

(Through the Bible) Luke 16-17

by Chuck Smith

Jesus teaches us to be wise and faithful with what God has given us, and to use our resources to prepare for the future and to prioritize spiritual things over material possessions and worldly desires.

Duration: 1:15:16

Scripture: Luke 16:1

Topics: "Luke"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a responsible steward of God's resources. He uses the parable of the dishonest steward to illustrate the concept of accountability. The speaker highlights that everything we have belongs to God and we are entrusted with managing it properly. He also mentions that one day we will all give an account of our actions before the Lord, and that we will be judged according to our works. The speaker encourages disciples of Jesus to embrace their role as servants and to seek an increase in faith through prayer.

Transcript

Jesus speaks on two unpleasant subjects to a lot of people. Not unpleasant to me, but to a lot of people. Talks about hell, that's not unpleasant to me, not worried about it at all.

Now Jesus is at a supper with the Pharisees, it's on the Sabbath day, and this particular section that we are now in is still in that supper that Jesus was invited to beginning the 14th chapter, where the Pharisees invited him to the house, set him up with a fellow with a dropsy, and so this whole interchange of thought and all is going on there. At times he is addressing the Pharisees, at times he is addressing his disciples, and at this point, beginning of the 16th chapter, he is now addressing his disciples. And so 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 wasted his goods.

And he called them and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for you may no longer be steward. Then the steward said within himself, what shall I do? For my Lord is taking away from me this stewardship, and I cannot dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I'll do, so that when I am put out of the stewardship, they will receive me into their houses.

So he called every one of his Lord's debtors unto him and said unto the first, how much do you owe my Lord? And he said, a hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, take thy bill, sit down quickly and

write fifty. He said to another, and how much do you owe? And he said, a hundred measures of wheat.

And he said unto him, take your bill and write eighty. Now 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. And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by the use of the unrighteousness of mammon, that when they fail, or that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

So Jesus here gives a parable, it's to his disciples, and it's a parable of stewardship. Now, the thing to notice, first of all, about this steward was that everything he possessed belonged to his master. And in his waste, he was actually wasting his master's goods.

In the application of this, of course, God has made us stewards. And everything that we have really belongs to God. The Bible says the earth is the Lord's in the fullness thereof.

It all belongs to him. Now, God allows me that privilege and opportunity of overseeing that which belongs to him. But God also holds me responsible as to what I do with it when it is under my care.

So, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, everything we have is our Lord's. But I am responsible to him. There is another parable of the steward, and in the other parable, the Lord went away to a far country and left his goods in the hands of his servants, and the one he gave five talents to another four to another one.

But the same idea is the Lord came and they had to give an accounting of what they had done with what was the Lord's. When you see yourself as a servant of Jesus Christ, then it naturally follows that as his bond slave, everything you possess actually belongs to him. I own nothing of my own.

It all is the Lord's. And this particular steward was accused of wasting his goods. And so he was called to give an account.

The Bible tells us that one day every one of us are going to stand before the Lord to give an account of the things that we have done while we're in these bodies, whether good or evil. Second Corinthians chapter five, Paul said that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are also told that we are going to be judged according to our works and many of the works will be burned by fire, but those that we may, we will be rewarded for.

So we will all one day give an account to the Lord of our stewardship, how I managed the Lord's properties, how I managed the Lord's resources that he placed at my disposal. I have that responsibility then of proper management whenever God places anything in my power. And so he was called to give an account.

Now this particular steward knew that he was in trouble when the audit was made, the accounting was to be made. He knew that he was guilty of wasting his master's goods. He knew that he was going to lose his job.

And so he was concerned because he felt that he was just too frail to dig ditches and he was ashamed to beg. And then he hit upon an idea, very dishonest, in which he began to call in his master's debtors and he began summarily to discount their obligations to his master. Now the master in this case was probably a landlord.

And so often the landlord in renting out his property would take instead of rent some of the produce from the land. It was very common for the people to pay their rent in wheat that had been produced on the land or in the oil that had been produced on the land or in some of the products of the land itself. And this was a very common thing.

