

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

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Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Flip with me if you don't mind to Luke 16. I'm going to continue to dive through these parables and dive through. I don't know. We're going to dive into these parables.

I don't know about you guys. I've just had a blast looking at these texts, these stories that so often catch me by surprise.

You know, I'm just like anybody. I love stories and I love these. You know, I'm reading from the English Standard Version. If, yeah, I love so many different versions, but I love this Bible.

And if you don't have a copy of it, we have some in the back. You can slip back there and grab one now or you can grab one on your way out. I'd love to just give it to you. We'd love to give it to you. It's a great version of the Bible. It's not the only great version, but it's a good one.

[1 : 04] And I'm going to begin reading in verse 1. So if you look there with me, Luke 16, verse 1. This is the Word of God. He also said to his disciples, The Word of God is not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg.

I have decided what to do so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses. So, summoning the master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, How much do you owe my master?

The man answered, A hundred measures of oil. He said to him, Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. And he said to another, And how much do you owe?

He said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill and write eighty. The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

Jesus continues, For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourself by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

[2 : 57] Verse 10, One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much. And one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will 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 be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. That is the authoritative word of God.

You know, as we've been marching through this series, one of the common threads I've noticed about these parables is the unlikely characters, or the unlikable characters Jesus describes.

[4 : 01] If you remember, he describes the unjust judge. The story revolves around this judge, or the Pharisee, that was with the tax collector. Just last week, the high and mighty priest, and the Levite.

Again and again, these characters surface as negative examples. Jesus is putting them forward as what not to do, and how not to act.

And our parable this morning revolves around a very unlikable character, this dishonest manager. But the difficulty with this parable, and many people say this is the most difficult parable.

So if you found it a little bit confusing, join the club. But the difficulty of this parable comes because Jesus calls us to be like him, not to be unlike him.

So he is the most, perhaps, unlikable character in Jesus' parables, and he is the one Jesus tells us to be like. But first, let me recap the story.

[5 : 06] It's simple enough. There's a rich man who has a manager who manages his estate and household. Perhaps this is close to around Nashville, where these recording artists have a manager or so that manages his estate.

Well, this manager, similar to one described in Luke 20, Not only that, but this estate, as we see by some of the people that come to him, produces goods and sells its goods to the surrounding areas, to the surrounding towns.

And the manager oversees it all. Well, in many ways, we should picture this manager like Joseph was in the courts of Egypt. Remember, he oversaw everything in Pharaoh's house.

So when the famine came, he oversaw the giving of everything. So the master is free to focus on other things. You know, if you get high enough, the whole point is to delegate everything to someone else.

And that's what this master does and lives probably somewhere else off the estate. And yet the master hears that this manager has been wasting his possessions.

[6 : 25] So the master comes to confront him. Look down there in verse 2. He called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? The master really is preparing for a fight.

He's certain of the manager's wrongdoing. So he doesn't come in asking questions to learn anything. He comes in asking questions to point out the wrong this guy's done.

What is this I hear about you? The master is busted, right? Much like my mom used to say to me, Listen, we've received the phone calls.

We know everything about last night. So let's just make this easy. You tell us and you'll get in less trouble. Now I was super stubborn.

So I never took that deal. But my older brother always did. I used to hate it. But I was not wise. I was a fool, you know. But essentially the master expects the manager to confess it all.

[7 : 27] What is this I hear about you? Tell me everything. But this manager is too clever and remains silent. So the master fires him.

We see that in verse 2. Turn in the account of management for you will no longer, you can no longer be my manager. And the manager at that moment is in a bit of a pickle.

So much like us when we get in trouble, his mental gears start going. You know what I mean? When you get in trouble, how can I get out of this gear start going inside your mind?

He begins to just kind of say, Well, what should I do? You know, I just got fired. I can't let this word get out. I'm not strong enough to dig. That's actually a pretty honest moment.

You know, I've only had desk jobs. I'm not strong enough to dig. And I would be ashamed to beg. What he's saying there is I'm not blind, lame, or deaf. So I'm not going to go out and beg. It wouldn't make sense.

[8 : 25] But I got to do something to save myself. I'm in a jam. My reputation will be ruined if word gets out and I'll never recover.

