

# Day 152, Luke 16

by David Servant

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*Jesus teaches that faithful stewardship and using money to make friends is essential for inheriting God's kingdom.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 25:35, Luke 16:9-25, 1 Corinthians 6:9, James 2:5

**Topics:** "Faithful Stewardship", "Eternal Justice"

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## Description

David Servant delves into the parable of the unrighteous steward, clarifying that Jesus was not endorsing dishonesty but rather emphasizing the importance of using money wisely to prepare for the future. He urges believers to make friends by meeting needs and caring for the poor, highlighting the eternal impact of righteous stewardship. Jesus warns against serving both God and money, emphasizing the need for faithful stewardship to inherit God's kingdom. The story of the rich man and Lazarus serves as a poignant reminder of the consequences of neglecting to use wealth for righteous purposes and the eternal justice that awaits those who reject God's mercy.

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## Transcript

The parable of the unrighteous steward often raises questions because it appears as if Jesus was sanctioning dishonesty and thievery, as exemplified by the swindler in His story. But let us erase that thought from our minds, as it is an impossibility. No swindler will inherit God's kingdom (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

As I have so often said, a parable is simply an expanded metaphor, which is a comparison of two things that are basically dissimilar but that share at least one similarity. The key is not to assign a similar classification to what should be understood as dissimilar. Jesus wants His followers to imitate the unrighteous steward in only one sense, and that is to prepare for their future by using money to make friends. That is it. He does not want us to imitate the means of the unfaithful steward.

More specifically, Jesus wants us to "make friends for ourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive us into the eternal dwellings" (16:9). He speaks of money as being "the mammon of unrighteousness" simply because money is intrinsically linked to the world's evil. The money in your wallet has likely been used, before you possessed it, for many things that God hates. It is now your responsibility, however, to use that unrighteous mammon righteously.

The unrighteous steward made friends by the unrighteous use of his master's money, so that when he lost his income, his friends would take care of him. Like him, we have been entrusted with our Master's money.

We, too, should use it to make friends, not in an unscrupulous manner, but rather by meeting pressing needs and caring for the poor. One day, specifically the day we die, we will lose our income, just as did the unrighteous steward. Yet our beneficiaries who have already gone to heaven will be waiting there to receive us, not into temporal, but "eternal dwellings."

We all need to have friends waiting for us there who will testify before God, "I was hungry, and that person was my friend, and he fed me." Jesus solemnly warned, "If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you?" (16:11). If we have not been faithful stewards of God's money, we are foolish to think that we will inherit God's kingdom. No greedy person will enter heaven. Jesus emphatically declared, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (16:13). It is one or the other.

The Pharisees, who thought themselves to be lovers of God, actually loved money, and they scoffed when they heard Jesus (16:14). Jesus, ever-patient, told them a story that reveals what happens at death to people who don't "make friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness." They, like the rich man in His story, find themselves in hell, reaping what they have sown. Just as Lazarus once sat outside the rich man's mansion, longing for the crumbs that fell from his table, the rich man found himself outside of Lazarus' "mansion" as it were, longing for a single drop of water from him. But his request was denied, because hell is a place of perfect justice for those who refused the mercy that God offered through Jesus, continuing in their selfish lives.

Concerning this story, I once heard a well-known evangelist say before a huge crowd, "The rich man didn't go to hell because he was rich any more than Lazarus went to heaven because he was poor!" The crowd roared with approval, because what he said sounded so right. But the fact is, even though Lazarus' poverty had nothing to do with his salvation, the rich man's wealth had a lot to do with his damnation. Abraham explained it quite clearly to the rich man that his treatment of Lazarus was very much related to why he was suffering in hell (16:25). Keep in mind that Abraham was a rich man when he was on the earth, but obviously, he "made friends by the means of the mammon of unrighteousness" when he had the opportunity.

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