

# The True Discipleship Broadcast-1983-10 True Discipleship

by William MacDonald

---

*The passage teaches that faithfulness in small things leads to faithfulness in greater things and that what we do with our money determines our progress in divine things.*

**Duration:** 24:38

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:24, Matthew 6:33, Luke 16:1-13

**Topics:** "True Discipleship"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a passage from Luke chapter 16, verses 1-17, which presents difficulties for some Christians due to its seeming commendation of dishonesty. The passage tells the story of an unjust steward who was accused of embezzling his master's goods. Instead of being commended for his dishonesty, the steward is actually praised for his foresight in providing for his future. The preacher emphasizes that the future of a child of God is in heaven, not on earth, and encourages listeners to prioritize their eternal future by investing in the work of the Lord.

---

## Transcript

Let's turn today to Luke chapter 16, verses 1 through 17. There are some surprising passages in the Bible, but this is one of them. For some people, it might even be embarrassing.

For people who love the Bible, who believe it's the infallible Word of God, this passage presents difficulties. The reason it presents difficulties is because it seems to commend dishonesty. And a lot of Christians just pass over it blithely, apparently thinking if they don't look, it'll go away.

But it hasn't gone away. It's been in the Bible all these years, and will always continue to be in the Bible. And you never have to be afraid.

If you just read the passage, see and understand what it's saying, it's beautiful. It's not embarrassing. It's beautiful.

There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. Wasting! That didn't mean he used too much sugar in his coffee. Wasting here means embezzling.

The man was a crook, and he was. He was really dishonest. This is not the first time it's happened in the history of the world, and it's not the last time either.

So he called him, and he said, What's this I hear about you? You're through. He fired him on the spot, but he said, Before you leave, I want an audit. I want to know exactly where I am financially.

I want the books brought up to date, given account of thy stewardship. He began to think ahead to the days of unemployment, and he thought, I know what I'll do. So the doors will swing wide open to me, and friends will say, come on in and have a cup of coffee.

So he called in one of his master's creditors, and he said, What do you owe my master? Well, you'd think he would have known. I should think he could have gone to the accounts receivable file and found out. Maybe he didn't keep good records for one reason or another.

And this man said, I owe, let's say, 100 gallons of oil. Not Union 76, but olive oil. And he said, Don't worry about it all.

You sit down, and you just cross off the 100, write in 50, pay for the 50, and we'll call it square. Was that okay? No, that wasn't okay. He had no right.

He's still up to his old tricks. He had no right handling his master's money that way. Imagine the cheek of him, as they would say in the north of Ireland, right? Cheek, they don't use that word here so much.

But he was really cheeky. So he called in another creditor, and he said, How much do you owe? And he said, Well, I owe 100 bushels of wheat. Well, he said, Don't worry at all about it.

He said, We'll make a deal with you. Sit down, cross out 100, write in 80, pay for the 80, and we'll call it even. Now, the surprising thing is the next sentence in verse 8. It says, So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly.

Well, that really is a shocker, and this is why people have difficulty with this passage of Scripture. In the King James Version, the original King James, it's not clear whether the Lord or his Lord commended him. But frankly, it doesn't make a bit of difference.

It doesn't make any difference whether it was his own employer or whether it was the Lord Jesus who commended him, because the thought is still the same. Key number one to the understanding of this passage, he didn't commend him for his crookedness. He commended him for his foresight.

He looked ahead. He looked to the future. It's going to become evident as we go along that this is one of the keys to the understanding of the passage.

The master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. How had he dealt shrewdly? He was thinking ahead. He was thinking to the days when he wouldn't have any regular income coming in, but he'd still have friends.

No money, but plenty of friends. He had dealt shrewdly. And then the Lord Jesus added those wonderful words, the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons alike.

He's saying people of the world are clever. They look ahead and make provision for the future, whereas the children of the kingdom don't do it. And you know, the people of this world are pretty clever when you

stop to think of it.

When you stop to think about their shrewdness in business, their cleverness in politics. They're way ahead. But that brings us to the second key for the understanding of this passage.

The first is that the master didn't commend him for his crookedness, but for his foresight, for looking to his future. The second key is the future of the child of God is never said to be in this world. It's in heaven.

You've got to see that for this passage to make sense. Put those keys in the door and the door will open. He didn't commend him for his crookedness, but for looking to the future.

And the second key is the Christian's future is never said to be in this world. Our future is in heaven. And so what the Lord Jesus is saying here is the people of this generation, of this world, they look ahead to their future in the world.

Christians don't look ahead to their future in heaven. Oh yes, as far as their salvation is concerned. But this is talking about stewardship and reward for faithful stewardship.

