

## [Luke 16 -- Say what?](#)

Luke 15 has three stories that are very familiar topics to preachers. The lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. Everyone “knows” those stories, but then you come to Luke 16 and it is “say what?” When I come to a chapter like this I have to wonder if I really understood what I was reading because if I did why is this chapter so mind boggling? In chapter 15 we are rejoicing over finding something that was lost. This chapter is about a manager who is about to lose his job because the owner has not been getting a good return on his investment. Secondly, I very much dislike the tendency of expositors to refer to “additional teachings” because they didn’t know how they fit in. To me that is like rebuilding an engine, you took it apart, then rebuilt it, and now you are left with a few extra parts and you are trying to tell me these are “extra”. They aren’t extra, you just don’t understand how they fit in! Finally, I love chapters and verses of the Bible that I do not understand because I have something to pray over and I know when the Lord opens up the verse to me it will be a new revelation that I didn’t have before. That is what I hope to see here in chapter 16. **16** [Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 2 So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’](#) The context is the manager is being audited with the threat that he very likely will lose his job. The analogy here is the manager of a business like Best Buy is being audited, but the greater context is that Jesus is the owner of this business, He is building His church, and this person is one of His servants. For comparison we should consider the verse where He says He gives one servant 5 talents, another 2 and another 1 and tells them to trade while He goes into a far country and then when He returns they each need to give account of what they have done with that talent. If you are the manager of a BestBuy nothing in that store belongs to you, everything belongs to the owner, and it is your job to sell it to the people in that city. Likewise, if you are a Christian nothing belongs to you, every experience and gift you have has been given to you from the Lord and if you don’t share that gift it is a waste. When I was first saved I met with a church that had the practice of giving testimonies during every meeting. The message might go for an hour but then they would reserve another 30 minutes for all the members to share testimonies. Generally there was a time limit, definitely don’t speak for more than five minutes, but

usually the time limit would be shorter. It can be terrifying to stand up in front of hundreds of people and share your poor little pathetic experience. So for months I was struggling, the Spirit was bothering me to share some experience, but in my mind it was too trivial. The meeting would end and I would go home defeated. Then I read this verse and it really terrified me. I felt the Lord was speaking to me, I have given you many experiences and what have you done with them? I am hearing that these experiences are wasted on you! **3** "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— **4** I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' **5** "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' **6** "Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.' **7** "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' "A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.' There is a verse in Proverbs that says a word spoken in season is like apples of gold in settings of silver. To have that perfect testimony that exactly hits the point, it is like a beautiful treasure. I knew I had many experiences I wanted to share, but you want that perfect time. But once I thought I could get fired my thought was time to have a "going out of business sale". Better to get something rather than nothing. I started to share my testimonies, didn't worry if they were perfect, everything was being marked down. **8** "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. This word "dishonest" is also translated as "unjust" and "unrighteous". A hard word to swallow, but true. Everyone wants to have a "perfect" testimony. Sorry, if your testimony is "perfect" then you are being dishonest. The truth is that you are unrighteous and unjust and are in the process of being transformed. You aren't there yet. Why is it that we think we can be street smart when we are in the street, but the minute you step into the church you can't do that? **For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.** Most Christians sit dumbly in the meeting hall. Why? They are afraid to share a testimony that reveals they are dishonest, unrighteous or unjust. Yet, look at all these prevailing ministries of people who once were in gangs or on drugs. They begin by sharing the testimony of how they were unrighteous. **9** I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. Everyone loves to quote the verse that "money is the root of all evil". Of course, there is no

such verse in the Bible. The real verse says that “the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil”. It isn’t money that is the root, it is the love of money, and it isn’t the root of all evil, but rather all sorts of evil. The Lord just threw in a side teaching here, you can use money in this age to help you get welcomed into eternity. Money is temporary, it is a vapor, it will disappear, but as long as it is here you can use it to get something eternal. There is no way to save money eternally, or to put money away so that your children and grandchildren and great grandchildren will all be rich. But the one thing you can do with money that will last for eternity is to “gain friends for yourself that will welcome you into eternity”. The same is true of that talent the Lord gave you to use in this age. There are many Christians who have helped me on my path and I intend to welcome each and every one of them into the eternal habitations. My cousin was extremely diligent to raise money to help a hospital for the disabled (his daughter was paralyzed in an accident) and also to raise money for the local lacrosse team. At his funeral it was standing room only in a church that must have held at least a thousand people. **10** “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. **11** So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? **12** And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? I sure hope you just caught that. How many people ask “if there is a God why does He allow this?” referring to all kinds of corruption and unrighteousness. God is not about to trust you with true riches until He knows how you will handle worldly wealth. In this age your behavior will prove whether or not you can be trusted with true wealth. Did you waste the experiences the Lord gave you? Did you waste the gift God gave you? If so, at the judgement seat of Christ you will lose your job as a manager, I suspect there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Or, were you honest about being dishonest? Did you share your testimonies of being unrighteous, how the Lord saved you, redeemed you, and sanctified you? Did you make friends with money that would welcome you into eternal habitations? If so there might be a thousand people cheering you as you appear before the Lord, just like my cousin. All those people who were so corrupt, robbing widows of their houses during the mortgage crisis, that will surely be a key piece of evidence as they appear before the Great White Throne as to whether they are cast into the Lake of fire or not. In the grand scheme of eternity our life is a blip on a screen, but it is enough for the Lord to know whether or not to give us the true riches, and it is enough to judge

