

## Lesson 9 – Parables on Stewardship

Text: Luke 16-17

Main Characters: God, Jesus, 10 lepers

Key Passages:

- Luke 16:11 – If you are not faithful with wealth, who will trust you with real riches?
- Luke 16:25 – Results of the rich man receiving good things in life while Lazarus received evil things.
- Luke 17:17 – Jesus wondered where the other 9 lepers were who had been cleansed.

Main Storyline:

As Jesus continued teaching his disciples, he raised the subject of stewardship. A steward is someone who has been appointed to look over another person's wealth or property. In Jesus' two parables in Luke 16, he talks about stewards in order to teach his disciples some very important lessons.

Jesus began by telling his disciples about a rich man who had a steward, but the steward had been accused of wasting the master's goods. The master called for the steward and demanded an account of that which he had been entrusted, for the steward was about to be dismissed. The steward did not know what he would do after being dismissed, as he could not work or beg. The steward had an idea, however, and he called all of his master's debtors to himself. He gave each of the debtors a discount on the debt that each owed to the master, hoping that the debtors would receive them into their own houses after the master had put him out. The master commended the unjust steward for his shrewdness. Following this parable, Jesus said (amongst other things), "...if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [wealth], who will commit to your trust the true riches? ... No servant can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and mammon."

The Pharisees, who loved money, began to scoff at Jesus. Jesus rebuked them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts." He also spoke about the kingdom of God.

Jesus then told another parable; this time about a rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. The rich man lived lavishly every day. Meanwhile, Lazarus lay at his gate, hoping to just get some crumbs. Eventually, Lazarus died and was taken to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was taken to be in torments. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to give him a drop of water, for he was in flames. Abraham reminded the man that while he was alive, he received good things while Lazarus received evil things; however, no one could cross the gulf between them. The rich man begged for Lazarus to go back and warn his father's house. Abraham again denied his request, pointing out that if they would not listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not listen to Lazarus either. (Note that this parable often leads to a discussion regarding our whereabouts once we die; it is certainly plausible that Jesus' parable mimics what will happen to us if we die before Jesus' eventual return). Jesus went on to give additional teaching before leaving to go to Jerusalem.

On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus met 10 lepers. They started shouting at him, asking Jesus to have mercy on them (heal them). Jesus instructed them to show themselves to the priest. As they were going, they were healed. One of them, a Samaritan, when he saw that he had been healed, rejoiced and returned to Jesus. He fell down on his face at his feet and thanked Jesus. Jesus wondered, "Where are the [other] 9?"

Later, Jesus was asked by the Pharisees about the coming of the kingdom of God, particularly about when it would come. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God would not be seen; it was within them. He then began speaking about judgment upon the Pharisees, using examples of Noah and Sodom and Gomorrah to illustrate that they would not see the judgment coming until it was already upon them. In these teachings, it seems that Jesus was prophesying about the ultimate destruction of Jerusalem (and the Jewish nation).

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Everything we have is from God. We must be good stewards of what we have and use it for the Lord.
- 2.) We will either love God or money. We must choose between them, because we cannot choose both.
- 3.) We must use what we have been given to benefit other people, giving to those who are in need.
- 4.) We must be thankful for what we have been given, giving glory to God having received it.