So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly, for the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of life. And then you come to the key verse in the passage where the Lord Jesus says, And I say to you, make friends to yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, or maybe your Bible says when it fails, they may receive you into everlasting habitation. Make friends to yourselves by reason of the mammon of unrighteousness.

What the Lord Jesus is saying is, use your money, use your material things, not for selfish pleasure, but so that when you get to heaven, there'll be a welcoming committee there at the ramparts of glory. Say, wouldn't that be wonderful? To arrive at the gates of heaven and have a crowd of people say, Thank you very much. It was you who invited me here.

I did? Yes, through the wise stewardship of your money. That's why I'm here. When in the mansions above, the saved all around me appear, I want to hear somebody saying, It was you who invited me here.

Here's a girl that was a man approaching his 80th birthday, and his adult sons and daughters decided that they wanted to do something special for him on his 80th birthday. And they began to say, Now, what do you get for an 80-year-old man? Would you tell me? You know, what do you get for the man that has everything? And, you know, how much more life does he have anyway at 80? And they racked their brains, and they couldn't think of a thing to buy for this dear Christian gentleman, their father. He had an electric razor.

He didn't have an electric toothbrush, but he didn't particularly want one. So they went to him, and they said, Dan, we wanted this to be a surprise, but it's not going to work. They said, Your birthday is coming up, and we wanted to do something special for you.

We wanted to get something special for you, but we can't think of what to get. Well, what would you like on your 80th birthday? And he thought for a while, and he said, I'd like to see a portion of the Scripture going into some language that it's never been in before. That wasn't exactly what they had in mind.

You know, they thought of gimmicks and gadgets and something out of the Sears catalog. But they thought, well, we'd better be good sports about it. So they went down to the Bible Society, and they said,

you know, our dad's approaching his 80th birthday, and we wanted to get something.

The Bible Society said, well, that's really interesting. We're just about to translate and publish the Gospel of John in an African dialect that it's never been in before. And they said, well, how much would that cost? And braced themselves, and the Bible Society told them, and it was really more than they had intended to buy for a birthday present for their father.

But they thought, well, we'd better be good sports about it. So they scrounged, and they got the money together. And on his 80th birthday, that was his gift.

See the Gospel of John translated into an African dialect that it had never been in before. Transport yourself forward 100 years, and we're in heaven. And one day, that man walks down the streets of heaven, and he meets a brother coming the opposite direction.

And they strike up a conversation, as everybody does in heaven. And he says to him, where did you come from? Well, he said, I came from Africa. You did? How did you get here? And he says, well, somebody cared.

Somebody cared enough to have the Gospel of John translated into our language and published for us. And I'll never forget the day the shipment of the Gospel came to our area. And I got a copy of it.

And I read about it. Read about the Savior. And I trusted him as my Lord and Savior.

That's why I'm here. How do you think that man would feel? The 80-year-old. Well, he had done pretty much what Jesus says in verse 9, hadn't he? He had made a friend through the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when he failed, his friend received him into everlasting habitation.

And you can do that, and I can do that. We can make friends in Ecuador, or South Africa, or India. Makes me wonder what kind of a welcoming committee I'll have.

How about you? But that's what the passage is teaching. Then the Lord Jesus says in verse 10. He's not through with us yet.

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much. I love this. In what is least.

What is least in this passage? The mammon of unrighteousness. You say to me, well, I made \$42,000 last year. I say, that's what's least.

Now let's talk about what's much. You know? You say, well, I've accumulated a fortune in my lifetime. I say, well, that's what's least.

Now let's talk about what's much. Wonderful, isn't it? It's wonderful, the delightful scorn that the Lord Jesus can pour on the accumulation of money for money's sake. I like that expression.

That which is least. He who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. What do you think is much in this verse? Well, spiritual treasures, eh? Things that last for eternity.

That's much. These other things are just a passing value, really. A passing value.

But the things of God and the things of eternity are much. God allows a certain amount of material things to pass through our hands and says, I'm going to watch him. I'm going to watch her and see what she

does with that.

And based upon what I do with that, he says, okay, I don't think I can trust him with very much. Because if he wouldn't be faithful, and the few dollars that trickle through his hands, I can't entrust spiritual truths to him because he wouldn't be faithful with them either. What the Savior is really saying is that our minds should be computers.

They should be working all the time thinking about precious, never-dying souls. That's what they should be. How can I reach these people? How can I use what I have best for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ? If I close my mind to the whole subject of Jesus on the unrighteous man, there are verses in Scripture that won't make sense to me.

My mind will be blocked. I'll have a mental block, and it just won't come through. Whereas if I obey the Lord, it just opens up like a road.

