

Living for What Last

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Preacher: Tyler Bittner

[0:00] You have your Bible able to stand, Luke chapter number 16. Luke chapter number 16. It's good to be here in the Lord's house today. Thankfully you chose to worship with us. And we're making our way through the gospel of Luke.

Hopefully it's been a great help to you. Good reminders of some truths, some things we need to apply to our life. And that's really the message today. It's going to be more practical in the sense of kind of what we've come through.

The last few chapters, Jesus has kind of been having these interactions with the Pharisees and reminding and showing us the heart of God. But today he kind of turns to his disciples and wants to give them some practical truth for their life that we can see.

Now we're going to read this parable. And it's going to feel, it's kind of one of those parables. I read it and I'm like, what is going on here? It doesn't seem, it kind of seems like Jesus is saying things that Jesus shouldn't say.

That he's going to commend somebody for doing the wrong thing. But there's some great truths that we're going to really pull out this morning. I think it will be a help to us. So you found your place there in Luke 16. Begin reading in the first verse where the Bible says this.

[1:01] And he said also unto his disciples, there was a certain rich man which had a steward and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee?

Give an account of thy stewardship that thou mayest no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, what shall I do? For my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship I cannot dig and to beg I am ashamed.

I am resolved what to do that when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his Lord's debtors unto him and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my Lord?

And he said a hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, take thy bill, sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another, how much owest thou? And he said a hundred measures of wheat.

And he said unto him, take thy bill and write four score. And the Lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely. For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

[2:08] Jesus says, I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.

And he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters.

For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, they seem to always be around when Jesus is speaking.

Jesus is speaking to the disciples, but here's the Pharisees. Their ears are perked up. They don't like how this story is going. And Jesus tells us exactly what's wrong with them. They were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.

[3:16] And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before men. But God knoweth your hearts. For that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

I want to preach this message this morning entitled this, Living for what lasts. I think we all have the tendency to sometimes live for the here and now. It's things that we're working for, and they're not all bad things.

But Jesus reminds us, this life is not just however long we live on this earth. It's for eternity. And are we investing here? Are we investing eternally? And that's what he's going to show us here this morning.

So let's ask him to bless our time. And Father, we've come to you multiple times, Lord, and we've asked you for help. And Lord, we ask you once again as we open up your word that you would just help our minds to be calm and our ears and our hearts ready to listen to what you have for us.

Lord, I pray as we do every Sunday, Lord, that we wouldn't just hear this message. Lord, that we would take it to heart. We would apply it to our lives. Lord, that you would convict where it needs to be. You would encourage and challenge us.

[4:20] Lord, I pray that you would just be with me. You would empty me of self. You would cleanse me of sin. Lord, fill me with your spirit that it could be a help to these people here this morning. We ask it in Christ's name. Amen.

Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated. You ever borrowed something from somebody else? And you're like, maybe it was your dad's truck. He said, you better take good care of this.

You know, I believed my dad when he told me those kind of things because I'm pretty sure I wouldn't be here today if I didn't take care of his things. Maybe it was your dad's truck. Maybe it was your neighbor's ladder. I'm thankful for my neighbor that lives just to the right of me, Larry. He has every tool in the world, and I have a hammer. So I'm like, hey, Larry, you got this tool. He's like, I got this tool. And so I always go to Larry and ask him to borrow a tool. And maybe you've had to borrow a friend's trailer.

We had to borrow Brother Justin's trailer, pick up some VBS stuff. And maybe you did borrow a tool. Have you ever borrowed a tool and then three months later found it in your garage? And you're like, oh, no.

[5:17] You're like, now you're that neighbor that has borrowed somebody's tool and it's just kind of been chilling in your house. But the idea is when we borrow something from somebody, you should take a little bit better care of it because it's not yours.

Because the idea when you borrow it is you're going to have to give it back at some point. And you're a little more careful. You're a little more responsible. Really, when we borrow something in that sense, it has this idea that we see here in Luke chapter number 16 of stewardship.

