

The Dishonest Manager

Luke 16:1-15

Tax collectors and sinners are coming to Jesus and He receives them. But what impact should that have on their (and our) lives? The first area Jesus tackles is how we see, and handle, wealth.

This parable is perhaps the hardest to understand, but once you do, it has the power to revolutionize the way you live now and the way you will live for all eternity.

The Pull of Money

Is money good, bad or neutral? Interestingly, Jesus doesn't use those terms. Instead he refers to 'unrighteous wealth': unrighteous because it has the power to corrupt. It is something that can compete with God for the ultimate place in your heart. It can become your master – controlling your decision making. It can become your idol – where you find security and significance. So Jesus says we must serve God and not money.

And He gives a good reason for that: money will fail us. It fails us because it cannot ultimately satisfy. But it also fails us because there will come a day, when we die, when money will be meaningless. So how should we handle money while we have it? That is the point of this parable.

The Power of Money

The manager in the parable is called to account for his stewardship. He doesn't try to defend himself. He knows he's guilty. So to make sure that he is taken care of in the future, he cuts the debt of those who owe money to his master.

Jesus is not holding him up as a good, moral example! But He is telling us that we can learn something from him: and that is to harness the power of money now for our future, eternal well-being.

Doing that will be marked by three things:

1. We will recognize that we are stewards: everything we have is God's. He has entrusted it to us to steward.
2. Generosity: by generous giving we can put money to work so that others come to know about Jesus, or are cared for and provided for. They will be there to welcome us into eternity.
3. Faithfulness: even the small things matter. This life is just the rehearsal for eternity. Money is the test-bed for our character, for what we really believe about eternity and whether Jesus is really our ultimate treasure.

But does this mean we can buy our way into heaven? The answer is no!

Paying your way into Heaven

Whilst how we use our resources now is of eternal significance, we cannot pay off our debt to God with money. Jesus does that by giving Himself for us. But His sacrificial generosity towards us can give us the desire and the power to steward His wealth generously and faithfully.