What he means, I'll never get a job. So the manager devises a plan and gets to work. You know, often what would happen to a manager like this, he would have that account of management, which he didn't turn over immediately.

So since he still has this account of management, he can still stand in and pose as the manager for a while longer. And that's what exactly what he does.

He begins to go out and slash the master's debts. You know, he goes to each debtor. The text even points out he goes to each one, one by one. The idea, he doesn't bring them all in so that they all can hear the deal he gave to one another.

He brings them one by one so that only they can know the deal he's making that they can't refuse. To one, he says, a hundred measures of oil. He said, quickly write 50. Or a hundred measures of wheat.

[9 : 26] Quickly write 80. These are massive savings. And the implication or the idea behind this text is they were immediately filled with joy. I mean, if your insurance agent called you today, say, I got a deal for you.

I will slash your rates 30%. All you have to do is sign today. You're like, heck yeah, you know, waiting on that call. Well, the idea is that the master or the manager just pleased everybody.

Word spread quickly of how generous he was. And ironically enough, how generous the master was as well. Then upon finding everything out, the master commends him.

That's what's so striking to me. And it happens just suddenly, look down at verse 8, he said, the master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. The idea is that there was some lapse of time there.

And the master found out that he had slashed all these debts. And then the master commended him. Literally, the verse says, the master praised the wicked manager for his shrewdness.

[10 : 38] He praised the wicked man. What this wicked manager has done has caught the master's attention and won his admiration.

Now, the only thing worse than not having money is losing it. Yeah, I was a miser by birth. As a kid, I would get money for a birthday or for doing yard work.

And I would save it and hoard it, you know. I would count it up. I knew how much money I had, you know. I would dream about what I would buy with it. And it was my money.

I couldn't wait to put it to good use. Usually it was saving up for a guitar or a guitar amp. And they cost a lot of money. So I was always saving. And in one particular season, as I was saving for a guitar, my money began to disappear.

I mean, right from the underwear drawer in my house back at home, you know. This money began to disappear. \$10 here. \$10 there. \$20 here.

[11 : 43] \$20 there. You know, a check written out to me even disappeared. I searched everywhere. I remember, I'm a miser, you know.

So I'm chasing this money down. I asked everyone. No one in my family had seen the money. The kids know where this story is going.

No one could find it. And I knew I didn't misplace it. That's usually what mom says. Well, you probably misplaced it. No, no, no, mom. You know me better than that.

I couldn't believe I lost this money. Well, several weeks later, I was at a store with my little brother. And he pulled out his wallet to buy a drink.

And when he did, a check fell out. Addressed to me. I couldn't believe it. You know, I wanted to pounce on him and punch his teeth out.

[12 : 44] All along, I wasn't losing my money. It was being stolen by that criminal in the bedroom beside me. I hated losing money.

And even more, I hated having money stolen from me. And my guess is, I'm just like you. You're just like me. And that's what makes this commendation so surprising.

How could he praise the manager who was wasting his possessions and stealing from him? What could this possibly mean?

Now, obviously, he's not praising the man for his dishonesty. The manager is a wicked man. And we can all agree on that, including the master. But he does praise him for his shrewdness.

That's just a word that means clever, on the ball. He praises him for his shrewdness and the way he saves face and saves his reputation.

[13 : 45] So we have to ask, why is this story in our Bible? Why does Jesus tell this story? You know, in many ways, I think Jesus is much like the master.

He commends the manager, not for deceitfulness or dishonesty. He commends him for shrewdness. He admires him. He sees how the manager carefully judges the situation and strategizes for the future.

He sees how the manager takes money that is not his and uses it to win friends in the community. So essentially, Jesus says, imitate this dishonest manager.

More than that, he says, there's something in the way he handles money that you must do. And you must be as a disciple. Now he's saying you must not be dishonest, but you must spend carefully and shrewdly.

You must be disciplined. You must spend differently because of a certain future you want. And he's saying you must spend money knowing that money does not lie.

[14 : 53] Money always tells the truth. It's black and white. You know, when there's a crime, usually all we need to do is follow the money. Follow the paper trail.