See, a steward is not the owner of the property. It's not the owner of the tool. A steward just simply manages something that belongs to somebody else. So you take a little bit better care of it.

And whether we realize it or not, every single one of us is a steward. There's so many things in our life that we think are ours, but honestly, ultimately, none of it belongs to us.

That we are just stewards. That everything we have has been entrusted to us by God for a season. I mean, it could be your job. It could be your home. It could be your children. All of these things, we are just stewards of it.

[6:25] And what we're going to see here as we pull out this text this morning is that every steward will give an account to the owner, to God, for how we managed what was placed into our care.

And so that's what Jesus is explaining and really bringing to the forefront of the disciples' mind. Now, when we kind of read this text and we've kind of come through Luke 14 and Luke 15, it seems like Jesus is changing subjects.

But I don't think he really is. I think he's continuing the conversation. You remember in Luke chapter 15, he gave some parables of the lost sheep and of the lost coin and of the prodigal son and the older brother that were lost and for different reasons.

And he told us about how a shepherd searches for a sheep. And he finds joy when he recovers him. And the woman, as she's searching for this coin that would have meant a lot to her financial stability, and she rejoices when she finds it.

And we saw the heart of the father last week as the prodigal comes home and he's searching and seeking even after the lost brother that was standing right in front of him.

[7:33] And the parables, they just reveal the incredible grace of God towards sinners. And I'm so thankful for that. I'm so thankful for the grace of God in my own life. And I can see myself even in some of these stories.

And I'm reminded that God came searching and seeking for me. But the thought here is now Jesus is turning to his disciples, those that know him, that love him, that believe in him, that have been saved by him.

And he begins to teach them about stewardship. Why? Why such kind of an abrupt change? Where is Jesus heading? Well, I think what he wants us to see is this, that grace doesn't simply change where we spend eternity.

No, the grace of God should change how we live today. How we invest, how we think, how we steward what God has given. See, people who have experienced this amazing, incredible grace of God should faithfully steward the things that he has given us.

That's the thought that Jesus has. Here's the big idea of the text, that everything we have belongs to God. And if we're going to be faithful disciples, if we're going to be faithful stewards, we can use our temporary resources for eternal purposes.

[8:49] That's what God wants us to see here. That's how he wants us to think. So the question we're going to answer is that. How should God's people handle what he's entrusted to us?

How should we handle what God has entrusted to us? And here in our text in Luke chapter 16, I think it gives us three characteristics of faithful stewards. See, before Jesus tells us what to do with our possessions, and don't get scared, this is not actually a sermon about money.

Everybody thinks preachers like to preach about money. This one doesn't. But here's what he wants us to understand. It's not just about money and possessions.

It's about how we view them, how we think about them. And that's what he wants us to do. He challenges us to think differently about them. So the first thing that we see in our text in verses 1 through 8 is that faithful stewards don't simply live for today.

Faithful stewards think eternally. Faithful stewards think eternally. Jesus begins this parable by introducing kind of the scene that there was a certain rich man.

[9:57] And when he would say that, they would have understood this would have been a man that had vast properties. I mean, he probably had so much stuff he didn't even know what he had. I mean, that was the steward's job.

The steward would have been there, and he would have been the one taking care of all of this man's wealth and his estate and all of the things that would have been pertaining to that. And the audience would have understood that.

We maybe not think like this in our culture and society, but every single person that would have been of this means would have had somebody that was the manager, the butler, however you want to look at it, of the estate.

And he was just doing what the master would want him to do. He would have been given clear instructions. He would have been told to take care of it. And everything he handled did not belong to him.

Now, he got to reap a lot of the benefits. You know, the master's got good food. Then the steward's going to eat some of it. He probably had a nice place to stay. He was well taken care of. But the Bible tells us, and Jesus begins the story and reminds us, that something has gone terribly wrong.

