

## The Unjust Steward

By Gary Carpenter

**Luke 16:1-13** And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. (2) And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. (3) Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. (4) I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. (5) So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? (6) And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. (7) Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. (8) And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. (9) And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. (10) He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. (11) If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*? (12) And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? (13) No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

This teaching has to be left in the entire context of the subject matter which begins in Luke 15:1 and ends in Luke 17:10. The subject is stewarding our lives in such a way as to serve the kingdom of God and not money.

I remember when I first read this story, I was surprised that the Lord commended this unjust steward. He was a crook. Why would the Lord commend him? He is totally violating his stewardship, turning against his master, and benefitting those who were in debt to his master.

One time when I was reading this story the Holy Spirit stopped me in the very first verse and asked me, "*Who is your rich man?*" I answered that Jesus is my master.

Then the Holy Spirit asked me a second question, *"Does your rich man have a steward, and are you one of them?"* Whoa! I had not thought about it like that before.

Most modern Christians do not think of themselves as being the Lord's steward. Most have the mindset that 90% belongs to them, and 10% is the Lord's. Most feel they have faithfully fulfilled their obligation if they give their ten percent. But as we have been teaching the past few weeks, if you are in the ministry of helps (1 Cor 12:28), or the simplicity of giving (Romans 12:8) ... remember that the servant said, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds." The original principal ... AND ... ALL of the increase ... belonged to the Lord.

The Holy Spirit was asking me those questions because He wanted me to have a different attitude than, "Ninety percent is mine and ten percent is the Lord's." Most of the body of Christ will live that way, and that is fine. But the ministry of helps, gospel entrepreneurs, do not live that way.

Let's just think about being a "steward" for a moment. Think about whoever is the person who handles the checkbook for a major corporation like IBM, Microsoft, Apple, etc. Somebody has the job at each location of writing the paychecks, paying the electric bill. They are paying for those things using the company's finances. They are stewards of the company's money.

By definition, a steward is a person who handles finances that belong to somebody else. The whole point of being a steward is ... that money is not yours. "Thy pound hath gained ten pounds." It belongs to the Lord. It is not yours. We put people in prison who take company money for their own personal use. That's called embezzlement.

In this story, the steward is told his time of stewardship is coming to an end. That is the point. Pastor Dave Roberson gave us the key that unlocked the whole parable. The only time any of us get to be the Lord's financial steward is during our lifetime on earth. Should the Lord tarry, your lifetime on earth will come to an end. At that moment, the time of your stewardship for the Lord on earth will end also.

This man knew he was coming to the end of his stewardship. He chose to live in such a way during his time of stewardship, that would secure his future in the days after his stewardship came to an end.

For us, the day will come when we will put off this earth-suit and leave the planet. That will be the end of our stewardship on earth. Your opportunity to steward the Lord's money on planet earth will come to an end at that moment. We all need to live with the mindset of, "My stewardship on planet earth will come to an end. I need to live now in a way that will secure my future forever."

The steward in this parable was a crook. He used the time of his stewardship to reduce the amount owed by each of his master's debtors. Said another way, he was using his stewardship in a way that would reduce men's debt against their Lord, so they would forever receive him after he was put out of his stewardship.

This "debt" is symbolic of the debt of sin man owes to God. When you share the gospel with men, you do the same thing. You tell them that their debt has already been paid in full by another, Jesus Christ. When they receive Christ as their Lord and Savior, their debt against God is marked paid in full, and trust me when I say ... they will forever receive you into everlasting habitations. Hallelujah!

That is the only reason the Lord commended the unjust steward. Not because he was a crook. But because he lived his life as a steward to reduce the debt load men owed to the master. He knew that after his time of stewardship was over, they would provide for him because of his goodness toward them.

**Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

The wisdom for us is, we don't live our lives serving money. We spend our lives as stewards of the Lord's money to settle the sin question by sending the gospel to people so they can be saved. Some preach. Others send. We live our lives now to send the gospel to the world. Our future will be secure after our lives on this planet has ended.

**Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.**

Pastor Dave would talk about looking forward to walking on the streets of heaven and somebody would jump out from behind the column of a building ... their lips would resemble a bathroom plunger ... as they planted a big kiss on his cheek. "What was that for?" Dave would ask. I want to thank you. I am one that was saved by your preaching of the gospel. They will forever receive Dave into their home.

When I get to heaven, I am going to find out who the person was who filled up the gasoline tank on that ugly Opel car that Michael Muccio drove the first time he came to my office. Because of that trip, I was saved, my whole family was saved, our grandchildren were saved, and it will continue. I will find out who it was, and I will be the one jumping out from behind a column and plant a big kiss on their cheek. "What was that for?" I will thank him/her for giving the money to fill up Michael's car with gas. He brought the gospel to us and my whole family was saved. Thank you for being a steward of the Lord's money! Mwah! Mwah! ... as I continue to put kisses on that person's cheek.

### **Romans 10:15a And how shall they preach, except they be sent?**

You may not ever stand in a pulpit anywhere on earth to preach the gospel. But you may be the one who pays for the airline flights, the car trips, the donkey rides up into the mountains ... by whatever means ... you may be the one to SEND the person who preaches the gospel. The reward for you is the same as for the evangelist. The people can't hear without a preacher. The preacher can't go unless they are sent. You pay for the sending. Glory to God!

We only have this lifetime to be His steward on planet earth. Use your time wisely to build His kingdom and not your own.

God rewards faithfulness. Start small. Be faithful where you are. Don't ever think God is not watching your faithfulness. He is watching! He promotes those whom He finds faithful.

### **Luke 12:34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

If the Lord finds you faithful in money, it tells Him volumes about your heart. He will promote you to greater service in His kingdom. Prove yourself as a faithful financial steward of the Lord. He will promote you. The best is yet to come!