

Teaching Outline

Lesson # 7

“God or Mammon? Luke 16

I. The Importance of Historical Context

Principle: To interpret a biblical text correctly, we must read it from the perspective of those who lived in that place and time.

II. Jesus Teaches The Parable of the Unjust Steward

- A. The Steward’s Predicament
- B. The Steward’s Plan
- C. The Steward’s Prudence

Principles:

1. When death comes, the power we have to do good with our money ceases – so we must do good now so that the friends we make on earth will be waiting for us in heaven.
2. Money is a great indicator of the state of your heart.
3. Material things belong to this life only. What happens in the afterlife depends on what you do here and now.
4. When we bring the word of God into people’s lives and they find faith, you have made forever friends.
5. Believers in Jesus should deal as shrewdly in God honoring ways as ungodly people of the world deal selfishly for their own ends.
6. Money is a rival god – we dare not love or serve it.

III. Jesus Addresses the Pharisees Directly

IV. Jesus Teaches The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

- A. The Two Persons: Rich Man/Lazarus
- B. The Two Places: Paradise/Perdition
- C. The Two Pleas: Relief/ Redemption

Principles:

1. What we do here (on earth) and who we are here is intricately attached to what we will do there (eternity) and who it is that we will ultimately be in eternity.
2. The decisions, choices and actions HERE determine the eternal state of your soul THERE – the soul of man never dies.

Lesson #7
Series 3 - Story 8

“God or Mammon?”
Luke 16:1-31

**ALL OF OUR RESOURCES BELONG TO GOD AND HOW WE USE
THEM EXPOSES THE STATE OF OUR HEART AND DETERMINES
THE ETERNAL STATE OF OUR SOULS.**

Story Outline:

- I. Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, lovers of money
- II. Jesus teaches the parable of the dishonest steward
- III. Jesus teaches the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

Life Application Principles:

1. Our attitude toward money and how we use it is a barometer of our spiritual state.
2. Our integrity meets its match in matters of money.
3. It is impossible to use money selfishly and genuinely love God.
4. The believer is to use money as a temporary vehicle to accomplish an eternal good – for purposes that transcend this life.
5. Man must love God and use money, not use God and love money.
6. Building a reputation around money is deceitful and will lead to dangerous and devastating results.
7. For the believer, earthly investments must be geared toward eternal rewards and benefits.
8. This life is preparation for the life to come – our knowledge of the Bible and our obedience to it readies us for eternity.
9. If you can't be trusted with the temporary, you will not be entrusted with the eternal. (If you are faithful in little, you will be entrusted with much)
10. Social status on earth does not dictate spiritual status before God -- eternal destiny is determined by the state of the heart.
11. A man is not measured by his money but by his Master.
12. One thing matters at the time of death – a relationship with Jesus.
13. Every person who has ever lived will spend eternity in one of two places – in heaven or in hell - for the soul never dies.

14. The love of money is the root of all evil and is at the heart of all pride, selfishness and power.
15. True followers of Christ will never be indifferent to the plight of the poor and suffering.

NAME OF JESUS

Devotional Reading

“JESUS, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD”

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16, NKJV)*

ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD . . . Have you ever truly pondered the meaning of this name of Jesus? Have you ever really sat on it for a while and meditated on it trying to understand why He would be given such an important title? Or, like me, have you merely read over it, perhaps a thousand times, accepted it as truth, but in eagerness to get to the next portion of this familiar verse, never stopped to explore the majesty, the love, the glory and the power hidden within this name? One morning recently, during my quiet time of prayer and study in the Word, God stopped my reading right in the middle of this verse and whispered in my spirit: “Do you know what this means? Do you really understand this name attributed to my Son?” Shamefully shaking my head, I humbly replied: “Well, you know Lord, not really. I have an idea of what it means, but honestly, I’ve never given it much deep consideration.” Certain that God never speaks randomly or without purpose, I knew He was calling me to delve a bit deeper into this particular name because He wanted to reveal to me the treasures that lie within it.