[10:59] So there was a rich man and a steward, but the same was accused, the steward he's speaking of, unto him that he had wasted his goods. So this man had one job.

This man's job was to make sure that the rich man, all of his things were taken care of. And everything was moving in the right direction. And his investments were working well. And the operation and maybe the farm and all the things would have been, everything would have been growing.

You don't put a steward in charge so everything can fall apart. This man would have put him in place so everything would keep running like it should. But the Bible says that this steward was not a good one.

Maybe your Bible says this. Mine says an unjust steward. He kind of was just clocking in, clocking out, kind of, hey, when the boss is away, the mice will play kind of thing.

If you work a job, you know what that means. Because you may, hopefully that's not you. It shouldn't be you. But there's some people when the boss is not there, hey, we don't have to do it because he can't see us.

[12:01] He doesn't know what's going on. That's kind of this guy's mindset. He was just kind of coming in. Hey, the boss doesn't know. I mean, I'm in charge of everything. And the Bible uses the same word here in verse number one that it used of the prodigal son.

When the prodigal son went into the far country and wasted his father's inheritance. He scattered it. He just completely used it up. And that's not what he was placed to do.

He was placed to control it and to help it grow and to maintain it. And just as the prodigal wasted his father's inheritance, this man has completely wasted his master's possessions.

He wasn't keeping up with it and really just simply put, he was not doing his job. Well, somebody found out about it and told the master. He said, hey, I don't know if you know this, but that steward over there, he's not doing what he's supposed to.

And that's what we see in verse number two, that the day of accountability has come now. You know, don't you love when your boss says, hey, I'd like to talk to you in my office. You're trying to think, oh my goodness, I'm about to get fired.

[13:05] I mean, you're on LinkedIn right now on the way in there trying to just find a new job.

That's kind of what this man does. He realizes this is not good. And the rich man calls him in and says, how is it that I hear this of thee?

Give an account for thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer the steward. He said, you thought you could pull one over on me, man, but I know what you're doing. I've heard that you have wasted my goods.

And that's kind of where this parable begins to kind of intersect with our life. See, just like this steward, we don't own what has been placed into our possession.

That's hard for us to kind of wrap our minds around. How many of you said, my paycheck this week? You know, that's my paycheck. It's definitely not Brother Garrett's. I'm not giving Brother Garrett mine. This is my paycheck.

We say my paycheck. We say my retirement, my abilities, my family, my opportunities. And I understand what we're saying. But what Scripture reminds us is that everything belongs to God.

[14:06] That all the things that are yours, all the things that are mine, that we are just managing what he has entrusted to us. And just like this steward has been called to give an account, there is coming a day that we will give an account to the owner.

We will give account to the Father of all the ways that we manage what he entrusted to us. We're not going to have to give an account for our salvation. No, that was completely settled on the cross of Calvary.

Jesus finished that. He said, it is finished. But how we live our life, we will give an account for that. We're going to stand before the Lord one day if we know him as our Savior, and he's going to ask us, how did we use the time he gave us?

Time is one of those things that just gets away from you, doesn't it? How many of you wish you had more time? You know, we always think, man, if I have one more day in the week, you know what? That would just be 24 more hours I'd be tired.

24 more hours I didn't get things done. We're going to give an account for the gifts that he entrusted to us. Some of the gifts that God gives us, we use for ourselves. But that gift was given to us to use for his glory and for other people, to show his love.

[15:16] We're going to even account for the opportunities that he opened before us, the influence that he allows us to have in our life and in our family and our workplace. And to be honest, that's a very sobering reality.

Because sometimes we think, well, nobody knows. Well, God knows everything. He sees everything. His eyes are to and fro. And he knows everything we do and opportunities that have been presented in front of us.

And we kind of just passed them by. You see, stewardship isn't simply about managing resources. I mean, that would have been this man's literal job.

