

Christian Separation

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- [0 : 00] Glad for everybody that thought it worthwhile to spend this time with God. Thank the Lord for people who will bake preachers apple pies.
- That is a blessing. Amen. Thank the Lord. They said, well, can Shirley have some? I said, if she'd get to it. The last time they made one for her, and I thought it was for me, it was a diabetic pie, I thought, well, it don't taste as good as it ought to, but I went ahead and ate it, you know.
- Didn't have no sugar in it. But it wasn't so bad I couldn't eat it. And then they said, how'd your wife like that?
- Whatever it was, a cake pie? A cake, yeah. I said, how'd your wife like that? I said, was that for her? I didn't get this waistline laying around waiting on somebody else to eat.
- How many of you are Christians today? You sure? You know, you know without a doubt, that if you died tonight, you'd go to heaven.
- [1 : 19] And if you died 50 years from now, you'd go to heaven. Do you know that? All right, you're the guys I want to talk to. I want to preach to you out of the Gospel of St. Luke, chapter 16, about the unjust steward.
- If I was going to title this message, that's what I would put on it. The unjust steward. Luke, chapter 16. Let's start reading at verse 1.
- 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 account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be 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.
- [2 : 33] 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, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And 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.
- Notice why he commended him, for being smart. He didn't commend him for being crooked. He commended him for being smart.
- Notice that that's not a capital L. So we're not talking about the Lord. Jesus commended him. We're talking about the fellow's boss commended.
- [3 : 46] He said, You've done well here. You did wise. Then Jesus said, After the punctuation mark, For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.
- Now I say unto you, Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

He that's 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 you 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 else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.

[5 : 01] Let's pray, and then we'll talk about the unjust steward. Heavenly Father, today we thank you for opportunity to preach.

Today we thank you for the stories that you left us in the Bible. We believe every word. We believe it's true. And we pray and ask you, God, to help us to be true to your word and true to your teaching as we preach.

Father, I pray that it may be an encouragement to Christians to keep on keeping on. Lord, if someone is kind of let down, may they pick up tonight.

I pray, our Father, that you'd give grace for this hour. In Jesus' name, Amen. The parable of the unjust steward, it was told to inform the disciples of the publicans and their unscrupulousness and of the Pharisees and their covetousness.

It has a connection with the previous chapter that most people miss. In the previous chapter, the prodigal son had wasted his father's goods.

[6 : 21] But in this chapter, the steward had wasted his master's goods. And both of them were called to account. In chapter 15, the disciples wouldn't listen while the Pharisees were addressed.

Chapter 16 is the reverse. So I want us to look at verse 2 there for a little bit. The accusation of the waste and the realization of the predicament that he found himself in.

Verse 3 is a visualization of a plan. I see that I don't have long. I've got to do something. Then we've got the implementation of the same plan.

In verse 8, we've got the commendation of the master. Verse 9, we've got the moral recognition. And I want to place this as important.

I want you to notice that Christian failure is worldly success. And worldly success is Christian failure.

[7 : 31] We think because we're successful in the world that all our gain is going to make us righteous. We think because we've acquired money, wealth, houses, and land.

We think because our church has got a crowd. We think because we've got all of the worldly things that people would look at and say, well, that's what I want.

I want you to know that you can be a colossal failure and a worldly success. Amen. Amen. In the accusation of waste, the steward is accused or accused of embezzlement.

And he's going to be fired. Y'all remember that, don't you? Amen. You remember when they fired you, dismissed you? Ha ha. A realization I want to bring home to you tonight that you're not here to stay.

I don't know where we get that idea that we're here to stay, that we've got a permanent home. But I'm telling you, there's nobody in this building tonight that in less than a hundred years, even the littlest baby in this building tonight is going to be gone from here.

[8 : 49] This church, if it's still here, will have a different pastor. It'll have a different choir director. It'll have a different pianist. Everybody, the whole crowd will be different because we're not here to stay.

We're stewards of a relationship that our master has put for us. And we squander, or this man has squandered his master's goods, wasted their blessings.

I think dispensationally we could talk about Israel. that wasted the goodness that God had given them. God had gave them a lot that he didn't give the heathen.

They had the oracles of God. Way back there thousands of years ago, the children of Israel had the word of God, the commandments of God. They wasn't guessing.

They knew what they were supposed to do. And yet they wasted the blessings of God. How many Baptists today waste the blessings of God? The prophet Malachi accused that nation when he said that you're actually robbing God.