And so the first one, he brought him in and he said, how much do you have to pay? And he says, well, I pay a hundred measures of oil. And he says, here, take down right 50. And to the one who paid a hundred measures of wheat, he said, write 80.

Now, what he was seeking to do is to make these people obligated to him so that when he was fired from his job, he would be able to come back to them and sponge off of them for a while because of the favors that he had granted to them in discounting their bills. As he was the steward managing his owner's affairs, he was setting himself up using this position of authority, using this opportunity that he had to set himself up for the future, which he knew was going to be very grim once he was fired because he wasn't a ditch digger and he was ashamed to beg. Up to this point, we can follow the story rather clearly.

But at the next scripture, when the Lord commended the unjust steward, that's where the problem arises. Why would he commend the unjust steward? Why would the Lord commend him? Now, I can understand if the Lord said, cast that unjust steward out, put him in the debtor's prison until his obligations have all been taken care of. But the Lord commended him for what? Not for his actions, not for his honesty, but for his wisdom.

The wisdom of using his present position to set himself up for that uncertain future that he knew was coming for him. That's what the Lord was commending. Now, as we go to the Proverbs, Solomon said, go to the ant, thou sluggard, or you lazy bum.

Learn of his ways and be wise. Again, he said, there are four things upon the earth that are exceedingly small, but exceedingly wise. And among these four things, the ant is but a feeble folk.

No, that was a cone, he's a feeble folk. The ant lays up its meat in the summer. The wisdom of the ant laying up its food supplies during the summer.

The ant somehow knows that the weather isn't always going to be this nice. Somehow there's recorded information in that little brain of the ant that the winter is coming, it's going to get cold, it's going to get rainy. And he won't be able to get out and forage for food.

Therefore, it is necessary while it is still summer, while he can still get out to get out and to gather together all of the food that he'll need to survive during the winter season. In other words, take advantage of the present situation to prepare yourself for what you know is coming in the future. Now, this is the wisdom.

That was manifested by the steward, and that's why he was commended, because he took advantage of his present situation to help set himself up for what he knew was coming in the future. That is always very wise, but it isn't wisdom that we always follow. We know that one day we are going to die.

We know that when we die, we can take nothing with us. We know that any treasure that we lay up in heaven, we have to lay up now. We've got to take advantage of our opportunities now to lay up heavenly treasure.

We know that we came into the world naked. We're going out of the world naked. We brought nothing into the world and it is certain we are going to take nothing out.

So if I'm going to set myself up in the heavenly kingdom, I must do it now and I must take advantage of the opportunities that I have now in order to set myself up for the heavenly kingdom. And this is exactly what Jesus is saying. Make use of the unrighteousness of mammon.

Make use of this filthy lucre, this money that God places at your disposal, make use of it in such a way that you will be reaping eternal benefits from it. Invest it in the things of the kingdom in such a way that when you fail, when you come to the end of the road, you might be received into the everlasting habitations. God, I am certain, keeps a very interesting set of books.

Paul the Apostle, when he was writing to the Philippians, thanked them for the gift that they sent to him. He said, not that I particularly needed it, but I desire that fruit might abound to your account. Thank you for what you sent to me.

I wasn't particularly in need, but I'm grateful for it because the fruit of my labor, those people that I won to Christ, will abound to your account because of the fact that you supported my ministry there. So, money is a tremendous outlet of spiritual power if we use it right. Money can be a blessing, it can be a curse.

It all depends on how a person uses it. It can be the closest thing to omnipotence that man possesses, but so often creates impotence. Jesus is warning here against that impotence that money often creates with a person.

Make use of the unrighteousness of mammon so that when you fail, they might receive you into the everlasting kingdoms. There is, to me, one interesting aspect of arriving in heaven. Something that you don't hear of much, but I expect to meet a lot of people that I have never seen before, who, though I have never seen them, I am responsible for their being there in the heavenly kingdom.

Maybe some native from Africa. When he gets to heaven, we'll say, now, how is it that I heard the gospel? And God will go through the books and say, well, actually, that missionary that was out there was supported by Chuck Smith. So when he arrives, that's the one you want to look for.

And so this fellow come up to me and say, hey, I want to thank you, brother. Oh, I so appreciate what you did. Well, who are you? Oh, man, I was a you bangy, but you brought me the gospel.