The bank statement is not open to interpretation, right? There's no wiggle room in the bank statement. It is what it is. And sometimes that news stings when we log in.

That's why everybody's trying to get a hold of President Trump's tax returns. Because they want to know. And they know that the money doesn't lie. So what Jesus is saying in telling this parable is that you can fake many things in the Christian life.

You can fake prayer and no one will know. You can fake humility and no one will know. You can fake mercy and folks may not be able to perceive it or see it. But you can't fake what you do with your money.

This is why Jesus gets so blunt. Look down there in verse 13. No servant can serve two masters. Either hate the one or love the other. Devote the one, despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. He's very blunt.

[15 : 56] You cannot serve God and money and the money won't lie. In a word, what I'm trying to say this morning is there's no true discipleship without shrewd stewardship.

There's no true discipleship without shrewd stewardship. To put it another way, disciples are shrewd stewards. Money is not like this material thing that doesn't have anything to do with our spiritual life.

But discipleship means we're shrewd with it. We care about it and we work with it very carefully. We take what is not ours as stewards and use it carefully and strategically for Christ.

There is no true discipleship without shrewd stewardship. We're going to unpack this in three points. First one is money will soon fail you.

Money will soon fail you. You know, in his famous book, Good to Great, Jim Collins says that one of the things that separates good companies from bad companies, or, well, rather, good companies from great companies, is the great companies continually face the brute facts of reality.

[17 : 03] The great companies face the bad news. They face the declining numbers. They face their reduced market share. They face the corrosive culture that's limited them from growing.

The first thing we must note about this manager, what he does right, is he faces the brute facts of his situation. Remember, he doesn't try to wiggle his way out.

He carefully and accurately assesses his situation. He knows he's busted. He doesn't dispute the facts. I mean, if your hand gets caught in the cookie jar, you don't begin saying you weren't reaching for a cookie, and that guy does not.

He doesn't offer another explanation. He doesn't even appeal for the master to reconsider. He faces the facts, and it changes everything. Jesus wants us to face the facts about money, and this is the first fact he wants us to face.

It will soon fail us. Look down in verse 9. When he's explaining the meaning of this parable, he says, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails, they may receive you into its dwelling, eternal dwelling.

[18 : 13] All your money will fail. It's not if, but when. I don't know what the numbers are, but we spend 80% of our savings in the last three years of our life.

All of our money, it just goes out. It just runs out. All of our savings, all of our retirement, all of our possessions, all of our family heirlooms, that thing you love, you held on to from your grandma.

One of your kids or grandkids is probably going to sell it for five bucks. So get used to it. You know, all will eventually break or be passed down to someone else.

We know this, right? This is biblical stewardship 101. We brought nothing into this world. We'll take nothing out. Just like George Strait said, we don't see a hearse with a luggage rack because it ain't going with you.

Psalms 39:6 says it like this, Surely for nothing they are in turmoil. Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather. Surely for nothing they are in turmoil.

[19 : 12] Man heaps up wealth and does not know who will gather. That's a vivid image. What's all the turmoil about? Nothing's going with you.

What's the turmoil? Oh, you got a heap. Good. Who's going to gather the heap? It's so vivid. And even though we know this is true, we fail to face the facts.

We live as if it's not true. One writer, James Montgomery Boyce, says it like this, Geese and other birds will fly south as winter approaches.

Rodents will store up for winter. Some animals hibernate, but human beings proceed in a manner they know is foolish and characteristically fail to make adequate provision for the future.

Other creatures recognize the failing of money. And so they make plans for it. But we don't. We run up credit card debt. We spend money we don't have. We bank on tomorrow. We'll make up the difference and cover our losses.

[20 : 18] But what Jesus wants us to see is the biggest way we don't make adequate provision for the future is we live as if eternity doesn't exist. We spend as if this world is all there is.

You imagine you're living at the end of the Civil War, as Randy Alcorn writes in his book. You're living in the South, but you're a northerner. Just for this, you're a northerner. Right? You plan to move home after the war.

While in the South, though, you've accumulated a lot of Confederate money. And when you know the war is about to be over, what should you do with the money? What should you do with your heap?