[9 : 56] You're actually stealing the tithe. And when you steal the tithe and offer the weak and the blind and the lame and the cripples on the altar to God and offering polluted bread to God and thinking that failure of marriage is something we ought to brag about and disregard for God's laws, I'm telling you, Israel was wasting the blessings that they had.

Proverbs 6.32 says this, it's an interesting scripture, He that committeth adultery with a woman destroys his own soul. Now I don't know whether you've come to that point or not, I don't know how long it takes you to get there, but somewhere in my 63 years I've commenced to realize that every time I sin against God I hurt me.

That's right. If the light that be in you be darkness, how great is that light? In our particular parable tonight, we're talking about people who idolize money.

Idolizing money will cripple you spiritually. If the almighty dollar is your God, then God can't have a place. And if, that's what that word mammon means.

It means money. But word comes to the master of the house that this steward has been wasting your goods. And so he calls him, our Bible said, that he calls him to count.

[11 : 23] Now if you look at verse 3, he said, I cannot dig. He didn't say, I will not. He said, I cannot. I don't know what that, I don't know how to explain that.

Perhaps he was disabled. Perhaps he'd been in that stewardship long enough that he was an old man. But he said, one thing for sure, I cannot dig.

And then he said, the second thing, I'm ashamed to beg. So let's get this straight. The man can't dig, the man's ashamed to beg, but he don't have no problem with stealing his master's goods.

Is that what, is that what I'm reading in this story? Didn't have any problem with stealing. He had a problem with begging. Pride. Verse 8, here's the one that gets everybody.

The Lord commended the steward. He commended him not for stealing, but he commended him for the realization that something needs to be done while there's time.

[12 : 24] Because if we don't do something while we've got time, if we're not willing to suffer a temporal loss for permanent gain, if we want to trade the present for the future, anybody that ever went on a diet knows what I'm talking about.

If you want to look slim and trim like your preacher, you're going to have to leave that pizza alone. You see, you've got to suffer a temporal loss. Don't look at me like that. You scare me when you look at me like that.

You've got to be willing to suffer a temporal loss for a permanent gain, for a later gain. Now, the steward did this for an earthly reception.

This guy is talking about somebody that was bossing on the job and had opportunity to get a hold of the boss's money, was spending the boss's money, and he knew he was going to get out, get put out of his boss's job, so he wanted to make friends with the folks there, so after he got put out of his job, then he'd have somebody's house he could go and bum off at.

That's what he did. But we're talking tonight not about a bossing job, but we're preaching about an eternal inheritance.

[13 : 38] And we're preaching if you've got the wisdom that this worldling had that you'll prepare for what you can't help, one day you're going to be called account to your stewardship for eternity.

Are you listening to me? For eternity, you're going to have to give account for what you sold for temporary fulfillment. You've got to give an eternal account for that.

God held Israel to account and destroyed their temple and threw away their city. God held the seven churches of Asia to account.

You remember reading that? And God will hold you and God will hold me and God will hold Esther Baptist Church to account and God will hold anybody from any other church.

He'll hold us all to account. One day we've got to give account for our stewardship and we need to make sure we've got this thing running right while we've got opportunity.

[14 : 40] Psalm chapter 24 verse 1 says this, The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. There's not anything on this world that God doesn't own and that God isn't sovereign over.

You think God needs your money? You think that's the purpose that God wanted you to tithe so He could have money to operate? That's not what God doesn't need your money. You need to give God so you can learn how to give.

Well, things we love and hold dear to our hearts. The old song said, they're just borrowed. They're not ours at all. Jesus only let them use to brighten our life.

Remind me, dear Lord. Will you remind me? I think that when I look around and I see folks that I went to school with and rather than seeing the fair-haired little girls or the good-looking, handsome young man, I see these withered old hags and I see, am I telling it right?

I see, great day. She used to be a cheerleader. What happened to her? That's a reminder in my life and a reminder in your life that you're not here forever. One of these days, the death angel is going to come by and he's going to take you for a text and he's going to cut you down and tell everybody that the wages of sin is death.

[16 : 08] Remind me. And then, after death, the judgment, we are accountable entirely through eternity for all that God entrusts us with down here.

You know, it would be good if I wasn't a millionaire. Amen. If I'm not a millionaire, I don't have to give account for a million dollars. I wonder what these lottery winners will do whenever they stand before the God of eternity and say, I gave you 32 million dollars.

What'd you do with it? Mm-hmm. I'd just soon have kept it. Amen. If I'm going to have to give account for it. Now, if I had a way of splurging and, but that's what people think.