Because the best commentary on scripture is scripture, I began to search for other passages, that I might gain more insight into the meaning of “**ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.**” As only God can skillfully orchestrate, the very next passage I read led me to another aspect of Jesus that, once again, I have never really noticed before, much less deeply considered.

*“No one has seen God at any time. The **only begotten son**, who is in the bosom of the father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18, NKJV)*

IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER . . . Don’t you just love that??? How can it be that in all my years of Bible study I have missed this simple, yet profoundly meaningful truth? Jesus Christ is **IN** God’s bosom. He is not merely on it or near it, but He is **IN** it. Similar to the intimacy felt between a mother and her child when the child rests it’s head on its mother breast, this phrase points to the mutual love and tender care that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ have for one another. However, unlike any human relationship, the bond between them runs much deeper. Jesus Christ the Son is an integral part of the whole of God. The inclusion is like none other in all creation, for in them, there is no separation. This is the unique “oneness” of God which Jesus affirms when He rightfully

declares, “*You, Father, are in Me and I in You*” (John 17:21). This description is simply breathtaking . . . for in it we can see the unparalleled connection, the abiding intimacy, the warm closeness and the intertwined relationship between God and His Son. O, Praise the Lord, who never leaves His seeking children in the dark! Through this revelation of the unique “oneness” of God and Jesus Christ, we are helped in our understanding of His name “**ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.**”

The Greek word for “begotten” is *monogenes*, which literally means “pertaining to being the only one of its kind or class; unique.” In his writings, the apostle John uses this term to convey the truth that Jesus, as the “*only begotten Son of God*” is the unique, unequaled, incomparable, one and only Son of God, come from within the Father’s bosom, and as such, alone shares the exact same divine nature as God.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word with was God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing that was made was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-4, 14)

In his Gospel account of Jesus, John begins by boldly proclaiming Christ’s Deity, that is, His divine nature and supremacy over all creation. He tells us that Jesus Christ is eternal, that He was with God and is God from the very beginning. He also tells us that as the “**only begotten Son,**” Jesus enjoys intimate fellowship with God, is equal in power to God and is acquainted with all God’s ways. However, although He is divine and above all creation, He is also personal. Jesus the Son, became God in human flesh, yet He never lost a single one of His divine attributes. As God in the flesh, He came to earth to personally live among us that He might reveal to us exactly what God is like...a God full of unmerited favor, endless mercy, absolute truth, almighty power and abounding love. John’s goal in all His writings was to prove that unlike every other man that ever has walked on earth, Jesus Christ is the **ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD**...the one-of-a-kind, ever-only, uncreated God-man, in whom there is life for all who believe in His name (John 20:31). As the “**only begotten Son of God,**” Jesus Christ is the only One in all creation who has the power and authority to save sinful man from death and eternal destruction in hell, and to give them eternal life, because within Himself, He is God. “*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the “only begotten Son of God” (John 3:17-18). “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him (1 John 4:9).*

Matthew Henry writes, “Jesus Christ in His person is God manifest in the flesh. The person of the Son is the true image and character of the person of the Father. In beholding the power, wisdom, and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold the power, wisdom and goodness of the Father.” The scriptures affirm this truth:

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Hebrews 1:3)

He is *“the image of the invisible God. In Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.” (Colossians 1:15, 19).*

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.” (Colossians 2:9)

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul helps us in our understanding of the majesty, the love, the glory and the power of Jesus Christ, the **“ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD”** when he writes, *“Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).* Oh the wonder of wonders . . . that Jesus Christ, the Divine Son, willingly took off His royal robes, set aside His royal crown and left the intimacy and safety of His Father’s bosom for our benefit. With a love most undeserved, He tore back the protective veil of heaven and entered the realm of wicked and evil man in order to save us. In His passion, He became our Servant and our Savior, stooping so low, that He not only identified Himself with us, but willingly died the cruelest death on the low Cross of Calvary so all who believe in Him would be set free from the penalty of sin. He suffered and died, so we don’t have to. Without hesitation, He wore the crown of thorns, that we might wear the crown of life. He wore the sinner’s blood - stained robe of eternal death, that we might wear the righteous white robe of eternal life. He was mercilessly beaten and tried that we might escape the just penalty of our sin and receive His mercy and grace that leads to our forgiveness. Even more, by identifying with us and dying the death we are due, He satisfied the wrath of God, shattered Satan’s evil plans, and secured for all who believe abundant life with Him in heaven . . . forever and ever!