But here's what biblical stewardship, here's what it looks like in our life. It's about living every day with the awareness that we will stand before the Father. That it's not just about the here and now. That it is about eternity. And the steward in this story realizes very quickly the seriousness of the situation. That's what verse number three says. He says, what shall I do?

[16:15] He's like, oh, great. What am I going to do? I love this. He says, I'm not cut out for manual labor. Because this man would have kind of had a little bit of a posh job.

He'd have a nice little air conditioner, a nice little office. And all the people that would have been working for the rich man, they would have come into his office. And, you know, he kind of just told people where to go. And he would test the food out. And, you know, he had all the things going.

And now he realizes, I might actually have to work. That's kind of what he says. He said to dig, there's no way I'm doing that. And he says to beg, I'm way too proud to beg.

So what he does in verses four through eight is he concocts this plan to save his bacon, so to speak. He wants to make sure that he knows he's about to get kicked out.

He's about to get fired. But he's going to make sure that he has a kind of a fail-proof plan. So what he does is he begins to call his master's debtors in. In verse number five, so he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him and said unto the verse, How much owe us thou unto my lord?

[17 : 18] So he kind of realizes, well, I've kind of wasted some things. So I'm going to at least maybe kind of save myself here. So he calls this man in and the man says, hey, well, I owe a hundred measures of oil, which had been an exorbitant amount.

And he said, here's what I want you to do. Write 50. You say, well, that doesn't seem any better. Here's what this man would have done. His master would have given him a certain amount that he was supposed to get. And much like the tax collectors, he would have put a giant commission on it. So the master would have said, hey, I want this for 50 measures of it. He said, okay, I'll do it. But I'm going to charge that guy 100 and I'm going to pocket the 50. So what he's doing here is he's kind of cutting his commission off the top.

And he does the same thing in the very next verse. You think, what's he doing here? Really, it's a shrewd business move and he's reducing all of their debts. And he's making them feel like they get a deal.

So when he gets kicked out, when he gets fired, he'll go to them and say, hey, you remember I hooked you up right there. Why don't you hire me to be your steward? I'm a really good steward. He's looking out for number one. He's looking out for himself.

[18 : 22] He's looking to, he's really, here's what he's doing, creating his own job security. He said, I'm about to get fired, but I'm not going to go down without a plan. And that's exactly what's taking place here.

Now here's where it kind of gets a little weird. And when you read it, because a lot of people misunderstand this parable right here. Because notice what Jesus says in verse number eight. And the Lord commended the unjust steward. Why would Jesus say, man, that guy's a smart guy. He did a good thing when it was very obvious that he was dishonest, that he was unjust, that he wasn't doing his job.

Here's what Jesus is really wanting us to see. He is praising this man's foresight. He's saying, hey, I want you to see how he thinks about life and how he plans for the future.

See, the unjust steward understood something that a lot of people ignore. That today's decisions are going to shape tomorrow's reality. He understood that.

[19 : 26] He's in a situation because he made bad decisions, and now the reality is he's going to lose his job. But instead of just saying, well, that's the lot in life, he's going to try to do something. He's going to try to make it better for himself as much as he can.

And really what Jesus is saying in verse number eight, he says, What does that mean?

Jesus says often that the people of this world, the people that care nothing about the things of God, are more carefully preparing for the temporary future than his own disciples are thinking about their eternal future and what they're investing and where they're moving forward.

And really, that's kind of an indictment on God's children. That if somebody is so worried about just their job security, and yet we are supposed to be investing in heaven, and we have no thought about it.

Jesus is saying, what are we doing? We shouldn't be living that way. I mean, we think about it in our own terms. I mean, people spend years preparing for retirement and meeting with financial planners and saving and investing and building portfolios, and there's nothing wrong with that.

[20 : 43] In fact, Scripture commends wise planning. I mean, read the book of Proverbs. He says, I mean, even the ants understand you've got to get ready for winter. They're preparing, they're saving, they're doing all of these things.