People think, oh, if I could just win the lottery, I'd be so happy. But I'm telling you, brother, that whatever you've got in this life, you're going to have to give account forever. Penny. God's so, so meticulous that you can't give a cup of cold water and God don't know about it.

Maybe I'd be better to be poor than I would to be rich after all. And then again, maybe I could be rich if I didn't love it. The love of money is the root of all evil. You might be a planter.

[17 : 24] You might be a waterer. You might be a husbandman. You might be a reaper of the field. But whatever your job is, God is going to hold you accountable for what job you do.

I don't know what's the matter with people today. People today think they've done God a favor when they come to church. People today think that God ought to be pleased that they gave Him a little bit of their time.

And they think that they ought to come to church look like they're going to a dance or something. Amen. Am I telling it right? They want to come to church in Bermuda shorts and tank tops. They want to come to church looking like they're going to the prom.

I'm telling you, friend, whenever you go to the house of God, you're going to meet somebody that's important. You need to be dressed just as good as you can because you're going to give account of how you stand in the house of God.

All right, this steward operated for an earthly reward. When he was in office, all the decisions that he made were valid. Did you know that?

[18 : 24] If he wasted the goods, the goods were just wasted. The owner could not come and disannull because he gave him the authority. God gave you and I, God gave Adam the dominion over this earth, the authority to do what you do.

God has gave it to you and God will not annul your decision but God will hold you accountable for your decision. Verse 8, the Lord's not capitalized.

Verse 8, at the punctuation mark, it says ungodly are smarter than the Christian. How could they be?

Now watch this. They are taking care of number one. Will you agree with that? Most people, that's what they want to do.

They want to take care of number one. And I'm telling you, that's exactly what you need to do. You need to take care of number one. You need to take care of yourself.

[19 : 28] But don't take care of yourself down here. Take care of yourself up there. Make sure that you're going to be received into the everlasting habitations of God with praise and not scorn.

You understand what I'm saying? If you're very smart, you'll listen to what this preacher is saying. You won't waste your time on ball games when you ought to be at church. You won't waste your time on programs.

You'll want to do what God wants you to do because number one, it's going to give a cow to the number one up there one day. So we need to take care of number one.

Now the accusation was brought against him that he'd wasted his Lord's goods. I'm thinking that it was a malicious accusation, but I'm also thinking that it was true.

You know, the devil doesn't really have to lie on us. We're doing that. Amen. To get in trouble. All he's got to do is go tell God, look what he did.

[20 : 34] Wasted. And when it's wasted, it's wasted. It's like water that's spilled on the ground. You cannot, you cannot gather it together again.

It's gone. You cannot bring back tomorrow. You cannot bring back yesterday. Or you can't, well, y'all interpret that for yourself.

You cannot do, undo what you did yesterday. But you will, you will, and you think, the IRS wants receipts. The IRS wants transcripts.

It wants documentation. And whenever you stand before the Lord of glory, he's got the receipts. He's got the transcription. He knows what you think.

Even the hairs of your head are numbered. You're going to give a count. Just like this unjust story. What will I do? Then the, the light bulb goes off in this guy's head.

[21 : 36] He said, I got an idea. I know what I'll do. If I'll be good to these guys that owes him, then whenever he kicks me out, they'll be good to me. I'll scratch their back and they'll scratch mine.

What a good idea. So he calls this guy and he said, I'm foreclosing on accounts. But I'll tell you what, if you'll settle today, I'll give you 50% off.

So the guy said, hey man, that's not a bad deal. He shells out that money, tells the other fellow, I'll give you 20% off. Take your bill, write 50, pay me 50, I'll give you a discount. Why would he do that?

Because he's looking out for number one. He was wanting to get it fixed or whenever he got fired, he could get him another job. He's commended for looking out for number one.

The devil tries to convince us that we're looking out for number one when we're looking out for the devil. Are you looking out for number one? Are you a wise steward?

[22 : 40] He said, how can I be a wise steward? He that wins souls is wise. Do you ever even witness to folks? Do you ever even try to witness to folks? That steward's wisdom was only for one generation.

Look at verse 8. It was not eternal. That steward's thinking was only for what he was going to do when he was put out of that office, how he could have another job.

His wisdom is flawed and it fails in eternity. Take the bill, he said, and quickly do it. Privately, don't publish it. I don't want my maker to even know about it.