O friend, do you now see a bit more clearly the majesty, the love, the glory and the power wrapped up in this name of Jesus Christ, the **ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD**? Do you now understand that the One who is *in the bosom of the Father* is the one and only Son of God Most High and that He alone has the power to save men from their sins and

the eternal judgement in hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth? Do you know Him? If you don't know Him, will you come to Him today, confess your sin and receive the salvation of the Lord? If you do know Him, but have made light of His great love and sacrifice will you right now turn to Jesus, the “**only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth” and confess your sins that you may receive His redeeming mercy and be restored? Then will you, who were once far off and wandering, go and share the life-saving message of God's amazing love? It has been truthfully said, that every man's life is eternal. The great question is just WHERE will he spend it? Someone's life, perhaps, even yours, is dependent on the answer to this question today. Beloved, today is the day to choose life, for tomorrow may be too late. Don't delay . . . for to choose not to choose, is to choose!

*He left His Father's Throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace!
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race!*

*Amazing love! How can it be?
That Thou, my God shouldst die for me!*

(“And Can It Be” by Charles Wesley)

THE DOCTRINE

“GOD OR MAMMON?”

Biblical Stewardship

Luke 16: 31

A man is not measured by his money, but by his Master.

I read a story recently about a woman who had finished her shopping and returned to her car only to find four men inside it. She dropped her shopping bags, drew a handgun from her purse, and with a forceful voice she said, “I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!” Those men did not wait for a second invitation. They got out and ran like crazy! The woman, understandably shaken, quickly loaded her shopping bags and got into the car. She just wanted to get out of there as fast as she could. But no matter how she tried, she could not get the key into the ignition. Then it hit her: THIS ISN’T MY CAR! She looked, and indeed her car was parked four spaces away. She got out, looked around to see if the men were near, loaded the bags into her own car, and drove to the police station to turn herself in. The desk sergeant, after hearing the story, nearly fell out of his chair laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four men were reporting a carjacking by a woman with glasses and curly white hair, less than five feet tall, and carrying a large handgun. NO charges were filed! (Greg Laurie, *A Time to Worship*, Decision, Nov. 2001).

The woman thought it was her car, but it really belonged to someone else. The doctrinal truth of this week’s lesson is: God owns everything. He owns that lady’s car and the one she mistakenly got into. And He owns everything we call “ours.” He owns it all!

Biblical Stewardship: A Definition

The Bible is clear: God is the giver of all that we have. What we possess is not earned, but is a gift from God, therefore we are accountable to God for what we do with what He has given to us. We are therefore, managers, not owners. A good definition of stewardship is: The job of supervising or taking care of something such as assets, an organization, or property on behalf of the owner.

In Psalms 24:1-2 David writes:

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness of it, the world, and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the streams and the rivers.”

The Old Testament prophet Haggai narrows his focus somewhat when he talks about God's possession of wealth: He declares:

“The silver and gold belong to Me” – the declaration of the Lord of Hosts.
(Haggai 2:8)

The Apostle Paul notes as well that God not only owns the world and its wealth, but He owns us as well.

“Do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own.” (1 Corinthians 6:19)

A simple illustration of this concept of stewardship can be illustrated by the following hypothetical example: When you go to a hotel, you give your bags to a STEWARD who takes them to your room, but the bags are not his bags. You simply entrust your bags and their safekeeping to him for a short period of time. The foundational principle of biblical stewardship the same: God is the owner of all – we are only the stewards of His wealth.

Three Aspects of the Believer's Role as a Steward, Accountable to God

1. Aspect # 1: God is the Owner, I am the Manager

Everything I have today comes from God. It is His, and I own nothing. David said that “the world and everything in it” belongs to God (Psalm 89:11). I am not the owner of the things in my life. As a steward, I am merely the manager. If I believe that I am the owner, then I will constantly be in conflict with God over what I do with the things that I have. But when I understand that the Lord owns it all, and I am only the manger, the conflict disappears and freedom overtakes my life.