But Jesus is really getting us to think about a much bigger question. How much thought are we giving to eternity? Because sometimes if we're just going to be real honest, we realize we're a sinner, we need a Savior, we accept Christ as our personal Savior, and we just kind of check out. We're like, hey, I know eternity's coming, and my spot's secured. But we're supposed to live every day with eternity in mind. So let me ask you this. When's the last time you made a decision because

of eternity?

Not because it was financially beneficial. Not because it was personally convenient. Not because it advanced your career, but because it would matter forever.

That's what Jesus is saying. He wants us to think that way. That's how faithful stewards think. They understand that this life is temporary. Because sometimes, I mean, if we're just being honest, we ask this question, how's this going to help me today?

[21:52] You know, we go and buy things at the store, and there's nothing wrong with that, but we're buying it because we want it easy and right now. But sometimes that's not the best decision. A faithful steward says, is this going to matter 100 years from now?

Because we're not just living for us. Listen, I'm so thankful we celebrated 250 years of this great country. This church has been around 70 plus years. You know why that is?

It's because when they started our country, when this church was founded, it wasn't just like, hey, what do we need? How do we build for the next generation is the question. How do we move forward so those coming behind us have something to stand on?

See, faithful stewards know that everything they've been entrusted with is temporary. I mean, don't you love when you get something new and it smells new? And you tell your kids, don't touch it.

We're not eating french fries in this car ever. You know, all those kind of things that we say, and we believe it. We believe we're going to keep this car clean. We believe we're going to keep our shoes clean and we're going to have this forever and ever and ever.

[22:56] I mean, we could go out here, we could have a whole meal in some of these cars out here right now. You're like, eh, we tried. So many things that we live for are just temporary.

But even the temporary things, what Jesus is saying, we're going to see in a minute, they can make an impact eternally if they're used the right way. See, this dishonest steward understood this important truth.

That temporary resources could shape his future. He said, write this down, write that down. I'm setting this up. I know I've been an unjust steward, but I've got to take care of myself now.

I need to use some of these resources, some of the ability that I have to make sure that when I get kicked out here, they're going to bring me into their house. They're going to hire me to be their steward. And what Jesus does is he's going to take that principle one step further.

See, the question isn't just simply how we think about what God has entrusted us. But the question really becomes, how do I use it? How do I invest it? That's what Jesus shows us here in verses 9 through 12.

[24:00] Verse 9 says this, This is one of these verses that's kind of confusing.

I mean, what is Jesus telling us? Is he telling us to buy friends? Is he telling us that money earns us a place in heaven? That's not what he's saying at all. That's the furthest thing from what Christ is saying.

We've already learned that Jesus isn't praising this man's dishonesty. He's praising his foresight. And now he's going to apply that principle right to his disciples.

He's saying, you need to use these temporary resources, this mammon of unrighteousness, you need to use it for eternal purposes. It's not about money.

It's about stewardship. And that's what Jesus is calling us to because he reminds us all these things don't last. That money doesn't last. It can't be taken with us.

[25:00] It's all eventually going to pass away. But it doesn't mean it's not profitable for God. That God can't use it in your life.

See, temporary things can accomplish wonderful things when they're placed in God's hands. You know what we want to do? Our tendency is to hoard it for ourselves. Well, this is my money and I'm going to hold on to it.

This is my job. This is my car. These are my things. And that's not how God wants us to think about the things and to invest the things he's entrusted with us. Because it's not just merely possessions that Jesus gives us.

Here's what he does. It's opportunities. It's opportunities to invest. I mean, think about it this way. Here's what Jesus is really trying to get us to understand in verse number nine. That every dollar becomes a tool.

It's not just money. It's tools that God gives us to reach other people. That every paycheck becomes an opportunity. That every home is a place for ministry. That every vehicle can be a way to serve

somebody else.

[26:05] That every talent can point others to Christ. That every conversation can be used to encourage someone spiritually. That everything you have in your life, maybe God has given you that.

