables in the Bible, not a single one ever uses a proper name (unless this is a parable, which it is not)
- Some may ask why this is important. It is very, very important when we talk with people who claim to be Jehovah's Witnesses

- They believe that at death, the evil people are annihilated; they just cease to exist
- In other words, they do not believe in any kind of hell for lost people
- Therefore, when we bring up the account of the rich man and Lazarus, the answer they have been taught to say is, "Oh, that is just a parable – it doesn't apply to the doctrine of hell and eternal punishment"
- But the truth is that this is not a parable

Please consider that this account is historically correct – Lazarus is in the arms of Abraham.

- Why isn't he in the arms of Christ (according to Psalm 23.4)?** Because Christ was on the earth at this time, and Abraham was his stand-in for accompanying people through "*the valley of the shadow of death*"
- Remember when Stephen was being stoned to death – Christ was standing beside the throne of the father waiting to welcome Stephen into heaven (*Acts 7.55-60*)
- So Christ accompanies his people through death, except during the time he was on the earth
- So again this is not a parable, but a real, authentic account of Lazarus and the rich man
- So this is not a parable (a story to "lay alongside" of real life) – this **is** real life, and there is nothing to indicate otherwise
- These are things that we can bring up with our Jehovah's Witness friends
- Unfortunately there are now several false teachers in the Lord's church who are also teaching the annihilation of the souls of evil people at death (the so-called doctrine of "soul sleeping")
- This is a popular doctrine to teach, because it does away with the concept of hell; but think of all the Scriptures that speak of the "*eternal punishment*" that awaits lost people
- Therefore please do not fall into the trap of referring to the account of the rich man and Lazarus a parable – it is not

V 19 – How did the Lord describe the wealth of the rich man?

- Dressed in purple (a very expensive dye in the First Century)
- Dressed in fine linen
- Lived joyously in splendor every day (he took great pride in his wealth)

V 20-21 – Describe the life of Lazarus

- A poor man
- Was placed at the rich man's gate every day – **Why?** To get the scraps from the rich man
- Covered with sores
- Trying just to get the crumbs that fell from the table of the rich man
- How bad was his health?** The dogs licked the sores on his body
- So he was destitute, hungry, and disease-ridden

V 22 - Describe the death of Lazarus: He was carried away by angels to meet Abraham (notice again: not Christ, since he was still on the earth at this time)

- What does this tell us about Abraham?** What an honor to be a stand-in for Christ for these years while Christ was on the earth!

V 23 – Where did the rich man find himself after death? In Hades (tartarus – the name for the part of Hades for lost people)

- See 2 Peter 2.4** – See the footnote in the English Standard Version
- Hades is the name for the waiting place for the dead; it has two parts: *Paradise* for the saved (remember the words of Jesus to the thief on the cross), and *Tartarus* (the Greek name for the waiting place for the lost)

- Some people refer to Tartarus as the "place of torment" (which is a good description of it)
- So the rich man was awaiting the Day of Judgment and his ultimate destination of hell

V 24 – What was the request of the rich man in torment? Just to get a drop of water

- Did he even want a drop of water?** No, just for someone to put his finger in water and touch his finger to the rich man's tongue
- This is a gruesome picture of punishment that most people would like to ignore, especially in our country today

V 25 – First answer of Abraham? You had it good in this life, and Lazarus had it bad, but things are now reversed

V 26 – Why couldn't the rich man get a drink? There was a great fixed chasm separating the lost people from the saved people

- The next request of the rich man?** To send Lazarus to warn the rich man's five brothers
- Answer of Abraham?** They had Moses and the prophets

V 27 – Did the rich man accept that answer? No, he wanted anybody available to be sent to warn his family members back in this life

V 28 – Exactly whom did he want warned? His five brothers

- Why did he want them warned?** So that they would not come to this awful place
- What is the message here to those who say that if they obey the gospel, it would mean that their loved ones who have already died would be lost (because they were not baptized)?**
- Answer:** If our loved ones are lost, the one thing that they would wish more than anything else is that we would not go to that awful place

V 29 – What was the answer of Abraham? They had Moses and the prophets

- Again notice that this is not a parable, but it exactly correct for its position in the Bible (before the Day of Pentecost and the completion of the New Testament)
- Can we learn about Christ as the answer to eternal punishment from the Old Testament?**
See **Genesis 3.15, Job 19.23-29, Isaiah 53, Malachi 4** (and many other Scriptures)

V 30 – Would they repent if someone arose from the dead? No, today people ignore the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, just as the rich man's brothers would have ignored it

V 31 – Abraham was exactly correct here – Jesus performed miracles right in front of the Pharisees, and they said he did the miracles by the power of Satan

Lessons:

1. Salvation is not based on our social status in this life
2. The word of God is all the warning people need; if they do not need that word, then "miracles" and "faith-healings" and other such things will not convert them
3. Sin has short-term pleasure to it, but it does not pay in the long run

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