What do you mean? I brought you the gospel. I've never been in Africa. Oh, well, I checked the records up here and you were the one that was supporting that missionary over there that brought me to Jesus Christ.

How can they believe unless they hear? How can they hear except there be a preacher? How can they preach except they be sent as it is written? How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those that carry the gospel of peace. But that part of being sent and that's where we can come in. Make use of the unrighteousness of Mammon.

So that when you fail, they might receive you into the everlasting kingdoms. And now the Lord goes on in verse 10 to make the application of the parable as he relates it now to your place in the kingdom of God. When you come into the kingdom of God.

If you have been faithful in least in these little things that God has placed at your disposal, then you will also be faithful in much in those great things of his kingdom. But if you have been unjust in the least, then you'll be unjust in the greater things. Man, if you're embezzling dollars now, you'll be seeking to embezzle more later.

You see, if you're unjust in the little things, if you have a bigger opportunity, you're going to be that much more unjust. If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, then who is going to commit to your trust the true riches? Now, this unrighteous Mammon is not true riches. Moth and rust can corrupt it.

The banks can fail. There's just many ways that this unrighteous Mammon can suddenly disappear. It's not true riches.

The true riches are the things in the kingdom of God. They're the eternal riches. Yet, if you've not been faithful in this unrighteous Mammon, then who is going to commit to your trust the true riches? If you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, you see, I'm a steward.

Whatever I have belongs to God. It's not mine. And if I'm not faithful in taking care of what belongs to God.

Then who is going to give me that which is my own? No servant can serve two masters. 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.

You can't serve them both. Divide and loyalty. It just won't work.

You cannot have God as your God and money as your God at the same time. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Now, the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, they were covetous.

They loved the money. They heard all of these things that he was saying to his disciples, and they began to deride him. And so he turned on them.

Now he's talking to the Pharisees. And he said unto them, you are they which justify yourselves before men. But God knows your hearts.

There are so many times when a person comes up and tries to justify before me something that they have done. I say, man, it's cool. That made a difference.

I'm not the one who is going to be your judge. You don't have to justify your case before me. I'm not your judge.

God is the one. He knows your heart. He knows what the motive was.

And the Pharisees were those who loved to justify themselves before men. But God knows their hearts for that which is highly esteemed among men. Talking of the Pharisees who were highly esteemed by men, he says, is an abomination in the sight of God.

Men may highly esteem you. But as far as God is concerned, you're an abomination. The law and the prophets were until John.

And since that time, the kingdom of God is preached. And every man presses into it. So up until the time of John, you were under the law, you were under the prophets, now the kingdom of God.

John came preaching what the kingdom of God, saying the kingdom of God is at hand and Jesus preached of the kingdom of God. And so since the coming of John, the kingdom of God has been preached and every man must press into it. The word press is a. Intense word in the Greek, it's agonizing, must agonize into it, and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one title of the law to fail.

Now, he said, you know, the law was until John, now the kingdom of God is being preached, but heaven and earth will pass. But not one little part of the law is going to fail. Now, evidently, there was a running battle between the Pharisees and Jesus over the issue of divorce, for there was a school of thought followed following Rabbi Hillel, which was the popular school of thought who interpreted the law of divorce.

If a man finds an uncleanness in his wife, let him give her a writing a bill of divorcement. He interpreted that uncleanness to if she put too much salt in his soup, grounds for divorce, salty soup again. And so they had liberalized the law of divorce.

A man could put away his wife for just about any cause in which he just was displeased with her. It was almost as bad as it is today. Look how we've liberalized.

You know, you don't need any excuse now. Just go to court and say we're incompatible. So it was much that way in the day of Christ by the liberal interpreting of the law by the rabbis who followed the school of Hillel.

And so Jesus, taking a more literal view of that law, and no doubt it was a running battle with him. So he says, hey, not one little tittle of the law is going to fail, you know, easier for heaven and earth to pass than one of these little marks in the Hebrew to fail. And then he sticks the knife in this particular issue that they were asking him about and no doubt arguing with him about.

