**The Shrewd Manager**

Luke 16:1-12

Key Verse 8

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.”

**Introduction**

In this passage Jesus teaches us how to use our wealth to be welcomed into eternal dwellings and be rich with true riches. The wealth that we have was given by God and we are His stewards who are supposed to manage wealth according to God’s will. May God help us to know how to please God with our wealth.

1.  **Read verses 1-7. What was a manager accused of and what was a rich man going to do? (1-2) What did the manager plan before losing his job? (3, 4) What did he tell each one of his master’s debtors to do? (5-7)**

**1-1. Read verses 1-7.**

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.’**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.’

**1-2. What was a manager accused of and what was a rich man going to do? (1-2)**

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**.

* Jesus told his disciples the following story.
* A manager wasted his master’s possessions. The rich man whom the manager worked for was going to fire him.
* A manager was a steward in charge of money or property.
* The rich man wanted the manager to “Give an account of your management/stewardship”
* All people must give account in some way, and we will give account to God.
* For each of us, our time of stewardship will one day come to an end.

**1-3. What did the manager plan before losing his job? (3, 4)**

“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.’

* The manager considered how to survive after losing his job.
* He didn’t have enough physical strength to do construction work or farming even though these kinds of jobs might have been available if he was really willing.
* It was also too shameful for him to beg for money.
* This former manager was about to become homeless.

***I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’***

* His plan was to stay at other people’s houses.
* We can say many negative things about this manager:
* He was wasteful and dishonest.
* He was lazy, saying “I’m not strong enough to dig.”
* He was proud, saying, “I’m ashamed to beg.”
* There are many negative aspects to what this man was doing, but we have to give him credit for one thing: he was shrewd.
* He realized that he was about to be fired, but he had not officially been fired yet. He had his pink slip, but he hadn’t yet cleared out his desk.
* For a short period of time, this man still had authority as a manager.

**1-4. What did he tell each one of his master’s debtors to do? (5-7)**

***“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.’***

* He called in each one of his master’s debtors and cut down the amount of their debts significantly by changing the amount of their debts.
* According to US dollar value, 1 gallon of olive oil is worth about $65. So 900 gallons are worth about $58,500.
* 400 gallons are worth $29,250. So about $28,950 was discounted. (http://www.organicinfusionswholesale.com/olive-oil-extra-virgin-cp/?medium=tsa&gclid=CMmE7dOit8oCFYqGfgodV20PEg&gclsrc=aw.d)
* Cutting down a significant amount of debt was a great favor towards the debtors. We can imagine how happy the debtors might have been after their debts were reduced.
* The debtors must have appreciated the manager’s help. They might have been willing to do any favor for the manager in return for his mercy.
* The manager solved his problem about how to survive without a job, using the master’s money.
* He wasted the rich man’s money again by cutting down on the debtor’s debts. But he succeeded in buying favor from the debtors which would be beneficial for his future life.
* By buying favor from the debtors, this man managed his master’s money shrewdly, while the money was still under his management.

2.  **Read verses 8-9. Why did the master commend the manager? (8a) In what respect are the people of this world more shrewd than the people of the light? (8b) How did Jesus advise his disciples to use their worldly wealth and why? (9)**

**2-1. Read verses 8-9.**

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. **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.

**2-2. Why did the master commend the manager? (8a)**

“The **master commended** the dishonest manager because he **had acted shrewdly**.”

* He knew he would be called to account for his life and he took that seriously.
* We Christians should think seriously about the fact that we will be called to account.
* The manager took advantage of his present position to make preparation for his future.
* ‘Commend’ means to ‘praise’. The master praised the manager because of his shrewd act.
* Even though the manager had to reduce the original amount of debts, the master recognized the manager had acted shrewdly to prepare for his future life and to survive.
* Especially the master praised the manager because he had used his money to turn the debtors into his friends, so that these people might help him later.
* The manager could have used the master’s money for a different purpose but he used it to get people’s favor and make friends. It was a very shrewd act.
* The manager looked forward to things to come and prepared for it.
* We should look forward to the world to come, which is the eternal kingdom of God.
* We should use all our wealth to provide ourselves eternal dwellings.

Luke 12:29-34 reads,

“And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. **30** For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. **31** But seek his kingdom,and these things will be given to you as well. **32** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. **34** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