Well, there's only one answer, right? You convert it to U.S. currency. At the end of the war, it's useless. The Confederate States of America are no more.

And every good manager knows there's a good time to buy and good time to sell. What Jesus is saying, this world will soon end, and all the money that's left that we don't get rid of is useless.

[21 : 24] To keep on heaping up money and buying things and living as if the world, this world is all there is. It's not just wrong. It's stupid. It's what Jesus says.

Point two, steward your money for the life to come. Steward your money for the life to come. This is a parable about stewardship.

And that's what is underlined in this dishonest manager. Knowing he's busted and knowing his money will fail him, the dishonest manager is shrewd. And Jesus commends him and underlines a shocking truth.

Look down there in verse 8, the second sentence there. He says, for the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

Jesus commends him because he's shrewd, as I've said several times already. He's careful. He's clever. He's on the ball. He doesn't miss things. But the specifics of his shrewdness come out in this verse.

[22 : 28] He's shrewd because what he's all about comes out in what he does with his money. Jesus is not commending him for being dishonest, but he is commending him for being consistently dishonest.

Now, you've got to catch this, and I'll make this point. But Jesus is not commending him for being dishonest, but he does commend him for being consistently dishonest. Now, this guy is obviously a worldly man. And since he is a worldly man, he wants everything to work out well for himself, and he does everything in his power to get everything to work out well for him.

And Jesus essentially says, look at him. He's worldly and acts worldly with his money and possessions. Then Jesus turns to us. He does a better job showing what he's all about with his money than you do.

He's saying it shouldn't be hard to tell what we're all about. That's what's clear with this shrewd manager.

But Jesus is saying with the sun's light, it is hard. Because what we're all about doesn't come out with our money.

[23 : 48] Let's consider this again. You know, the sons of this world are more shrewd than the sons of light. The sons of this world, they know who they are, and they have no trouble acting like it. Liars have no problem being liars.

Thieves have no problem stealing. That's the point. They're often more shrewd and consistent in showing who they are than we are. Sometimes worldly people are better evangelists than we are. That's what Jesus is getting.

Worldly people have no trouble telling you what they're all about. But we fumble when we try to point people to the gospel. Worldly people have no trouble living for the passing things of this world while we wrestle with living for the life to come.

Worldly people have no trouble working, striving, and buying things for their best life now while we struggle spending our money for the life to come. The point is, if we, children of light, know what we know, we should be faithful and consistently living and spending for the life to come.

That's where he goes at the end of this parable. Look in verse 10. One who's faithful in a little will be faithful in a month. One who's dishonest in a little will be dishonest in much. If you then have been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

[24 : 56] Faithful, faithful, faithful. It's required of stewards to be faithful. Not to be impressive or successful or wealthy, just to be faithful. All we have is a gift. All the talents and opportunities we have have been entrusted to us.

We just have to steward them is what he's saying. They steward them well. Have you ever been on a plane? You probably have.

You know what I love about stewardesses, besides the free peanuts, is they know their job description. You know, their title tells everyone their job.

They steward. Their job is to steadily and wisely care for what is not theirs. The passengers. Now, how wrong would it be if you walked into a plane and the stewardess was sitting in the cockpit?

Or how wrong would it be if they were eating caviar in first class? They know their job, right? But as Jesus' disciples, do we know ours?

[26 : 10] Do we hold on to what's not ours? And the key here is we steward as those already prepared for the life to come.

Look down there in verse 9 again. He says, The sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. John 1 says, Light shines in the darkness, darkness and not overcoming.

The true light which enlightens everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.

Jesus is essentially saying, You are not like this world. You're already unlike this world. You're not like this dishonest manager. You're already sons of light.

You've been born again. You've been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's son. You're a citizen of heaven, a living, breathing new creation.

[27 : 19] It's not shocking when worldly people chase by and live for worldly things, but it is shocking when disciples do. You're already prepared for the life to come.

You know everything you need to know. So live and spend like it. Last Thursday, June 6th, was the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

June 6th, 1944. Most of us, if not all of us, were not alive that day. You know, on that day, Western allies landed on the beaches of Normandy.