He said, whosoever puts away his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whosoever marries her that is put away from her husband commits adultery. I mean, he lays it out straight, hard and and just nails them. And then he goes right on.

And he said there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

So we have a very vast contrast of lifestyles, a rich man faring sumptuously every day and there at his gate, a poor beggar covered with sores, begging and seeking to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table and dogs coming and licking his sores. Some have said that this is a parable. Jesus didn't say it was a parable.

I do not think it was a parable for. In all of the parables, never was a person named. In this story, the person is named Lazarus, the poor man, the rich man isn't named, someone called him Davies, but we don't know that.

And it came to pass that the beggar died. And was carried by the angel into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

Notice, it didn't say the poor man was buried in those days when the poor people died, they just threw them into the Valley of Tophet into Gehenna into the valley just outside of Mount Zion.

The valley of Hinnom. Where they put the refuse from the city and there were constant fires burning there in the valley of Hinnom and they would just cremate the bodies, throw them in the fires in the trash heap. They wouldn't bury the poor people.

So the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And in hell, Hades, he lifted up his eyes being in torments and seeing Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.

He cried and said, Father, Abraham, have mercy on me, send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember. That you in your lifetime received the good things and likewise Lazarus, the evil things, but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

And beside all this between us. And you, there is a great gulf that is fixed so that they which would pass over from here to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from there. Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.

Now, Jesus is teaching here concerning Hades, which is translated for the most part in the New Testament, hell, a place that is located in the center of the earth. When they asked Jesus for a sign, he said a wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

So Jesus located it in the heart of the earth because we are told. That Jesus descended into hell. When he died.

But God had given him the promise, I will not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow the holy one to see corruption and Peter said God fulfilled the promise and he did not leave his soul in hell, neither did he allow the holy one to see corruption, but the same Jesus at God raised from the dead. And Peter in Acts chapter two bear witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ in his message to the throne. Later, Paul, the apostle, tells us in Ephesians for he who has ascended into heaven is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth.

And when he ascended, he led the captives from their captivity. Peter tells us that he went down and preached to those souls that were in prison. Who in one time were disobedient, so according to the scriptures.

And according to the teaching of Jesus here. Prior to the death and burial of Jesus Christ and subsequent resurrection. Hades or hell, a place in the center of the earth was divided into two compartments in one compartment.

Abraham had charge of comforting those who came in to that particular compartment as the poor man was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. What a fitting person to be comforting them, the father of those who believe what was he comforting them with? The promise of God to send the Messiah to deliver them in Hebrews chapter 11. As it talks about the faith of Abraham, it said these all died in faith.

Abraham and Enoch and all of the rest of these all died in faith, not having received the promise, but seeing it afar off. They embraced it. They held to it and they claimed that they were just strangers and pilgrims here.

They were looking for a city which have foundation, whose maker and builder is God. So Abraham was saying, hey, look, God's true to his word. He'll keep his promise.

You're not going to have to stay here forever. Now, just don't worry about it. Just, you know, Lord's going to do it.

The Messiah is going to come. He's going to deliver us out of this place. And one day into hell, there came a burst of glory.

As Jesus came in and said, hey, I did it, it's finished, the price has been paid, you've been redeemed from your sinful state. And he broke the bars of hell, and when he ascended, he led the captives from their captivity. Part of the prophecy of Jesus Christ in Isaiah 61, is he would open the prison doors and set at liberty those who are bound.

It's exactly what he did. And he led the captives from their captivity. That's why Matthew's gospel records that after the resurrection of the death, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, many of the bodies of the saints were taken.

The saints were seen walking around the streets of Jerusalem. Hey, what's Moses doing walking over there, you know? David, oh. Then Jesus ascended and he led the captives from their captivity as he ascended into heaven.

So that the one compartment of hell at that point was emptied. Now, the other compartment in hell will also one day be emptied. It, as is described here by Jesus, and who would know better than he, was a place where the rich man was in torment.

He asked that Lazarus be sent to dip his finger in water and cool his tongue. He was tormented in the flame. One day at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ.

Death and Hades will give up the dead which are in them. And they will stand before the great white throne judgment of God, Revelation, chapter 20, and whosoever's names. Are not found written in the book of life.