I want to get this reward ready and if I publish, you already got the reward. So don't publish it. I think this, that material wealth is given by God to test your character.

You have what you have just to test your character. It is called unrighteous mammon because of how it's used. The same dollar that's put in the church house can buy a bottle of liquor.

[23 : 50] Am I telling it right? And it becomes unrighteous for what it's used. If it's used unwisely, it's simply this. You're storing up treasures for yourself on the earth.

The problem with storing up treasures on the earth is the thieves on Wall Street. The problem with storing up treasures on the earth is the moth that eats it and corrupts it and you go to look for it and one day you're wealthy and the next day you're flat busted.

But I'll tell you, if you'll realize that you've got to give account to God one of these days, bless the Lord, when you get into glory land, every treasure that you laid up there is still going to be there reserved in heaven for you.

An inheritance undefiled that fadeth not away. Money in this parable is what is least. Verse 10, but you know what happens to money?

Inflation, recession, stock market, valuable today, not valuable tomorrow. Treasure in heaven is secure.

[25 : 05] Treasure in heaven has got a fixed rate. Treasure in heaven is eternal. Have you got anything laid up there? It takes effort to gain wealth either place.

You know, this idea that I'm just going to sit here and somebody's going to come along and stuff money in my pocket, that don't happen. And I want to tell you this, hate to be the bearer of bad news, but if you're wanting a reward in the glory land, nobody's going to come along and stuff it in your pocket.

It's directly proportionate to what you do down here. While working for earth, we rob God.

While working for God, we rob this old world. Now, Christians should gain earthly wealth by honest means if you can. It's a big help to not have to beg.

It's a big help, especially if you're unable to work and you're too proud to beg, but certainly you don't want to steal. The Bible said that a man, if he's a pastor, I think even a deacon, he ought to be a good report, a blameless person, a requirement for a pastor and a deacon that he's not a thief.

[26 : 25] Dishonesty in earthly affairs, greed in earthly affairs are the direct result of a weak Christian. Now, I'm not going to get you unsaved.

We'll leave that up to those Arminian denominations. But I am going to tell you that your character is showing when you wind up being dishonest in your dealings with people.

How they are in their heart. And it's self-perpetuating. You can't build while you're tearing down. Nothing in your Christian life will ever go any further than your building on it.

While you're tearing it down, you can't be building it up. Make no mistake. This steward wanted to be received into an earthly house. Isn't that what he said?

They'll receive me in their houses. But I'm thinking if you'll listen to what your preacher is saying tonight that you're going to have a heavenly house. And I'd like to receive you into my heavenly mansion.

[27 : 28] Have you ever thought about going visiting? I mean, you know, you got one, I got one. It's proportioned in that city to what we've done down here. And we're going to go visit somebody in their mansion.

Amen. Wouldn't that be great? You believe that preacher? You're too literal preacher. You're crazy. There ain't no... No, you call me what you want. You can have a shack. You can have a room. I got a mansion.

And you're welcome to come. Amen. Mammon cries for our time. You can't get it if you don't put time in.

So does Jesus. He cries for your time. And you can't serve both. If you serve mammon, you can't serve God. Christians, like I say, they should not be greedy.

They should not be so much dishonest in their earthly affairs. They should not be self-perpetuating in their developing and tearing down. But if they're weak in character, they'll be weak in conduct.

[28 : 32] One of my dear ladies come to me not long ago, I think when I was teaching Sunday school class. And she said, you said something that helped me there today, preacher. You said Christian conduct should match Christian profession.

What's wrong with that? Would you agree? If you're a Christian, you gotta look like a Christian. If you're a Christian, you gotta talk like a Christian.

You gotta walk like a Christian. You gotta go where Christians go. Have you ever been someplace where you said, Lord, I hope you don't come now? Have you ever been there? Now, I'm gonna tell you this.

And I went one time to a steel guitar convention. And I was, you know, interested in the steel guitar and they was having a convention and I thought, well, I'll just go.

And so I went and I paid \$40 to get in. And I walked in the door and there was no drinking, there was no cussing, but there was an atmosphere there that I just said, Lord, don't come until I get out of here.

[29 : 43] My wife went shopping and she called. We'd driven clear over in some other state and she called on the phone in about 45 minutes, her and Molly, and said, how's it going?

I said, it's going fine. She said, where are you? I said, I'm in the hotel room. Well, how come you aren't at the steel guitar convention? I didn't want the Lord to catch me there.

Hello. Amen. Nothing wrong with it as far as I know. It just didn't look like the place I wanted to be. Now, if they were all Christians, it would have been better.