You can go pick that friend up and bring him to church. You can open up your home and have a meal. And gather around the table and talk about the things of God. That those paychecks is not just to go buy a bunch of fun stuff.

And God's not against fun stuff. Listen, God's not against us possessing things. But he's against things possessing us. That's really what he's getting at. And sometimes those things we buy, are we using them just for ourself and just for pleasure?

Are we using them as an opportunity to share his love? That's what he's showing us here. That everything God has given you can become an investment in his kingdom. That he wants to use that.

That he wants to use those opportunities. That's what he's teaching here. That we don't own anything. We just simply manage what belongs to him. Now are we using it for him?

[27:03] Are we using it for his glory? I mean, let's just bring it to where we live. When you think about your resources, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

Security? Comfort? You know, the ability to have an easy life? None of those things are wrong. But here's what Jesus wants to do.

He's trying to stretch our thinking beyond this life. He's trying to get us to think and invest eternally. That he reminds us that people, not possessions, are eternal.

But sometimes we invest in the wrong thing. We only have our children in our home for a certain amount of time. Instead of just kind of going through the motions and doing a bunch of things, are we investing in them?

That's eternal. Your job, yes, it pays the bills and it puts food on the table. But maybe God has placed you in that workplace because there's people there that need the Lord. And that's the real investment.

[28:04] Listen, money can build a bigger house. Or it can help send the gospel around the world. And money can buy another toy. Or it can maybe help somebody hear the gospel for the first time ever. The question is, how are we using it?

Listen, money itself is not good or evil. People misquote that verse all the time. Money is not the root of all evil. The love of money is the root of all evil.

How are we using it? Money is just simply a tool. Possessions are simply a tool. And the question Jesus is asking, and he's trying to get his disciples to really hold on to, what are you doing with it? How are you investing? That's why I love what Jesus says here. He's just simply reminding us at the end of verse number nine that one day we're going to step into eternity.

And when we do, we're not going to regret anything we invested into his kingdom. Because it's going to be there with us.

[29:08] We're going to look around and we're going to see our family. We're going to see our co-workers. We're going to see that friend. And they're there because we said, hey, listen, Jesus loves you. And we shared the gospel with them. And we hear it all the time and you hear missionaries say it, but I believe it's 100% true.

That one day you're going to meet somebody in heaven. And they're going to say, hey, I know you don't know me, but I'm so and so. Thank you for giving. You know, we participate in faith promise missions here and we send missionaries all over the world.

And we're going to meet people in heaven. We read a letter on Wednesday night and these people got saved in Bostwana. And these people are saved in Slovenia. Listen, that goes to your account. That is investing eternally.

And we're going to meet people one day and say, listen, I'm so thankful you were willing to give a little bit of your money so a missionary could come to my country. And I could hear that Jesus loves me. But here's the sad reality.

There's people in Gainesville, Texas that doesn't know Jesus loves them. We have opportunities to invest all around us all the time. I mean, you talk about a good return on investment. These type of investments, when we invest eternally, it's something that never loses its value.

[30:14] I mean, what if that was your stocks? I mean, the stock market can't promise that. I mean, they can give you some percentages. Hey, the average is about a good 10% a year. But there's going to be down years. There's never a down time to invest in eternal things.

See, no retirement account can guarantee these type of returns, but Jesus does. Every investment that we make for his kingdom carries eternal dividends.

That's what he's teaching us here in this text. And see, in verse 10 through 12, Jesus reminds us that it's not the amount that matters. It's the attitude. Sometimes we think, well, if I just had more, I could be a little more generous.

If I made more money, I mean, the Lord knows my heart, I'd give it. If I had more time, I'd serve. If I had opportunities, I would do that. But here's what Jesus does in verses 10 through 12.

He says just the opposite. Jesus says faithfulness isn't measured by how much you've been given. Faithfulness is just measured by what you're already doing with what you have.

