

Sunday, April 19, 2024 | The Road to Redemption

Week 25 | Luke 16:1-13 | "A Sure Thing"

Last week, we unpacked the other half of Jesus' parable about the prodigal son. And I argued that the *elder brother* was the titular prodigal son of the two sons. This is because, unlike when the younger son left, when the older one was upset and refused to go in to celebrate, the father, like the shepherd who lost a sheep (Lu. 15:3-7) and the woman who a coin (Lu. 15:8-10), came out and entreated him. Ultimately, the lesson was that **stressing the law at the expense of love makes us resentful toward the remorseful; it makes us criticize what God celebrates.**

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On March 13, 1986, Microsoft's stock went public for \$21 per share and sold 2.5 million shares.<sup>1</sup> Had you been in the *know* and got in on the ground floor of what would soon become the biggest tech company in the world, you would be a multi-millionaire today, and you wouldn't have had to spend a ton of money to do so.

Here's what I mean.

Say you acquired 47 shares of Microsoft that day. You would've only spent \$1,000 and owned 0.00188% of the company. But, today, those 47 shares would be worth a staggering \$3.23 million, to say nothing about the money you would've received from dividends. That's a return on investment of 327,401%, all because you did your research and got in while the gettin' was good.<sup>2</sup>

Consider this: if investing in a tech company like Microsoft in its early days could yield such immense wealth, how much more could investing in the Kingdom of God bring us? We have over 2,000 years of history to draw from, a wealth of evidence that investing in Christianity is the ultimate 'sure thing.'

Today, we'll study one of Jesus' most difficult parables to comprehend. And as you've likely guessed, the lesson at the heart of this parable has to do with *wealth*. As we'll see, those who know their time is limited will use riches to provide for themselves a home so that they'll have a place to go when their time is up. Such people, whether just or unjust, are considered wise by

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<sup>1</sup> General Editors, "Microsoft goes public," *Microsoft*, <https://news.microsoft.com/announcement/microsoft-goes-public/#:~:text=Microsoft%20went%20public%20with%20a,the%20deal%20of%20the%20year>, [accessed, May 16, 2024].

<sup>2</sup> Di Pizio, Anthony, "If You Invested \$1,000 in Microsoft Stock in 1986, Here's How Much You'd Have Now," December 27, 2023, *The Motley Fool*, [https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/if-you-invested-\\$1000-in-microsoft-stock-in-1986-heres-how-much-youd-have-now](https://www.nasdaq.com/articles/if-you-invested-$1000-in-microsoft-stock-in-1986-heres-how-much-youd-have-now), [accessed, May 16, 2024].

Jesus. Why? Because prudence in every form is always praiseworthy, especially in the realm of finance.

I want you to notice **three** things:

**i. The unjust manager gets fired.**

**READ:** Luke 16:1-2 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a **manager**, and charges were brought to him that this man was **wasting** his possessions. <sup>2</sup> And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your **management**, for you can no longer be **manager**.’

**ii. The unjust manager makes friends.**

**READ:** Luke 16:3-7 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> And the **manager** said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the **management** away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from **management**, people may receive me into their houses.’ <sup>5</sup> So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ <sup>6</sup> He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ <sup>7</sup> Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

“A hundred measures of oil” is roughly 900 galleons (6,910 lbs = a hippopotamus), and it would've cost 1,000 denarii, which is the equivalent of three years' salary for the average worker.<sup>3</sup> So, decreasing the debt by 50% was like giving the debtor a year and a half's salary.

“A hundred measures of wheat” is roughly 39,000 liters (85,980 lbs = a fully loaded semi-truck), and it would've cost 3,000 denarii, which is the equivalent of 10 years' salary for the average worker.<sup>4</sup> So, decreasing the debt by 20% was like giving the debtor 2 years' worth of salary.

**iii. The unjust manager gets favor.**

**READ:** Luke 16:8-13 (ESV)

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<sup>3</sup> Bock, Darrell L., *Luke 9:51-24:53*, The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), p. 1331.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>The master **commended** the dishonest manager for his **shrewdness**. For the sons of this world are more **shrewd** in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

<sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that **when it fails**, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

<sup>10</sup>“One who is **faithful** in a very **little** is also **faithful** in **much**, and one who is **dishonest** in a very **little** is also **dishonest** in **much**. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been **faithful** in the **unrighteous wealth**, who will entrust to you the **true riches**? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been **faithful** in that which is another's, who will give you that which is **your own**?

<sup>13</sup>No servant can serve **two** masters, for either he will **hate** the one and **love** the other, or he will be **devoted** to the one and **despise** the other. You **cannot** serve God and money.”

### **So, what's the takeaway?**

Whether they have a **lot** or a **little**, a just steward uses earthly **wit** and **wealth** to store up for themselves heavenly **favor** and **fortune**.

The Kingdom of God deserves every last penny. We are morally obligated to spend our lives in service to the gospel. So, if you don't give, that is, if you don't use your time, talents, and treasures for God, you're out of the will of God, and, according to Malachi 3:8, you've robbed the Creator.

But we are not to give begrudgingly but cheerfully. 2 Cor. 9:6-7 says, “**The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.**” The true Christian loves to give because they know that giving to God is the only time when their money is invested in something that will produce eternal returns. Financial contributions to the church, relief work, the poor, and so on have a guaranteed return; **it's a sure thing**. Every dollar given to God is never wasted or lost; it's the smartest investment one could make. In fact, you could give away every last dollar you own to further the kingdom; it would be considered a wise financial decision.

**READ:** Matthew 13:44-45 (ESV)

<sup>44</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and **sells all that he has** and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, <sup>46</sup>who,

when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.” – Jim Elliot

## **Video Description:**

### **The Road to Redemption | Week 25 | "A Sure Thing" (Luke 16:1-13)**

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

If you had invested in Microsoft when it went public in 1986, you would be a multi-millionaire today. 30+ years have proven that such an investment would've been a sure thing. But if that's true regarding some tech conglomerate, how much more about the Kingdom of God? We have 2,000+ years of history, which proves, beyond all reasonable doubt, that if there's one basket you should put all your eggs into, it's Christianity.

Today, we'll study one of Jesus' most difficult parables to comprehend. And as you've likely guessed, the lesson at the heart of this parable has to do with *wealth*. As we'll see, those who know their time is limited will use riches to provide for themselves a home so that they'll have a place to go when their time is up. Such people, whether just or unjust, are considered wise by Jesus. Why? As Jim Elliot put it, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." You can't take your riches with you into the afterlife, so you might as well use them to acquire the sort of wealth that is eternal.

**Pastor's manuscript can be found here:**

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