A test may be helpful here to make certain we truly understand this relationship. If you made \$400 last week, and you come to church on Sunday, how much of that \$400 belongs to God? ALL OF IT! But someone might say, “Well, 10% of \$400 is \$40 (the percentage of the entire amount the Bible states as the tithe!” While mathematically true that \$40 is 10% of the full amount of \$400, it is not true in regard to biblical stewardship. The principle of tithing does not mean \$40 is God's, and the rest is yours. The foundation of understanding what it means to tithe is understanding that it ALL belongs to God.

Paul makes this clear when he asks three questions in 1 Corinthians 4:7 - “*For who makes you so superior? What do you have that you didn't receive?* If, in fact, you

did receive it, *why do you boast as if you hadn't received it?*" The implied answer for the first two questions is, "Nothing!" The answer to the third question is, "I shouldn't!"

Deuteronomy 8:17 cautions us - "You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant He swore to your fathers, as it is today."

2. Aspect # 2: As a Manager, I Have a Divine Responsibility

If God is the owner, then I am the manager to whom He has entrusted His property – His wealth. I must learn to think, therefore, like His manager. A manager oversees the owner's assets for the owner's benefit. A manager carries no sense of entitlement to the assets he or she manages. The job of a manager is to find out what the owner wants done with his assets and then carry out His will. This understanding affects how we give.

A. We Are To Give Abundantly

King David, then the most powerful man on earth, understood this owner-manager relationship. After receiving a tremendous offering, David responded to God:

"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? For everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your own hand." (1 Chronicles 29:14).

David was thinking like a steward, a manager, not an owner.

In Randy Alcorn's *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving*, the author tells the story of a wealthy man named Jerry Caven, a successful restaurant chain owner who also owned 2 banks, a ranch, a farm, and several real estate ventures. At 59, Jerry was searching for a nice lakeside retirement home, but the Lord, His Owner, had other plans for Jerry at this stage of his life. Jerry recalls: "God led us to put our money and time overseas, and it's been exciting. In our earlier years we gave only token amounts of our money to good causes, but now we put substantial amounts of money into missions. We often go ourselves to South Asia as missionaries." When asked what changed the Caven's attitudes towards their giving, the answer came quickly: "Once we understood that we were giving away God's money to do God's work, we discovered a peace and joy we never had back in the days when we thought it was our money!"

B. We Are To Give Sacrificially

In 2 Corinthians 8 Paul speaks of the Macedonian Christians and their sacrificial giving. He testifies of these believers: “We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity. I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and beyond their ability, they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, and not just as we have hoped. Instead, they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God’s will.” (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

How could they give so generously while living in such poverty? They didn’t see poverty as an exemption from giving. They simply refused to miss out on the satisfaction of giving sacrificially.

C. We Are To Give Joyfully

“God loves a cheerful giver!” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Joyful giving is evidence that the giver understands the owner-manager relationship. Cheerful giving can only come from a heart set on things above, not on earthly things (Colossians 3:1). God loves a cheerful giver because such givers are investing in heaven, which reaps eternal dividends. When the tabernacle was being built in the Old Testament, people got so caught up in the joy of their heavenly investments that they had to be “restrained” from giving more. Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work for the sanctuary came one by one from the work they were doing and said to Moses,

“The people are bringing more than is needed for the construction of the work the Lord commanded to be done.”

After Moses gave an order, they sent a proclamation throughout the camp,

“Let no man or woman make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary.”

So the people stopped. The materials were sufficient for them to do all the work. There was more than enough (Exodus 36:4-7). Moses basically had to get up and cry out, “Enough! No more!” We give because everything is God’s to begin with. The Scripture teach us, both by mandate and by model, that we are to give abundantly, joyfully and sacrificially.

