

Rich Man, Poor Man, Beggar, Thief

Chapter 3 Audio Lesson: New Testament #21



Objective: To further understand the Gospel of Luke, the manifesto of the Messiah, and two parables about rich men in Luke 16.



“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So, if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.”

—Luke 16:10-13

Jesus told two parables about rich men in Luke 16 which many times are misunderstood. Both these parables should be seen in the context in which Jesus taught the parables of the lost things in chapter 15. Jesus addressed these two parables to His disciples, but He obviously intended these two stories for the Pharisees as well. The first parable, known as “The Parable of the Unjust Steward,” seems like a negative illustration, but it is really a positive statement about participating with Christ in His mission, the Nazareth manifesto. The second story, “The Rich Man and Lazarus,” is a very negative statement about a man who was the absolute opposite of the partners Jesus was recruiting.

There are at least two personal applications of these parables: First, we can learn that while we are in this life, we are only stewards or managers of all that God has given us and we should use it all wisely for eternity. Second, these parables teach us to view everyone who intersects our life as the blind, bound, and broken people for whom Jesus came. We should see the people of this world as the lost sheep, coins, and sons. As Lazarus lay at the gates of the rich man, lost people lie at the gates of the Church. If we realize that the Christ who lives in us would like to reach out to these people through us, we can become part of His solution and respond to their needs in this life and in eternity.

1. True or false? Jesus expects us to give Him only ten percent of our lives. The rest is for us to control.
2. True or false? Jesus taught that to be effective stewards, we might need to be dishonest with other people.
3. True or false? God wants us to plan wisely for our future, not just in this life but especially for eternity.



4. True or false? Jesus taught that wealth is evil and His followers should give it all away.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. When Jesus teaches about stewardship, which aspect(s) of our lives is He talking about?
- Ten percent of our money
 - Ten percent of all of our resources
 - All the money, talents, and time we devote to Him at church
 - All of it—everything God has given us in every area of life
6. Why are we to make wise use of our financial opportunities?
- So we can earn our way to heaven
 - So we save not only ourselves but others
 - So heaven, our eternal dwelling, will be a welcome experience
 - So we can become wealthy
7. What does God promise us if we are faithful with the little things like our money?
- He promises to make us wealthy and happy.
 - He promises to protect us from injustice and evil.
 - He promises many rewards here and in heaven.
 - He promises to trust us with real riches, spiritual treasures.
8. How can you tell if money is your Master?
- You worry about it and spend a lot of time caring for what you have.
 - You do not do what you should do only to earn more.
 - You have a very difficult time giving money away.
 - All of the above

9. What does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus teach us?
- a. Rich people go to hell and poor people go to heaven.
 - b. Participating with Jesus in His “manifesto” involves treating people with great compassion.
 - c. It is possible to be saved after we die.
 - d. In eternity, we will not remember anything from this life.
10. Which approach to life did Jesus recommend in His parable of the Good Samaritan?
- a. What is mine is mine, and what is yours is yours.
 - b. What is mine is mine, and what is yours is also mine.
 - c. What is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.
 - d. What is yours is yours, and what is mine is yours whenever you need it.
11. If we follow Jesus as an example, what kind of compassion will we have for people?
- a. Spiritual compassion only—we will pray for them.
 - b. Physical compassion only—we will meet their physical needs.
 - c. Every kind of compassion—we will try to meet whatever needs people have.
 - d. None—people who suffer are paying the consequences of their sins, and we must not interfere with that process.
12. Which of the following are you to faithfully manage? (*choose all that apply*)
- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| a. Your time | e. Your education | i. Your position |
| b. Your talents | f. Your job | j. Your plans |
| c. Your wealth | g. Your emotions | k. Your abilities |
| d. Your family | h. Your health | l. Your mind |



Money is a hard and deceptive master. In what ways can you let God be your Master?

In what ways can you show compassion to people in need? In what ways are you participating in Jesus’ “manifesto”—His mission to teach, heal, and deliver?



Thank God for the compassion He has shown to us by meeting our needs and saving us from our sins. Ask Him to meet any needs you currently have according to His will, and ask Him for opportunities to be part of Jesus’ mission and ministry, and show His compassion to others in need.



Going Deeper

1. How do you apply the basic and essential meaning of the word “steward” to the personal applications of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16? _____

2. In what ways does the concept illustrated by this parable apply to more than your money? _____

3. What are the awesome applications of Jesus to this story? _____

4. What are the “true riches” Jesus tells us will be withheld from us if we are not faithful managers of money and all that to which this parable applies? _____

5. Who are the friends we are to make in the next life by the faithful management of money in this life? _____

6. Does this parable teach that it is a sin to be rich, or does it teach the opposite? Explain. _____

7. How does this parable contrast with the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus? _____
