

# *The Gospel of Luke*

## *Lesson 31: Luke 16:1-32*

Heaven is before men and many are not preparing for it. They know that they are to “stockpile treasure in heaven” (Matthew 6:20, MSG), to be “rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come” (1 Timothy 6:18-19, NKJV); that they will give an account of their time, their talent, their substance, and their influence<sup>1</sup>, and yet, their earthly treasures outweigh their heavenly ones.

Pastor David Guzik has said, “If we pursued the Kingdom of God with the same vigor and zeal that the children of this world pursue profits and pleasure, we would live in an entirely different world.”

May it be said of us that our stewardship was well managed, our appointment was profitable to the kingdom of God, and that an abundance is laid up for us in heaven.

*Read Luke 16:1-13.*

1. What is a steward? What is he trusted to accomplish? Read Genesis 39:2-6 and Matthew 25:14-19 and list the steward’s qualities.

What had been entrusted to the Pharisees?

Similarly, what has been entrusted to the believer?

2. Return to Luke 16. What accusation was brought against the steward? (v.1) How did he take his position for granted?

3. Why do you believe the steward didn't refute the charge? What excuses are often made when unfaithfulness is exposed?
  
4. While he had the chance to do well for his master, the steward neglected his duties. How does this speak to you about your present responsibilities?
  
5. We will not always have the abilities and the opportunities we have now. Like the steward, one day our stewardship will come to an end and will be required to give an account. What do the following verses state about accountability?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:14, Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:16, 14:12, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15, 2 Corinthians 5:9-11, Ephesians 6:8, and Revelation 20:12.

6. Return to Luke 16. Why couldn't the steward dig? Why did he refuse to ask others for help? (v.3) (Consider the Pharisees.)
  
7. While his master did not praise his activities, as he lost much on his account, he commended the steward for his practical wisdom. (v.8) He used his remaining time to ensure his future. It has been said that "this steward prepared for the hereafter."

Jesus states, "*The sons of this world are more shrewd (wise; marked by the exercise of good judgment or common sense in practical matters) ... than the sons of light*". Why?<sup>ii</sup>

8. “The wisdom of worldly people in the concerns of this world is to be *imitated* by us in the concerns of our souls”<sup>iii</sup>. In what manner does the world seek security and prosperity? How do they manage goods and relationships?

How did the Pharisees employ these methods?

How can we use our monies and material possessions to prepare for our future? (See Matthew 6:19-21.)

How should we use our influence to form relationships so that God’s kingdom is benefited?

“Go to the men of the world, thou Christian, and do not let it be said that the devil’s scholars are more studious and earnest than Christ’s disciples.” (Maclaren)

9. How is faithfulness measured per verses 10-12?

Now read Matthew 25:19-30. How is faithfulness appraised according to this passage?

10. Back to Luke 16. In what ways do verses 10-13 apply to the Pharisees?

*Read Luke 16:14-18.*

11. Why did Jesus' parable upset the religious leaders? What dictated their actions? (v.14)

12. What enabled the Pharisees to deny Christ's accusations? (vv.15-16)

13. The ceremonial law was passing away, but the moral law would not fail; Christ returned it to its intention—loving God and others. Explain why divorce is an example of breaking moral law. (Think on Romans 3:23, James 2:10-11, then Romans 5:8 and 6:13.)

*Continue reading in Luke 16, verses 19-31.*

14. The man Lazarus was not carried to Abraham's bosom because he was poor and sick, nor did the rich man find himself in Hades because of his affluence. What clues are provided in verses 20 and 23 that expose the rich man's heart?

Also think on 1 John 3:16-18, Job 21:13-15, Luke 6:24-26, and James 5:5.

15. Return to Luke 16. Like the steward, the rich man failed to do what was just while he had the opportunity. Although the steward had a final chance to “lay up for his future”, the rich man perished. Describe the rich man’s torment and his regret. (vv.23-25, 27-28)

Ultimately, what was his error? (v.31)

16. During his lifetime, the rich man observed Lazarus begging at his gate and did nothing to relieve his hunger. Now he watched Lazarus from Hades with an unceasing desire for water. How does Galatians 6:7-8 apply?<sup>iv</sup>
17. According to verses 29-31 of Luke 16, why wouldn’t the miraculous persuade the rich man’s brothers? (Consider John 12:9-11 and 5:46; also Romans 10:17.)

Charles Spurgeon has said, “When God’s whole creation having been ransacked by the hand of science, has only testified to the truth of revelation—when the whole history of buried cities and departed nations has but preached out the truth that the Bible was true—when every strip of land in the far-off East has been an exposition and a confirmation of the prophecies of Scripture; if men are yet unconvinced, do ye suppose that one dead man rising from the tomb would convince them?”

“If the Holy Scripture be not in the hands of God enough to bring you to the faith of Christ, then, though an angel from heaven, then, though the saints from glory, then, though God himself should descend on earth to preach to you, you would go on unwed and unblest.”

18. The rich man was aware of his neglect and its consequences. If he was able to live on the earth again, how might his heart and his actions have changed?

Has this account changed your perspective? How?

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<sup>i</sup> Spurgeon, Charles.

<sup>ii</sup> See Ephesians 5:15-17.

<sup>iii</sup> Henry, Matthew.

<sup>iv</sup> “In one way the rich man of Jesus’ story was very different than the religious leaders, the Pharisees. He lived a life of gourmet excess and indulgence, and the Pharisees were rigid and disciplined and super self-controlled. Yet they shared this with the rich man: *they cared nothing for the needy around them, and despised them with neglect.* That’s why they were so offended when Jesus taught and cared for tax collectors and sinners (Luke 15:1–2). ‘A hundred miles may separate two rivers, but for all that, they flow from the same lake.’” (Morrison)