

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 29

Chapter 16 of this gospel focuses upon three subjects: stewardship, relationship and the purpose of the law as it relates to the kingdom of God. In the parable of the shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-15), Jesus stresses the importance of being good and faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to our care, and He tells us to be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves while doing so (Matthew 10:16).

Regarding relationships, Jesus emphasizes the truth that someone who can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and someone who is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest in much. He then asks who would trust you with true riches if you are not trustworthy with worldly wealth. Overhearing this, the Pharisees, who loved money, were sneering at Jesus. He replied, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight" (Luke 16:14-15). The implication is that we should be trustworthy servants who treasure the things of God.

Concerning the law, Jesus notes that it is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for a tiny part of Scripture to be inaccurate. From other Bible passages, we observed that the law or scripture is perfect, flawless, righteous, eternal, true, holy and good. We saw that the law revives the soul, makes the simple wise, and gives light and understanding to those willing to be trained by it. Alive and active, the Word of God is sharper than a double-edged sword that divides soul and spirit, joints and marrow. Scripture judges the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts (Hebrews 4:12), increases our awareness of sin and leads us to repentance.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus teaches the importance of our relationship with God and one another. The rich man dies after a life

of ease and neglect of the needy beggar Lazarus. From across a great chasm that divides them eternally, the rich man sees Father Abraham comforting Lazarus and begs Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers of the doom awaiting them if they fail to repent. Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers have the teachings of Moses and the prophets, thus implying that everyone must pay attention to the Word of God. The rich man contends that his brothers will believe a messenger from the dead, but Abraham answers that that they will not be convinced by even that (Luke 16:30-31).

In this parable, Jesus not only issues a warning but also predicts his own resurrection from the dead, an historical event that is a source of great comfort to those who believe but evidence of rebellion and unbelief to those who do not.

As you begin this lesson, ask God to give you understanding of His Word that strengthens your belief and overcomes your unbelief.

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

1. Read Luke 17:1-4.
 - A. To whom is Jesus speaking?
 - B. What warning does He issue?
 - C. From verses one and two, what language does Jesus use to connote the seriousness of His warning?

D. Why is this warning so severe?

E. How (in what way or manner) do verses one through three suggest that we are responsible for the choices we make?

Read Matthew 12:36, 18:6-7; Romans 2:12-16, 3:19, 14:12; and 2 Timothy 4:1. How do you know that we will be held accountable for the choices we make? Please cite other Scriptures to support your view.

F. According to verse three

(1) If your brother/sister sins, what is the first thing you are to do?

From Matthew 18:15 and Ephesians 4:15, how are you to do this and with what attitude?

- (2) From your knowledge of the Bible and observation or experience, give an example that illustrates this principle.
- (3) Again from Luke 17:3, if the offender repents, what is the next thing you are to do?
- (4) From Luke 17:4, if the person continues to sin against you and continues to repent
- (a) what are you to do?
- (b) From Matthew 6:12 and 14-15, Ephesians 4:32, and Colossians 3:13, what patterns, principles and/or promises about forgiveness are implied?
- (c) Why are we to extend forgiveness to one another?

(5) When a person who has injured us does not seek forgiveness, what do the following Scriptures suggest our attitude should be?

(a) Luke 23:32-34

(b) Acts 7:54-60.

(c) Ephesians 4:29-5:2

(d) Hebrews 12:14-15

2. According to 1 Peter 4:7-8, what are we to do and why are we to do it?

3. What challenges, disappointments, promises and/or benefits of seeking and/or extending forgiveness would you like to share from your experiences or observations?