**2-3. In what respect are the people of this world more shrewd than the people of the light? (8b)**

***For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.***

* ‘The people of the light’ are the people who have the word of God and believe in Jesus who is the light of the world.
* The people of this world are the people who live seeking money instead of seeking and trusting God.
* The people of this world are more shrewd than the people of the light in terms of making money and using their money for their personal benefit.
* They know better how to invest their money and how to maximize their profits, for they believe that money is the only security and source of happiness.
* They manage money very shrewdly for their life security here on earth.
* For instance, people put away for retirement. People are working for 30 to 40 years to save up money for retirement, so they can enjoy the good life.
* But the average live expectancy is 75-80. They work all of their lives to provide for their last 15 or 20 years.
* They work all of their lives to pay off a mortgage. But, by the time they pay it off, they are old and maybe ready to die.
* They only live for their generation, yet they plan for it very well. Think about how many good investment tools are available.
* The original Greek of verse 8 doesn’t really say “their own kind” but “their own generation.” A wise man of the world makes a plan for his short life here on earth.
* The diligence of worldly people about the things of this world is better than the diligence of believers about the things of eternity.
* It is great shame that believers don’t work for treasures in heaven as much as the people of the world work for their earthly treasure.
* We should learn from the people of the world who are doing their best to get what they want.
* For instance, Coca-Cola is more widely distributed than the gospel of Jesus Christ.
* If we work for the kingdom of God with less zeal than we work for the things of this world, we should repent.
* Children of God should have more diligence and zeal for God’s work than any other people of the world.
* We should be better than them in doing the work for God’s eternal kingdom.

**2-4. How did Jesus advise his disciples to use their worldly wealth and why? (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****.*

***To use worldly wealth to gain friends***

* It means to help or serve others who are in need using our wealth so that we may build up friendships with them.
* We have to use our wealth to gain people and help them to be saved.
* We have to consider what we are going to use our money for. The best way to use our wealth is to use it to serve people and help them to be saved.
* God entrusted worldly wealth to us. We are the managers of the wealth. We should use our wealth shrewdly to help and save people.

***“You will be welcomed into eternal dwellings”***

* Those who use their wealth to serve and save others will be welcomed into the eternal kingdom of God.
* Using wealth to serve others is the way to store up true wealth and treasure in the Kingdom of God.
* Those who hope for the kingdom of God don’t keep their wealth only for themselves.
* Rather they serve others with their wealth hoping for the eternal kingdom of God.
* We should use our money for our eternal future, because the end of our life on earth will surely come.
* Jesus himself shows the best example of how to make friends for eternity.
* He was known as a friend to sinners and tax collectors, because he invited them to repent and have new life. He offered them eternal dwellings.
* He called his disciples his friends as well. He wants to be your friend as well. To make friends for Jesus was costly.
* In order to do this, Jesus had to come to this earth and give up heaven.
* To invite his friends into eternal dwellings was also costly for Jesus. He would have to die on the cross before we could enter the gates of righteousness.

2 Corinthians 8:9 reads,

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

* When we consider how Jesus gave up so much to make friends out of sinners such as ourselves, we can know how to use our riches. We must use our riches to make friends of sinners, so that we will see them again in eternity.
* We can offer our time and money to serve the weak, and the lowly and the sinful.

John 14:2 reads,

“In my Father’s house are many rooms. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”

* These eternal dwellings are wonderful – they are described in Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem.
* A city with streets of gold and gates of pearl and foundations of precious jewels. But that is not all.
* A city where God wipes away every tear and makes his dwelling with men.

**3.**  **Read verses 10-12. What would happen to those who could be trusted with very little and those who were dishonest with very little? (10) What will happen to us if we are not trustworthy in handling worldly wealth? (11). What do ‘true riches’ refer to? What further warning does Jesus have for us? (12)**

**3-1. Read verses 10-12.**

“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?

**3-2. What would happen to those who could be trusted with very little and those who were dishonest with very little? (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.***

* Those who can take care of small things can take care of many things.
* We should be able to take care of small things first to be in charge of many things later.
* Taking care of small things are the best test of one’s character.
* Unfaithfulness in small things is a symptom of the bad condition of one’s heart.
* Someone who is faithful with small things will be faithful with many things.

**3-3. What will happen to us if we are not trustworthy in handling worldly wealth? (11)**

***So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?***

* We should be trustworthy in handling worldly wealth first by using our wealth according to God’s purpose and managing it wisely.
* God doesn’t entrust his riches in those who are not trustworthy for worldly wealth.

**3-4. What do ‘true riches’ refer to?**

* ‘True riches’ refer to the riches that belong to God and can make us spiritually wealthy, for we are blessed with the word of God, the gospel message, the kingdom of God, faith and righteousness.

Revelation 3:17-18 reads,

You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. **18** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

* The wealth of this world is just temporary but the true riches are eternal.
* When we are trustworthy for our wealth in this world, God can entrust true riches to us.

**3-5. What further warning does Jesus have for us? (12)**

***And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?***

* Worldly wealth or money is someone else’s property because it passes from one to another and is never truly our own.
* But true property of our own is the possession that we can have eternally and is given by God. This is what ‘true riches’ is most likely referring to in the previous verse.
* Spiritual property and eternal riches are our own property that will never be taken away from us.
* When we are trustworthy with someone else’s property, God gives us everlasting property that we can have for all eternity.
* But if we are not trustworthy with the property of this world, God would not give us true and everlasting property as our own.

**Conclusion**

Through this passage we can learn the importance of using/managing our worldly wealth according to God’s purpose. We should be friends to others by others’ by using our wealth to serve them according to their needs. When we manage our worldly wealth in a way that pleases God, He entrusts us with true riches gives us eternal possessions.

**One word, “Who will trust you with true riches?”**