

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 28

In chapter 15 of his gospel, Luke records three parables of Jesus that stress the great love that God has for the lost and the unimaginable lengths to which He goes to find them. The parable of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son teach that there is great joy in heaven as well on earth over one sinner who repents. Why? Because what was lost has been found, and he who was dead is alive again. The idea of restoration to God and of fellowship with Him is poignantly expressed in an anonymous poem.

A Broken Vessel

*The Master was searching for a vessel to use.
On the shelf there were many,
Which one would He choose?*

*“Take me,” cried the gold one.
“I’m shiny and bright;
I’m of great value, and I’ll do things just right.
My beauty and luster will outshine the rest.
And for someone like you, Master, gold would be best.”*

*The Master passed on with no word at all.
He looked at a silver urn, narrow and tall.*

*“I’ll serve you, dear Master;
I’ll pour at your wine and be at your table whenever you dine.
My lines are graceful and my carving so true.
And silver will always compliment you.”*

*Unheeding, the Master passed on to the brass.
It was wide-mouthed and shallow and polished like glass.
“Here, here,” cried the vessel, “I know I’ll do.
Place me on your table for all men to view.”*

*“Look at me,” called the goblet, its crystal so clear.
“My transparency shows my contents so dear.
Though fragile I am, I’ll serve you with pride,
And I’m sure I’ll be happy, in your home to abide.”*

*“You may use me, dear Master,” the wooden bowl said.
“But I’d rather you use me for fruit, not bread.”*

*Then the Master looked down and saw a vessel of clay,
Empty and broken it helplessly lay.
No hope had that vessel that the Master might choose,
To cleanse and make whole, to fill and to use.*

*“Ah! This is the vessel I’ve been hoping to find.
I’ll mend it, and use it, and make it all mine.
I need not a vessel with pride in itself,
Nor one who is narrow to sit on a shelf.
Not one who displays his content so proud.
Nor one who thinks he can do things just right.
But this plain earthen vessel filled with My power and might.”*

*Then gently He lifted the vessel of clay.
He mended it, and cleansed it, and filled it that day.
He spoke to it kindly, “There’s work you must do.
Pour out to others; I’ll pour into you.”*

How wonderful that the one true God searches for those who are lost and heals those who are broken. Thanks be to God that He has provided the way for lost souls to be cleansed, mended and put on friendly terms with Himself. This reclamation has been accomplished through the atoning work of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross. Knowing no sin, Jesus was willing to become sin and die in our place, taking upon Himself the just penalty of death that we deserve so that we, who deserve to die, might be

forgiven, receive His righteousness and enjoy close relations with Him forever.

In this lesson, we will explore Jesus' teaching about stewardship, particularly the use of wealth and riches. We will also study what it means to live wisely before Him to whom we must give account. Some parts of Luke 16 are difficult to understand. Before beginning to study, please take a moment to ask the Holy Spirit for help understanding the truths of His Word and for grace to apply its principles.

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

1. Read Luke 16:1-15.
 - A. From verses 1-14, identify to whom Jesus is speaking and the name of the group that overhears His parable.
 - B. Using a dictionary, define the term "steward" or "manager."
 - C. From Luke 16:2:
 - (1) What accusation does the rich man imply against his manager?
 - (2) What does the rich man demand of his irresponsible steward?

(3) Moreover, what judgment does the rich man pronounce upon the steward?

(4) From Luke 16:3, what problem does this create for the steward?

2. From Luke 16:4-7, what does the steward do to solve his problem? Describe how his actions moved from being irresponsible to dishonest.

3. From Luke 16:8:

A. The rich man (master) commends his steward (manager) for being _____.

B. Two kinds of people are described, people of this _____ and people of the _____.

4. Read John 8:12 and John 12:35-36.

A. Who is the light of the world?

B. Who are the sons of light?

C. What promises does Jesus make to those who choose to trust Him?

5. From John 15:18-19, the world _____ those who belong to the world and _____ those who are sons of light. Why?
6. Reread Luke 16:8-13. Also consider Matthew 10:16, 1 Peter 2:21-22 and 1 John 3:1-5. From these passages and your knowledge of Jesus and the Bible, answer the following.
- A. Is Jesus commending dishonesty? Why or why not? Cite Scripture to support your answer.
- B. What is Jesus commending?
7. From Luke 16:10-15:
- A. What are the main points of this parable?
- B. What realities about God, the Pharisees, men and servants does Jesus communicate in His parable?
- (1) God

(2) Pharisees

(3) Men

(4) Servants

For background, read Ezekiel 34:1-16. Israel's leaders, including the Pharisees, had been charged by God to be faithful shepherds of the flocks entrusted to their care. Not only were they to steward resources wisely, but they were also to use wealth for the benefit and blessing of others. It is evident that they were failing to do this. Furthermore, the Pharisees and other teachers of the law were neglecting to uphold the very law they were to administer. Instead, they bent the law to serve themselves and the whims of the people.

In the remaining part of Luke 16, Jesus tactfully yet forcefully issues a stern warning to the Pharisees—and by implication, to all leaders of Israel—to become better shepherds and stewards or face God's judgment.

Additional Teachings

8. Read Luke 16:16-18 and Matthew 19:1-12.
 - A. Summarize the teaching of Jesus from these verses.

- B. Which of these verses, if any, are difficult for you to understand?
- C. Read Psalms 19:7-9 and 119:89, 137-138; Proverbs 30:5 and Romans 7:12. From these passages, how is the law characterized?
- D. Read Psalm 119:105 and 130, Romans 7:4-11, Galatians 3:19-25, 1 Timothy 1:9-11, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 4:12-13. What are some of the purposes of the law?
- E. Read Romans 3:19-20 and Galatians 2:15-16, 21 and 3:10-14. Can we be justified before God by keeping the law? Why or why not?
- F. From Acts 2:22-24, 36-40; Acts 4:8-12; Acts 13:38-39; Romans 8:1-4 and 10:4; and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, describe the good news of God's kingdom. How can we be justified in God's view?

C. Isaiah 49:22-23

D. Malachi 3:6-12

E. Matthew 6:19-33

F. Matthew 11:25-30

G. John 14:5-7

H. John 17:1-5

I. 2 Corinthians 1:18-20