

Lanier Christian Church
March 7, 2010

Can God Trust Me?
Luke 16:1-13

When our children were in their teens, they began to be a little more independent. Trust became a big factor. Can I trust you to drive safely? Can I trust you to make wise choices? Can I trust you to be home on time?

It's the same way with God, the Question that God has for everyone of us today is "Can I Trust You?"

Luke chapter 16 is an interesting parable that Jesus gives to us, it's one of the most difficult parables to understand in all the Bible. Luke 16 is connected to Luke 15, Luke 15 is the best known and the most loved chapter, the parable of the Prodigal Son, and in Luke 15 as Jesus tells this parable he is teaching about wrong attitudes about PEOPLE.

In Chapter 16 Jesus teaches about wrong attitudes about WEALTH. And he talks to us about our Possessions, what we have, and how are we going to deal with what He has given to us.

Jesus talked about Money 16 out of 38 parables; 1 out of 10 verses in the Gospels. The Bible devotes 500 verses on prayer; less than 500 verses on faith; but over 2,000 verses on money and possessions.

Let's look at what Jesus teaches us in this parable, this story about the Foolish Manager, or Shrewd Manger.

1, First, Let's look at the Accountability of the Foolish Steward (v.1,2)

When the owner came back this unwise manager of the master's possessions was brought into a position of accountability. Read V. 1-2 (Note that this parable was to his disciples)

There are reasons that this manager was accountable to the owner and there are reasons why we are accountable to God. Let's look at

them this morning:

A. God is the Owner, I am the Manager –

He is the owner, I am the manager.

The first reason that I am accountable to God is because everything that I have today are gifts of God of which I own none. I am accountable to the owner. Every good and perfect gift comes from the Lord, right? He's the owner, He blesses me with everything, Your very breath is a gift from God, Your ability to walk and work is a gift from God. Every Gift you have, He gave them to you, Every possession you have, He gave them to you. He's the owner. Now friends, this is the number one issue, until we can settle this issue we're always going to have a problem in this area of management and stewardship. You see, If I believe that David Simpson is the owner, then I'm going to be constantly in conflict with God over what I going to do with the stuff that I have. But the more that I understand that God is the owner, and I'm the manager then all of a sudden the conflict begins to disappear because I realize everything that I have, everything, my health, my life, my possessions, my family, everything I have, it's not mine, God owns it. I manage it.

OK, Let's see if we understand this in real life terms, a little quiz if you will. "If you made \$400 last week and you came to church today, How much of that \$400 belongs to God?" (ALL OF IT) HE IS THE OWNER. It's not \$40 is God's and \$360 is mine, all \$400 is God's and it all belongs to Him, now He only asks us to tithe 10%, but it is all His to begin with. If we don't understand this issue of Lordship we will be in trouble, He is Lord of all we are and have.

B. The second reason I'm accountable to God is because the Owner, (God), has expectations of the Manager.

In other words, when the Master comes back, he wants to know what has been done with the possessions that he has given us, and there are several areas of expectations, and I want to just give you a few biblical areas this morning.

A. Ourselves. The first thing the owner expects is to consecrate, dedicate, and give ourselves to Him. Rom.12:1 "RO 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship."

The Apostle Paul is telling us that this is our act of Worship, to give ourselves totally to God, He's our owner, we are His people, slaves to Jesus Christ. We don't like that word slaves, our pride kind of gets in the way, but the fact is, without Christ, I am doomed. Jesus brought me salvation and hope and life by his blood that he shed on Calvary, He paid my price, He died for me, I owe Him my very life, I am His slave/servant and I would have it no other way. The first thing God expects from us is OURSELVES.

B. Our Possessions, My Possessions. He has an expectation of what I'm going to do with the things that He has given me in my life. That's why Jesus says, Luke 14:33 " In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple."

C. Our Time. Paul writes to the Church in Ephesus in chapter 5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."

As one translation say, "make every minute count,"

D. Our Gifts or our Abilities. Jesus has an expectation of what we will do with what he has entrusted with us, listen to Peter in 1 Pet. 4:10 ". 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

God, our owner, has expectations that I will take my Gifts and abilities and use them to build up his Kingdom, Whether it's myself, my possessions, my time, my gifts, they are all to be used for Him, and we will be held accountable on how we are using those gifts.

E. The Gospel. The Good News is the story of Redemption, the Story of Jesus saving us from our sins and so much more.

1 Thess. 2:4 " "On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts."

Are we seeking to please others? To be popular? To keep others happy, or are we seeking to please God?

All of these areas I'm accountable for, now let's make sure we get this straight before we move on. God's the owner, I'm the manager, so therefore God has given me certain gifts, certain possessions, he's given me a certain amount of time, He's given me all these wonderful things of which He has high expectations that I will fulfill them and reach my potential.

I found this little saying this week that fits in with what I'm trying to get across. "God put me on this earth to accomplish a certain number of things, right now, I'm so far behind that I will never die." How many of you have felt like that before?

When I look at all the things that need to be done for the Lord here in our church and in our community, I have no idea how it's all going to get done.

Now the Second thing I want to note in this story, the first was the Accountability of the Foolish Steward, now number two we will note the

2. Assessment of the Foolish Steward.

The moment that this unwise manager realizes that he is going to lose his job, look at what he says in verse three. He makes an assessment of where he was.

LK 16:3 "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--

Now this fella, he realizes he's in trouble, the owner has come home and He hasn't been doing the job, he's been lazy, he's been irresponsible, or whatever, he hasn't got the job done. Have you ever

been there?

ILLUS – Bank job – when statements were due....

In our passage, this unwise manager realizes he's in trouble and so he assesses his situation. He realizes he's going to get fired, and now he has to decide what to do.

There are three times when people are most likely to change, one of those times is when they hurt enough they have to change, in this story, this guy is in that position, "He's saying, I have to do something different, I'm getting fired."

He made a quick assessment and realized that he wasn't doing what the master required.

3. The Third thing that we can note from this parable, that Jesus is teaching us, is The Action of the Foolish Steward.

Let's look at the action of the foolish steward. v. 4-7

It's interesting to note, that when this owner comes home, fires the manager, he gives this manager some time to settle accounts, and in the settling of accounts you will notice what he did. He sat down with these who owed his master, and he begins to cut down on what is owed. Now either this foolish manager had over charged them and was now giving them the legitimate amount owed, or maybe he was taking off the interest owed and going to the principle.

Regardless, he began to cut the prices down and our Lord Jesus commends him for his shrewdness.

Why was this foolish steward commended after he had just been told he was fired? He wasn't commended for being dishonest, he wasn't commended for wasting months and maybe years of the master's time and resources, He was commended for the fact that once he realized there was a problem, He immediately took action to fix it.

Now this is very important. Because some of you today as you listen to this message, You may be saying, you know David, I'm sure God has given me gifts that I don't use for His Kingdom, I'm sure that I'm not really using my time for the Lord, I'm positive that I haven't

settled this issue of who owns what concerning my possessions and my money, and maybe you're sitting there today struggling with this and saying, "Wow, maybe I'm a foolish steward?"

Here's the Good News! Aren't you glad for the Good News? The good news is that God gives us a chance just like the owner gave this man a chance to settle the issue, and to get the books right and the accounts right. There's a poem that goes something like this, "though I can't go back and make a brand new start my friend, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end."

And that's what we are going for. Start now to accomplish a brand new ending....one that results in the praise of our Lord. Don't put it off any longer. Start today!

G. Newton, D. Simpson