I read one post today, or this past week, just a D-Day survivor saying, Saving Private Ryan's opening scene is accurate.

If you've ever watched that scene, it makes you want to throw up. 1.1 million men and tons and tons of tanks and ammo landed in Normandy. Anyone with a brain in their head could see the war was over.

- [28 : 33] It took America a long time to take action. On June 6th, they did. You know, but Hitler didn't say, Oops, I'm so sorry.
- I've taken this too far. Let's make peace. He fought harder. Never watched Ken Burns' The War.
- I commend it to you. You know, Nazi Germany fought harder. Some of the longest and bloodiest battles came after D-Day. You've probably heard of the Battle of the Bulge.
- Completely brutal. A year would pass, almost a year to the date, before it was officially V-E Day, Victory in Europe Day.
- What I'm trying to say is that living for Christ in this present world is much like living in between these days. The future is certain. Jesus is King.
- [29 : 37] All will see. He's the King of kings and Lord of lords. All will see that our faith is not null and void. All will see that it is rooted in the most unshakable reality, that Jesus Christ has come and established His kingdom in the gates of hell.
- And all they come to bring against it will not prevail upon it. And Jesus is saying He's already come. He's already established His kingdom. He's already called us from death to life and from darkness to light.
- And He's continually calling others. That's what makes these days so vital. This is the gospel. God is light and in Him there's no darkness at all. If we walk in the darkness and say we're walking in the light, we lie.
- But if we walk in the light, as He's in the light, we have fellowship with God. The blood of Jesus cleanses us of all sins. You know, the allies fought and died with the certainty that the Nazi regime would soon be taken out.
- So too, we are to live and spend and die with the certainty that this world is not all there is. And we are citizens of another.
- [30 : 42] What we need more than anything else is a certainty that heaven resides here. And then money just flows through our fingers. Walk now as children of light.
- Jesus doesn't say, wait for heaven. Be shrewd as a serpent. Don't heap up wealth. Don't chase the things of this world.
- You know, I think Jesus would ask us, what does your spending say about you? It's a hard word. Nobody likes to talk about money.
- Look at verse 10. One who's faithful in very little is also faithful in much. One who's dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much. You know, that sounds like a principle Jesus has said again and again and again.
- If you're faithful in small things, you'll get bigger things to be faithful in, right? Sounds like that. But there's another thing going on there. He's saying, you are who you are. Whether you have a little or whether you have a lot.
- [31 : 46] It's just a way of saying that what we've been saying throughout this parable is that you cannot say one thing with your mouth and another thing with your money. Jesus is not permitting that.
- Money does not lie. So Jesus would ask, what does our spending say about us? What does our budget say?
- What priorities does our spending reflect? Our kingdom or his? What do you find?
- What's hard? What do you find hard to spend money on? What do you find easy? You can't serve God and money.
- Point two, do not make friends. Or do you make friends with your money? It's so interesting. You know, he commends this shrewd steward for making friends through his deceitfulness.

[32 : 49] Jesus also says we should make friends with our money. You know, the idea is we cannot keep it at the end, but we can send it on and send it out to others.

You know, the Bible encourages us to be tight-fisted on a lot of things, but not money. And this is an incredible image. This idea that our money can go places and do things we never imagined and make friends.

Often we think, I'm just going to write a check. That's not true biblically. Your money makes friends. One day, in this image, in heaven, you'll see where your money went.

How incredible is that? Receive you into its eternal dwellings. Point three, watch out. Rewards will be gained or lost with your money.

Watch out. Rewards will be gained or lost with your money. You know, if we know money will soon fail us and we're already prepared for the life to come, why don't we spend our lives and our money differently? Why don't we settle for something like the best possible life now and the best possible life then?

[33 : 58] Randy Alcorn says, What is a missing ingredient in the lives of many Christians is an understanding of rewards. An understanding of rewards.

And Jesus wants to motivate us this way. Look down there in verse 11 again. He says, If you've not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust you with the true riches? If you've not been faithful with this world's money, you will not gain riches in the life to come.

In a word, what Jesus is saying is rich rewards will either be gained or lost with our money. Now what's this talk of rewards?