Will be cast into Gehenna. This is the second death. So hell.

Someone says, well, hell isn't eternal. That's true. It will disgorge itself of its inhabitants at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ.

It is Gehenna. Which Jesus described. As being a place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dieth not, neither is the fire quenched.

And in revelation concerning Gehenna, it says, and the smoke of their torment ascends from the ages throughout the ages. Now you interpret that however you want, but don't ask me to modify it. Because God said, if any man takes away from the words of this book that is modifies them.

His name will be taken out of the book of life. You do with it what you want. I'm not going to modify it.

I'm just going to leave it be. Let the word of God speak and let it be. You say, oh, that's horrible.

I agree. That's why I have no intention of going there. Common fallacy.

Is often expressed in the question, how can a God of love consign a man to eternal punishment? Send a man to hell. The question is a fallacy because, first of all, the God of love that we serve has never sent one man to hell, nor will he ever send one man to hell. In fact, the God of love that we serve has done everything short of violating man's free will to keep him out of hell.

The God of love that we serve sent his son to die on the cross so men wouldn't have to go to hell. Jesus came to seek and to save those which are lost, and God has done everything short of violating man's free moral agency. So man, by his own choice, goes to hell, never sent there by God.

So rather than saying, how can a God of love send a man to hell? Just say, how can a man be so stupid as to choose to go to hell when God has made all of the provisions to keep him from it? Because that's what the truth actually is. Now, a couple of more things that we notice about Hades. There's no transferring from one side to the other.

Those that are on this side, if they want, cannot come over there, Abraham said to him. Neither can those that are over there come over here. The boundaries are set.

There's no transferring back and forth. There is consciousness. There is remembrance.

Son, remember, you in your lifetime lived in luxury. You had the good things, Lazarus the evil. Remember, he could remember, he remembered his brothers.

If he can't come and comfort me a bit, please send him back to my house. My five brothers, I don't want them to come to this place. Abraham said they have the law and the prophets.

Let them hear them. They said, no, no, no, they don't listen to that. But they will listen if someone comes back from the dead.

Abraham said if they won't listen to that, they won't listen even if someone comes back from the dead. Now, to me, it is very interesting. Jesus is talking, remember, to the Pharisees.

And there was a man named Lazarus who lived in the city of Bethany. And he was very sick. And his sisters sent an urgent message to Jesus, who was at the Jordan River, and it said, come quickly, the one you love is sick.

And Jesus remained at the Jordan River with his disciples for two days. And then he said, come, let us journey to visit Lazarus. And as they were journeying, they were talking about Lazarus' illness and Jesus said, well, he's sleeping.

And the disciples said, oh, that's a good sign. If he can sleep, he's probably getting better. And Jesus said, no, you don't understand me, he's dead.

And so they said, well, let's go, you know, so we can die with him. Well, as he was coming into town, Martha heard that Jesus was finally arriving at the village. She ran out and said, Lord, if you'd only have been here, my brother wouldn't have died.

Where were you? What took you so long? Why weren't you around when we needed you? Jesus said, Martha, your brother's going to live again. So, yes, Lord, I know the last day, the great resurrection. Jesus said, no, Martha, I'm the resurrection and the life.

And he that believeth on me, though we were dead, yet shall he live. And if you live and believe in me, you'll never die. Don't you believe this, Martha? Heavy, isn't it? Pretty radical.

But you see what he did, as he always does, divides men into two categories, those who believe and those who don't. I mean, he makes a radical claim and then he divides you, sets a knife right down and you're on one side or the other. You either believe or don't.

You either have hope of eternal life or you have no hope of life. She said, Lord, I believe that you are the promised Messiah of God. And so then they came to the house where they were all weeping.

And Mary said, Lord, if you'd only have been here, my brother would not have died. Jesus said, where did you bury him? Come, we'll show you the place. And they got to the place, the tomb.

And Jesus said, roll the stone back. And they said, oh, Lord, can't do that. He smells by now.

He's been in there for four days. The body's decaying. He said, roll the stone back.

And then he cried, Lazarus, come forth. He didn't just say come forth or the whole graveyard would have emptied. You got to be careful when you got that kind of power.