[31:21] That's what he wants us to see. That if you're not faithful in a little, what makes you think you're going to be faithful in much? I mean, some of us, there's a reason we're not going to be a millionaire. Lord knows we can't handle it. You say, I'd like to try, though.

Lord knows what you need. See, God isn't asking in verses 10 through 12 when he's talking about faithful in much, faithful in at least. He's not saying how much do you have. What he wants us to think about is how well are we managing what's already been entrusted to us?

How well are we stewarding the life God has given us? How well are we stewarding the time in our children that have been given to us? You see, what Jesus is showing us, this is not just about money.

It's about every area of life. Some people have been entrusted with great wealth. Others have been entrusted with modest means. Some people have been entrusted with tremendous influence.

And others quietly serve behind the scenes. Some people have a lot of abilities and some people have just a few. It doesn't matter the size or how much. No, what matters is that every one of us has received something of God and we all have the same opportunity to be faithful.

[32:34] That's what God calls us to do. It's one thing required of a steward that he be found faithful. You say, well, I don't have enough so I don't have to be faithful.

And that's not what Jesus teaches right here. It's not what he's showing us about our lives. I just want to encourage you with this. Don't compare your stewardship with somebody else's stewardship.

It's easy to look around and say, well, man, I could steward things a lot better if I had that. No. You know what? The enemy loves comparisons. Paul tells us don't compare ourselves amongst ourselves.

It's not wise. God didn't call you to be so-and-so. He didn't call you to steward what so-and-so has. No, he called you to steward what you have. See, Jesus isn't asking you to manage other people's resources.

He's just asking you to be faithful to yours. See, maybe your greatest resource isn't finances, but maybe it's your hospitality. Some people are just naturally hospitable people.

[33:36] Extroverted people. Listen, that's a gift that God gives you to encourage others and to reach out and to maybe pull others closer to the word of God. Maybe it's encouragement. Maybe it's your teaching ability.

Maybe you're handy and you're a craftsman and you can do things. Maybe your greatest resource is just your availability. But you don't give it to the Lord. Maybe it's your time.

See, Jesus is saying, whatever God has placed in your hands, place it back in his service. He wants to use it. That's why he gave it to you. See, I hope by now you understand this passage.

It really isn't about money. And in these closing verses, Jesus reminds us that faithful stewardship isn't ultimately about dollars. It's about devotion.

It's about devotion. The Bible says in verse 13, No servant can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will love the one and else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

[34:39] Ye cannot serve God and mammon. See, everything that he says about stewardship and about faithfulness and about eternity comes down to one simple truth.

That you can only serve one master. That faithful stewards, they live for one master. Why?

Because masters demand complete allegiance. And God demands our whole heart. Paul says that we're to lay our life down on the altar. That we are a complete sacrifice.

Because why? Any master will eventually take first place in your life. And in case Jesus, in case we were wondering, he says very simply at the end of verse 13, You can't serve two.

It's not possible. You can't live that way. See, money isn't the villain in this passage. It's just simply the test. And the real issue that we find here with disciples and faithful stewards is, Who sits on the throne of your heart?

[35 : 45] That's the question. Because when we love the Lord and he's in the first place, we have no problem serving him. But sometimes God says, Hey, why don't you use that for my good?

Why don't you give that? Why don't you spend some time with them? Why don't you invite them to lunch? You say, Lord, I don't want to do that. Listen, the things that he's given, they're not our things anyways. So anything he asks of us, we should be willing to give.

Because whatever controls your heart will eventually control your life. Jesus teaches this on the Sermon on the Mount. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Is our treasure our possessions or is our treasure God? See, when he's in his rightful place, everything else falls there. And Luke gives us a glimpse into the Pharisees' heart. Here's their problem.

They were covetous. They loved their stuff. They loved their money. They loved their possessions. The problem wasn't they possessed wealth. The problem was that the wealth possessed them.

[36 : 45] And they couldn't let that go. They wanted to be seen of men. And Jesus, what he did here is he exposed their true master. And the Bible says they derided him. They ridiculed him.