I'd rather for a Christian to play the Wabash cannonball as a sinner. Amen. Visit me in my mansion.

I was questioned the other day about ghettos in glory. Now, the Bible teaches it.

[30 : 47] I want you to understand that. Now, I answered this way. I said, the lowest shack in glory, the lowest cabin in the corner of glory land would be better than the biggest palace in hell.

But nevertheless, your place in the glory land is there because of Jesus, but your decorations are there because of what you did for God.

Amen. Glory, get up on your conduct here. Then I'm going to say this and I'll be finished.

Whenever Jesus gave this story, look what the Pharisees did. They liked that. They mocked Him.

They, in verse 14, they derided Him. And it even tells you why they derided Him. They derided Him because they were covetous.

[31 : 56] Beware of covetousness. That's the sin that got Paul. That's the sin that gets a whole lot of people. Now, if we got somebody laying out here on the parking lot drunk, we all, we all jump on Him.

We got somebody that's in the harlotry, we'd all jump on her. But people walk right in the church house and sit there with their little smile on and just as covetous as they can be.

And whenever you say, they say, ah, that's just preacher Randy. He always preaching like that. He just wants to hurt my feelings. No, I'm wanting you to get prepared for that day that you got to give account for your life down here.

If they didn't love you, it wouldn't tell you the truth. Because the truth, somebody said, it don't hurt. You ain't ever been hit with it. Cut's like a knife whenever, you know, I remember one time a guy was looking at this other guy's deer rifle and he said, boy, I'd like to have that.

I tried to correct him. I said, no, you'd like to have one like it. Hello. But a lot of people like to have it. And they'll get it if they can.

[33 : 10] And they'll get it by hook and by crook and cheap, amen, and take advantage of people. Am I telling it right? This world is full of professing Christians that just want to use people to build a what?

A kingdom down here? Hey, I'd rather get used down here than have a kingdom up there. The unjust steward was commended. He wasn't commended for stealing.

He was commended because he was smart enough to realize he wasn't going to be there forever and he was going to have to do something to prepare for that inevitable day when he was called to give account for his stewardship.

I don't know when that'll be, that today, tomorrow, but one day God will call you to account for your stewardship. Amen.

You know what I'd like to hear him say? That's what life wouldn't you? Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

[34 : 16] Enter into the joy of thy Lord. Wouldn't that be good if you'd hear Jesus say, Amen. You did a good job.

What I gave you, you used for my glory. You had the company's best interest at heart. Hello? I think that's why Wall Street's in trouble today.

They ain't got the company's interest. They got their own interest. I think that's why America's in trouble today. Everybody's covetous. Everybody got to take advantage of everybody else.

But one day, you'll give account. I'd like to be able to do it with joy. Stand there with a smile on my face and make Joel Osteen.

They'd say, Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Let's bow for prayer. How about you? Whenever such a message is preached, what do you do?

[35 : 19] Do you mock it and say, Ah, the preacher, that's all. He just does that all the time. He just wants to make me feel bad. He really wants me to go to church every day.

He really wants me to tithe. He really wants me to do the things of God. And if I listened to him, I would never have any fun. Thank you for coming to pray.

Thank you for everybody that's came this way. I wonder tonight there's someone there that would say, Preacher, pray for me.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. Thank God for these hands. God bless you, dear friend. Amen. I'm going to pray.

I'm going to pray in just a moment. Would you say, Preacher, pray for me that I can be faithful. It's required in stewards that I be faithful. Pray that I could be. God bless you.

[36 : 26] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Just about finished. Would you slip up your hand and say, Preacher, pray for me. Our Heavenly Father, today, Lord, I love you.

God, my flesh fights against me. Father, in my spirit, I want to glorify God. God, and I pray, Lord, that I could be able to yield my members as instruments of righteousness.

Father, the things that I do down here, Lord, they'd be because of a realization that one day life here on earth will be over and one day I'll have to give account for my stewardship down here.

Help me, Lord, to be just as smart, just as smart as those unsaved people that made provision for that day.

[37 : 40] Help me, Lord, to make provision for that day of judgment. Our Father, hands were lifted all over the church, side to side, front to back.

People said, I want my preacher to pray for me. Father, I pray for them the best that I know how. I pray, Lord, that they'd serve God and leave this old world with a shout.

In Jesus' name. Amen. All right, let's stand and sing. Brother Clanton. Number 288. Number 288.

Thank you.