I thought we were saved by grace. But Jesus continually drives rewards home. I was convicted studying this for not thinking of rewards enough.

Just a couple points on rewards. God will reward everything, every good thing done for him. Every prayer, every day of fasting, every act of compassion, every self-denial, every act of giving, every perseverance through persecution and serving.

[35 : 06] Go look at Hebrews 6. It's incredible. And many other things. He won't miss anything. That's just so incredible. Matthew 10 when he says, Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water.

The idea is the most insignificant thing you could give away, he won't miss. God will reward. That's incredible. He's watching. Two, these rewards include riches, crowns, and authority.

The Bible talks about rewards as riches. I'll restore you a hundredfold in this life and even more in the life to come. Treasures and crowns are repeated, crowns of life and authority and blessing and different things.

We don't even know what that means. I don't know what that means. But then nevertheless, Jesus holds them out before us. He also says, Every believer will not receive the same rewards.

Now we think about heaven like upward basketball. Everyone gets the same trophy. Everyone gets the same amount of PT.

[36 : 12] No winners or losers. We love equality, right? Most of our politics or some of it is built on same wealth, opportunities, and lifestyle. We assume heaven will be like that, but it won't.

Not all believers will hear, Well done, good and faithful servant. That's haunting. Some will squander what they've been given.

Not all will have treasure in heaven. Though salvation will be secure through Jesus Christ. Our hope of rewards may not be.

The way we live this life either gains or forfeits rewards. You know, it's a hard teaching, and yet it's packed into almost every teaching Jesus has about money.

It's meant to motivate us to give away our lives and our money for Christ. There's so many motivations for the Christian life. Just a few are gratitude, love, duty, fear, and rewards is meant to be one of them.

[37 : 20] You know, if one of those motivations isn't working, put rewards in there. We can think, wouldn't it be wrong to serve God for a reward? Well, yes, it would be if Jesus didn't say so.

But he says it's impossible to please God unless he believes, or unless someone believes he exists, and he rewards those who forsake him. In fact, if we study the biblical teaching of rewards, we will not just want rewards.

We'll want more and more and more of them. Such that we stop living for puny things in this life. We won't be content with our best life here.

We'll want our best life then. C.S. Lewis talks about rewards like this and encourages us to desire all the more.

He says, indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of rewards promised in the Gospels, what we've just been talking about, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

[38 : 25] Jesus doesn't want just 10%. He wants everything. He wants your life. He's worthy of it. We are half-hearted creatures fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.

We are far too easily pleased. Now that's an exclamation point to the teaching of rewards that we're not desiring too much.

There's not too much zeal. Jesus, the zeal should be endless. Desire to live for him. Desire to devote our lives to him. Desire to be shrewd with everything we have and everything we possess because of him and because of the reward that waits those who trust him.

There's no true discipleship without shrewd stewardship. And one day in the great unveiling, we will all see. Praise God at that unveiling.

All our sins will be hidden in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But nevertheless, words like these sober us because what we do with our money will not be hidden.

[39 : 48] It will be seen. And we possess the opportunity now to let it flow to Christ.

Oh, man. I don't want to be that fool that builds a heap. I want to be that fool that keeps slinging the heap out.

Let's do that together. Father in heaven, thank you for your mercy towards us in Jesus Christ. Thank you for not treating us as our sins deserve.

Thank you that as far as the east is from the west, so you have removed our transgressions from us. Far as the heavens are above the earth, so great is your steadfast love towards us who fear you because of your grace and your Spirit's work.

Lord, we thank you for the Holy Spirit this morning for coming and being with us and making our hearts open to hear hard things. Lord, I pray that anything that would be helpful would press us more into living for Jesus Christ.

[41 : 03] Anything unhelpful would be forgotten now. Lord, let condemnation not appear in our hearts and minds, but God, where appropriate, bring conviction.

Just as your servants often prayed in your presence, oh, search me and know me. See if there's any unclean way in me. Lord, we pray that your Word would have searched us already, but would continue to search us.

Our desire is to live full out for Jesus Christ. There's no halfway house allowed. We don't want to serve anything else but Him.

Lord, help us. Press us more and more into His image and into lives that reflect it. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com.