And Lazarus came hopping out. All bound in his grave clothes. And Jesus said, loose him and let him go.

And they went back home and they prepared a dinner and Jesus was sitting at dinner. And the Pharisees said, we better kill him. Maybe they were some of this rich man's brothers.

Abraham was right. They will not believe even if they see one who has come back from the dead. Lazarus came back from the dead.

It did not make believers out of the Pharisees. Oh, there were many who, when they saw him, believed. But if you are predisposed to unbelief, all of the proof in the world isn't going to change you.

You see, believing in Jesus is a matter of choice. And if you've chosen not to believe, I don't care how much proof or evidence is offered to you. You've chosen not to believe and you won't believe.

Believing is a matter of choice. I choose to believe in Jesus Christ. I choose to believe that he is the resurrection and the light.

And by believing in him, I expect never to die. Oh, you say, I knew you were weird. Never to die from a scriptural definition.

I'm going to move out of this old tent into a beautiful new house that the Lord's been preparing for me. He said in my father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you and I'm going to prepare one for you. And if I go and prepare one for you, I'm going to come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also.

For we know that when this earthly tent, our body is dissolved, that we have a building of God not made with hands that is eternal in the heavens. So then we who are in these bodies do often grown earnestly

desiring to move out, not to be an unembodied spirit, but to be clothed upon with a body which is from heaven, where we know that as long as we are at home and living in these bodies, we are absent from the Lord. But I would rather be absent from this body and to be present with the Lord.

So someday if you read in the paper, Chuck Smith died, don't believe it. Poor reporting. If they're going to be accurate, they're going to have to write.

Chuck Smith moved out of an old worn out holy tent into a beautiful new mansion, a building of God not made with hands. Eternal in the heavens. So here Jesus is telling them a little bit about what's going on.

And this is interesting to me as Abraham responds, if they will not believe, if they choose not to believe the law and the prophets. They have predispositioned themselves not to believe they won't believe even if they see a miracle of someone coming back from the dead. They'll say, oh, well, he must have swooned.

He really wasn't dead, you know, and isn't it fortunate that he revived. Now he turns again to his disciples. Then said he and his disciples, it is impossible.

But that offenses will come, you cannot help if you're living in this world, you're going to have offenses come your way. There are going to be people who will seek to put stumbling stones in your path. And that's what the word offense here.

It's a it's a stone of stumbling, a scandal on. It's impossible to live your life without having these things happen. These offenses, as people challenge your faith, as people ridicule you for your walk with Jesus Christ, it's going to happen.

But woe unto him through whom they come. You can't live your life unscathed, you can't live your life without having stumbling stones placed in your path. But woe to the person who put the stumbling stone there.

It was better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he was cast into the sea. Then he should offend one of these little ones. It is a very serious thing to tamper with someone's faith in Jesus Christ, to seek to put a stumbling stone or a block in their faith of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said much the same thing at another occasion in which he took a little child and was using a child for an example. And those that would try to rob a child of that pure, simplistic faith in Jesus. Quite often these scholarly theologians accuse me of preaching a simplistic gospel.

Thank God for the charge. I hope it's true. I hope that I'll always preach a simplistic gospel, because to me, the problem is that man has tried to make it so complex when God has made the believing in Jesus so simple that even a child can believe and be saved.

And Jesus said, unless you become as a little child, you won't be able to come into the kingdom of heaven. That's pretty simplistic. And I hope to keep it that way.

I love the spunk that Jesus has. He's going to take one of these big old millstones, and I've seen them the size of the pulpit here, tied around the guy's neck and toss him in the Sea of Galilee. Better for him that that had happened to him.

Then he should offend one of the little ones. So take heed to yourselves. Be careful that you're not a stumbling stone.

Be careful that you don't stumble your brother. Take heed to yourself. If your brother trespassed against thee, rebuke him.

There is a place for rebuke. Romaine has his place in the body. And for you who are listening on tape, Romaine is not my wife.

We had some people come to Calvary a while back looking for my wife. They thought her name was Romaine because of the reference that I have made to Romaine from time to time. Just keep the record clear.

If your brother trespassed against you, rebuke him. The Bible tells us that we should reprove, that we should rebuke. And if he repents, forgive him.