So I would say that there's a very vital correlation between my stewardship of material things and the progress I make in the study of the Word of God. What else could be true, Richard? Answers to prayer. Boy, that's quite a thought, isn't it? That my stewardship for the Lord Jesus Christ might have some very real influence on how much I see prayers answered day by day.

A fruitful witness for the Lord Jesus. Could be true riches, right? To say nothing of reward at the judgment seat of Christ. These are the things that really count.

And in this passage of Scripture, the Lord Jesus teaches something that you and I would never have thought of. That what we do with our wallet determines our progress in divine things. If it doesn't teach that, then I don't know what the passage is teaching.

Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust of true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another's. It says in the King James, another man. I'm sorry that the New King James put man in there.

Because it's referring to the Lord. If you have not been faithful in what is the Lord's, who will give you what is your own? That means that I'm just a steward. I don't own it.

There's no question of how much I should give to the Lord. This whole subject of tithing leaves me rather cold. It all belongs to the Lord.

The question is, how much am I going to keep for myself? And for personal needs? And if I haven't been faithful in what belongs to the Lord, how can he give me what is my own? Once again, those things that I've already rehearsed, they're my own. And especially rewards and the development of Christian character. And then the Lord Jesus repeats what we already read in Matthew chapter 6. No servant can serve two masters.

Remember I said to you that the Lord Jesus probably talked more about money and this type of stewardship than anything else in the whole New Testament. Well, here's another illustration of it. He's right back on track again.

No servant can serve two masters. You can't live for money and live for the things of God. You know, I want to tell you that a lot of Christian businessmen who have actually been living for the accumulation of

money have been a tremendous stumbling block to younger believers.

Those men might get up on Saturday night and give an impassioned plea for mission. But young people read them. They know very well that those men are not living for mission.

They're living for money. And it's a case of what they are speaking so loud that the young people can't hear what they say. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and Naaman. It's a moral and spiritual impossibility to live for both. If I'm living for money, then I'm not living for the Lord.

If I'm living for the Lord, I hold a very light touch on money and value it mostly for what it can do in the spread of the gospel and in the salvation of souls. Well, I like the way it ends. The Pharisees were there.

And they heard all those things and they derided it. Can't you hear it? Why, just like people today would deride the Lord Jesus, they know that the important thing is to make money. That's where it's at.

Get out and make as much as you can, as fast as you can. And it says when they heard all these things, they derided him. Imagine a mortal man deriding the Creator, who spoke only words of truth.

I love what he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your heart. God looked into their heart and he saw covetousness there. They loved money.

Jesus said what's highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. What's highly esteemed among... Well, of course, it's a very broad statement, but here it refers to spending your life in the acquisition of money. What's highly esteemed among men? You say, how much is he worth? We measure work.

We measure human worth by a man's bank account. How much is he worth? We say he belongs to the upper crust. That means more lard per ounce.

Or we say those people are the cream of society. What do we mean, that they're godly people? No, we mean that they're wealthy, you know, wealthy houses out in the suburbs. Queen of society.

More butterfat per ounce. That's what cream is. And that's what the Lord Jesus is saying.

What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. God's looking down to see people not trying to feather their own nest. The people who convert things into souls.

The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. Strange things happening in Jesus' day.

People pressing into the kingdom. People like the Pharisees deriding him. And it just goes to show, and it's still true today, that the teachings of the Lord Jesus do create a division among the people.

It takes sides, and it almost seems that there's no mutual stand. Wherever I've known the teachings of the stern demands of Christian discipleship to be taught unequivocally, people take sides. You're either for it or you're against it.

You either say, yeah, that's what it says, and that's what I'm going to do, or you say, I wish he had never written that book. Nothing in between. No neutral ground.

So, here you have the story of the unjust steward. And we started out, we were kind of embarrassed by it. We were kind of embarrassed that it was in the Bible.

We thought maybe if we didn't look it would go away, but we don't want it to go away now, because it's beautiful. And don't forget the two keys. The two keys are, first, this unjust steward was not commended for his dishonesty, because he was a crook.

He was an embezzler. He should have gone to jail for what he did. He wasn't commended for that.

He was commended for providing for his future. The second key is that the future of the child of God is in heaven, not on earth. And the people of this world are wiser in providing for their future on earth than we are in ensuring a welcoming committee when we get to heaven.

Well, that means, really, if I'm going to be practical about this, that I should go back to my apartment and see what can I convert into money and put into the work of the Lord so that men and women might not die for lack of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/23/SID23725.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/the-true-discipleship-broadcast-1983-10-true-discipleship/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**