

Stewarding The Pound

by Gary Carpenter

Luke 19:12-27 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. (13) And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. (14) But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. (15) And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. (16) Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. (17) And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. (18) And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. (19) And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. (20) And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: (21) For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. (22) And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: (23) Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? (24) And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. (25) (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) (26) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. (27) But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

In the parable of the ten pounds we read,

Luke 19:16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

Notice that this first-class servant referred to the original pound, the principle, as "thy" pound. The servant had not partaken of the principle entrusted to him, nor the increase gained by trading, for his own purposes.

This servant had a clear-cut distinction in his mind between his own needs being met, and his stewardship of the Lord's pound. He did not mingle the two.

Notice he did not say, "Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds, less the portion I used to feed my family." No, he understood the difference between dining from the table of grace, and his stewardship of his Master's pound.

How does the Father provide at His table of grace? Usually with a job of some kind. I can hear people saying, "A job? I thought it was by grace." It is by His grace. The promise is simple and straightforward:

Matthew 6:31-33 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (32) (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. (33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

You will have a job when times are hard. If you get laid off, you know your Father already has your next job available. You will be hired when nobody else is. If there are no jobs at all, He will still provide for you somehow. Remember He fed Elijah with food the birds brought, and he drank from the brook. Jesus is the way. **He Who is the way will always make a way for you. That is grace!**

If you are a businessperson, you might designate a salary for yourself, just as you do for your employees. You determine a budget, you set your salary, and that is your provision. It is an expense of the business just like the wages paid to your employees. Your salary is your provision. All of the profit from the business is for the kingdom of God.

Notice also that this parable also illustrates the statement, "Exaltation regarding your stewardship of finances IS based, 100 percent, on your performance." The servants were exalted in proportion to the effectiveness of their stewardship. The better job they did in stewarding the Lord's money, the greater responsibilities of stewardship they were given. The servant who had gained ten pounds was given authority to govern ten cities;

Luke 19:17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

The servant who had gained five pounds was given authority to govern five cities;

Luke 19:19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

Exaltation to greater levels of stewardship is 100% based on performance. But performance never prevents a child from having the right to dine from his Father's dinner table.

It is interesting that we are given no example in this parable of a servant who traded the original principle and suffered the loss of it. Perhaps such a thought does not enter our Lord's mind, knowing He would send the Holy Spirit to assist these servants during His absence. We are told, however, the single action that will make Him angry concerning our stewardship ... **TO DO NOTHING!**

It was not fear of loss that prevented the wicked servant from trading ... it was his attitude of heart. He did not understand what a "first class servant" is. Remember, from Luke 17:7-9, a first-class servant is one who always puts the needs of his Master first! In the King James version, the wicked servant's response is recorded this way;

Luke 19:20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

Luke 19:21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

He did not say he was afraid of disappointing the Lord if he lost the principle. No, that attitude, at least to some degree, is in the heart of every servant of the Lord who is called to trade finances in a risky market. Looking at precisely what the wicked servant said, he did not trade the principle because he perceived the Master as being one who "takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow."

That is a little blind to us in the King James version. Although I am not a great fan of the Living Bible, I believe that version gives a little more light on this passage in this instance. In the Living Bible the passage reads;

Luke 19:20 "But the third man brought back only the money he had started with. 'I've kept it safe,' he said,

Luke 19:21 'because I was afraid (you would demand my profits), for you are a hard man to deal with, taking what isn't yours and even confiscating the crops that others plant.'

The words, "I was afraid you would demand MY profits" are most telling. This man considered that if he spent his life trading the pound, the gain should belong to him ... not the Master! He most certainly did not have the heart of a first-class servant. He was interested in his "own" profits, not in gaining increase for the Master's use.

Even the wicked servant recognized that the original pound belonged to the Lord. He did not consume it upon himself. The problem was, he was not willing to spend his life trading the pound to gain increase for his Master unless there was also "profit in it for him." He was a "servant for hire," a "hireling." This is why Jesus said,

Luke 17:10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

When Jesus said for His disciples to say, "we are unprofitable servants," He obviously did not mean that they were to think themselves to be of no value to the kingdom. The servants who gained the ten pounds and the five pounds were both "profitable" servants for the kingdom of God in that sense. That is why the Master promoted them to greater levels of responsibility.

It was the wicked servant who was only interested in his "own" profit that Jesus Himself labels as being wicked in his stewardship of Kingdom Finances. In Matthew's account of this parable, Jesus says concerning the wicked servant who did not trade the original principle;

Mat 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Gospel Entrepreneurs, God's Stewards of Kingdom Finances, are to be "profitable" to the Kingdom of God. We are not to be as the wicked servant and consider ourselves to be "for hire." We are unprofitable in the sense of, "I trade the funds entrusted to me in order to obtain increase for my

Master's use in the Kingdom of God. I do this because it is my call. I am not doing it for personal profit. I am not doing it as a hireling."

We must make the distinction between being sons who dine at the family dinner table and our stewardship in the Father's fields. We dine from our Father's table because we are sons of God, by grace alone. We have no need to partake of the gain gathered by our stewardship in the fields.