You don't know what you're talking about. Oh, but he does. And before we give them a really hard time, how often is that our response when God exposes something in our life?

I'll be honest. Sometimes my first response is not repentance. It's resistance. Like, Lord, you don't know. I mean, I know it looks that way, but it's not what it is.

Sometimes it's excuses. Sometimes we try to justify ourselves, and that's exactly what they did. He said, Jesus said, you try to justify yourselves, but let me remind you, God knows your heart. God knows what you're really thinking about, what you're really investing in.

Jesus wasn't impressed by their appearances because that's not how God measures people. God measures us by our heart. He sees who we truly are. And he says something very sobering at the very end.

[37 : 44] He says, for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Listen, the world celebrates success. God examines faithfulness. The world's going to applaud accumulation.

Look how much stuff they have. But God says, I just want you to be faithful in what I've given you. The world teaches us, get all that you can. And Jesus says, live for what lasts.

Invest eternally. If someone looked at your calendar, looked at your checkbook, looked at your conversations, looked at your priorities, what would they conclude is most important to you?

It says a lot about who we are, what we think about. What would they say your master is? Who do you love? Who are you serving?

Because our heart, our lives reveal what's already in our hearts. That's what Jesus is teaching here in this text. You see, Jesus isn't calling us to manage our money better.

[38 : 50] There is principles in the Bible for that. He's not saying just forget about that. That's not what Jesus is teaching. But here's what he's teaching in this text specifically. He's calling us to surrender our hearts more completely.

That we're completely sold out to him. That everything we have, we look at it and say, I can use this for God's glory. I can use this to reach somebody. I can use this for the gospel's sake.

Because when Jesus truly becomes our master, everything else falls into its proper place. Our money, our time, our gifts, our opportunities, our relationships, they all become tools in the master's hand.

Opportunities to glorify our Father. See, faithful stewardship, it always begins with wholehearted surrender. That's where it starts.

That's what Jesus teaches here. Any Monopoly players here? The board game? You've got to have a, you know, it's one of those games you've got to have a little bit of time to play.

[39 : 51] I read a story about Dr. James Dobson. He was telling a story about he introduced this game to his children. And as the game unfolded, he did what every dad did. Just buried his kids in debt.

He bought Park Place and Boardwalk. And he had trains. And he was building hotels. And one by one, his children went bankrupt until he owned everything on the board. And he won. And he said, go to bed.

And that's just how it goes right there. That's what I'm talking about. The game was over. And he began putting everything away. The money and the deeds to the property and the houses and the hotels and the little pieces.

He had a thought that really stayed with him. And it kind of applies to this text. He thought, if it all, everything, we just play this game and it all just goes back into the box. And the game's over. He said, it's a lot like life.

That if we're just living for the here and now, yeah, it may be fun for a little while. You may have some cool toys and have some fun stuff. But we spend years working and saving and buying and building and accumulating and planning. And as we mentioned, none of those things are wrong.

[40 : 52] But here's the thing. One day the game ends. And the house stays. And the car stays. And the money stays. And the retirement account stays. It just all goes back into the box.

That's not how Christians should live their lives. That's not how faithful stewards live their lives. Because everything we've been given has only been trusted to us for a little while.

And the owner reminds us that one day we're going to give an account for how we managed it. We're not taking it with us. So the question when our life comes to an end is not how much have I accumulated.

It's not he with the most toys wins. No, the question is what have I invested that will last forever? I want to leave you with this thought. You can't take what God has entrusted you into eternity.

But you can use it to make an eternal difference. That's what Jesus is teaching right here in Luke 16. That's what he wants us to get a hold of. This week when you look at your calendar.

[41 : 48] When you look at your abilities. When you look at your opportunities. Remember this. None of them are yours. Use them for him. Use them for his glory. It all belongs to him.

And would God help us to make eternal difference? In the lives of others. Would you stand with your heads bowed and with your eyes closed?