beyond a reasonable doubt if someone should be tossed into the Lake of fire. **13** "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." There are many reasons why someone is not faithful to the Lord. Maybe you just need a push, or maybe the real problem is that you love money and have become a servant to money. In that case your pretense at serving the Lord is only lip service and not genuine. **14** The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. **15** He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight. We need this vision. We have had many examples of those who justify themselves in the eyes of others. That is a terrible example for someone trying to learn how to minister. To elevate yourself above others is detestable in God's sight, but all too common. **16** "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. **17** It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law. This is another one of those "say what?" verses. If you want to serve the Lord you need to "force your way into it". There is going to be resistance. Your family will resist, your friends will resist, maybe even the government will resist. No one serves the Lord without having to deal with persecution. Not only so but Satan is the "accuser of the brethren". Imagine Paul forcing himself into ministry after having aided in the stoning of Stephen and also in the arrest of the saints. Imagine Peter forcing himself into ministry after denying the Lord three times. Satan wants to sift us as wheat. We are sinners, we are dishonest, we are unrighteous. But, we overcome by the blood of the lamb and by the word of our testimony. **18** "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. This is simply one tiny example of the law that is not going to disappear. This word convicts us of sin. But this same word confirms that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that His blood washes us as white as snow. **19** "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. **20** At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores **21** and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. In this story you are that rich man. It is so easy for us to point our finger at some other person, condemning others. This chapter is not about others. We are the unjust manager of the Lord's business. We are the ones who need to make

friends with the gifts the Lord has given us while we were on this earth. We are the ones who need to force our way into ministry despite the accuser of the brethren holding up all our sins. And yes, we are the rich man. Dressed in purple means we are royalty, son of the king. Fine linen indicates we are clothed in righteousness. Lived in luxury means we had all the riches of the word, and the Holy Spirit every day. At our gate is laid a beggar means the Lord has sovereignly arranged that a person in need of our help is right there, at our front door. The dogs licked the sores indicates that even the dogs are helping this beggar, where are you? **22** "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. **23** In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. **24** So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' Say what? We are born again Christians, redeemed by the blood of the lamb. This cannot possibly refer to us! First of all Hades is not Hell. Hades is where you go when you die. Second of all I have experienced something similar to heartburn every time I missed an opportunity to help someone. There is a regret in the pit of my stomach, and I am in agony. That was my experience for months till I finally decided to start speaking in the meetings regardless of whether or not it was perfect. **25** "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. Abraham calls him "son", so he is a child of Abraham. He received good things in this life, don't many Christians teach that "receiving good things" means you are blessed? Why would you think this person does not depict a Christian, of the household of faith, a person who was "blessed"? **26** And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' OK, fair enough, this chasm is a pretty good indication. There is a very clear separation between the two. But I don't see any reason to conclude that he depicts an unbeliever. **27** "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, **28** for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' The gospel of Luke is not a hodgepodge of disconnected stories. Within the context of chapter 15 this refers to a believer who has received the treasure of eternal salvation. It is our job, like the manager who is being audited, to share this gift with others. You will have to force yourself into this because we all are sinners, and yes, Satan desires to sift us like

wheat. But there will not be room for any excuses. You cannot claim you didn't have an opportunity because when you appear before the Lord you will learn that there was a person right at your gate who needed salvation.

**29** "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' **30** "No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' **31** "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" Ouch. We often think "if I saw this" or "I saw that" then I would believe. If I saw the Red Sea parted, or if I saw Jesus rise from the dead. But it turns out that is not true. There were lots of people who saw each of those events yet they didn't believe. The good news is this, you can get all the faith you need from the Bible. Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God.