3. Aspect # 3: The Manager Will Give An Accounting

I am held accountable to God because He, as the Owner, has expectations of the manager. The Owner has complete rights to a full disclosure of what has been done with His property. Our managing His property will undergo a job performance evaluation. Each will give a personal account to God. God will want to know what we have done with the possessions he has entrusted into our care.

The areas of inspection are:

A. Ourselves

The Owner will evaluate how devoted we have been to Him. That is why Paul writes in Romans 12:1 - “Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.” Paul says a proper and spiritual act of worship is to give yourself fully to your Owner to be used as His servant.

B. Our Possessions

He will also hold me accountable for what I have done with the things he has entrusted to me. One of the final parables Jesus gave concerned a master who entrusted his possessions to three servants while he was away. The master, after returning held each servant responsible for how he had used or invested what had been entrusted to him. (Matthew 25:14-30)

C. Our Time

Ephesians 5:15-17 says; “Pay careful attention, then to how you walk – not as unwise people but as wise – making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” We will be held accountable for how we used each day the Lord has made and given to us (Ps. 118:24 and 74:16).

D. Our Abilities

The owner will examine what we have done with the gifts and abilities He has granted us. God, my Owner, expects me to take the spiritual gifts and abilities He has handed me and use them for His glory.

God has entrusted to my management time, possessions, abilities and even my very being. All are to be used for his honor. I will be accountable for all these things and how I used them. God has high expectations that I will serve Him and grow to think and care and love like He does.

If the examination were tonight – if the Owner called you to give an accounting today – what would the record say about your giving? We are in need of rethinking just how we are spending our resources for Christ and His Kingdom.

The white haired lady was mistaken as she went to the wrong car, wielded a gun, and sent the passengers running. Hers was an honest mistake. It wasn't her car, and she wasn't held accountable for her actions. We will however be held accountable for the truth of the matter is -- All that we call "ours" is actually His.

A man is not measured by his money but by his Master.

(Taken from Lifeway by Lloyd Stillely, *"It's All His Anyway"*)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Read: Luke 16:1-18

1. What do you think is the temptation that has potential to affect all men Jesus highlights in this Parable of the dishonest manager?
2. What does Jesus say happens when we try to love both God and our money? (see also Matthew 6:24)
3. (Personal) What is your attitude towards your money? How are you using it for eternal purposes. How generous are you with Gods assets?
4. (Personal) If Jesus were to ask you for an accounting of the way you spend your money today, do you think He would be pleased?
5. Share a time where passion and power for worldly things shifted your obedience to God. How in that situation did God show you the deceitfulness of riches?
6. Read 1Timothy 6:17-19. What principles do you find in this passage regarding how you spend your money or use your investments?

Consider your investment in people, share ways in which your investment in others is laying up treasures for you in heaven?

7. Read v. 14-18. Why do you think the Pharisees were “ridiculing” Jesus and His teaching? How did Jesus’ respond?

Read: Luke 16:19-31

8. Compare and contrast the rich man and Lazarus. Make a list of the differences you find between the two. Why do you think the rich man was not given a name, but Lazarus was?
9. What do the actions of the rich man and Lazarus tell you about their hearts? Describe the consequences each man reaped at death because of the choices they made in their earthly life?

What does this teach you about the choices you make in light of eternity?

10. What did the rich man do when he saw Abraham? How did Abraham respond?
11. In v.26 what do you think the “fixed chasm” is? How does understanding this chasm motivate you to share the gospel to the lost?
12. Read vs.27-31. What do you learn from these verses regarding Abraham’s response to the rich man’s request.
13. As you have studied this Parable and answered these questions, what is God teaching you personally? How will you apply these lessons to your own life and ministry today?

NAME OF JESUS – BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

How has the devotion this week deepened your understanding of WHO Jesus is and WHY He came to earth?

SALVATION QUESTION

If Jesus assessed the state of your heart today, what would He find --- love of this world or total devotion to Him? Take a moment to confess your sin before God. Ask Him to forgive you and allow His cleansing blood to wash you. Receive Jesus as your personal Savior and commit your ways and all your assets to Him both now and forevermore.