So your brother's trespassed against you, rebuke him and say, hey, that isn't right. You shouldn't have done that. Oh, I'm sorry.

Forgive me. Yes, I forgive you. Should be just like that.

If he repents, forgive him. Now, it doesn't say anything if he doesn't repent, does it? Do you have to forgive him if he doesn't repent? I don't think so. You say, oh, wait a minute.

Oh, let me ask you a question. Does God forgive a man without repentance? I don't know of a single instance where God forgave a person without repentance. In fact, Jesus said, unless you repent, you're going to perish.

So repentance is necessary for forgiveness. It's an absolute necessary qualification for forgiveness. If I'm to be forgiven, I must repent.

God will not forgive you if you don't repent. Therefore, God does not require that you forgive outside of repentance. But if they do repent.

Then you it's the ball is in your park and you've got to forgive. And even if he trespasses against you seven times in the same day. And seven times in the same day, he turns to you again and says, I repent.

Thou shalt forgive him. Thank you, Lord, I needed that. That's so hard, isn't it? You would be prone to think that the person wasn't sincere, just taking advantage of you.

If seven times he does some rotten deed and then quickly says, oh, I repent, I repent. And yet. If he repents seven times the same day, I'm to forgive him.

I can't do that unless the Lord helps me. And and the apostles no doubt felt the same thing, because when Jesus said this, they said, oh, Lord, increase our faith. Help me, Lord, can't handle that one.

And so, Lord said, if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed. Now, I think that we oftentimes make a mistake in this thinking of faith in quantity and we think, oh, mustard seed is so tiny. Just a little tiny, tiny bit of faith.

And we think of it in in quantity or in size, but he didn't say if you had as much faith as the size of a grain of mustard seed, did he? He isn't referring to size at all. If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed. I didn't know mustard seeds have faith, but if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this

sycamine tree or mulberry tree, whatever it might have been, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea and it would obey you.

Now, whenever I read something like that, I wonder, Lord, how much faith do I have? But faith as a grain of mustard seed now in another place, he said, if you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to Yon Mountain, be thou removed into the sea and it would happen. Let me suggest to you that a mustard seed is quite small. And when it is planted in the ground and covered with dirt and there germinates as that mustard plant begins to grow from the little seed, it begins to move in a sense, especially to its size, the mountains of dirt above it that it might break forth and grow up into a mustard bush.

So faith as a grain of mustard seed. There is that life principle there that can move mountains. Another place, the disciples said, Lord, increase our faith.

And perhaps he's just showing them how little they really do have. And if this be a standard, then I must take my place with them. I do wish that the Lord would increase my faith.

Now, this business of faith, though, becomes a very tough issue because so many times we find ourselves trying to generate faith. Have you ever been in the position of trying to generate faith? You know, you go trying to get the turbines turning, you know, and get the thing rolling. But you can't generate faith.

Now, a lot of times we are made to feel very guilty. Well, brother, if you just had enough faith, you know, surely you wouldn't be in the mess that you're in if you just had enough faith. You wouldn't be as sick as you are if you just had enough faith.

Now, if at any time a person needs comfort and help, it's when they're sick and they're weak and they're down. And it's no help to tell a person, well, if you just had enough faith, you wouldn't be in this condition, brother. That's no help at all.

You're as bad as those guys who came to comfort Job. You're kicking a guy when he's down. I cannot generate faith.

I cannot produce faith. Faith is a gift of God. It is listed in First Corinthians chapter 12 as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Now, it is glorious when God plants that faith in your heart. But if he doesn't, I don't know what you can do about it. So I think it's proper with the disciples just say, Lord, increase my faith.

Now, the Lord is talking to them about what it is to be a servant. You're the servant of the Lord. He's called these disciples to be his servants, and he's talking to them a little bit about what a servant, what it entails being a servant.

Let's leave it there. But which of you who has a servant plowing or feeding your cattle will say to him by and by when he's come in from the field, go and sit down and eat your dinner. But will you not rather say unto him, prepare my supper, gird yourself and serve me until I have eaten and drunken and afterward you can eat and drink.

Now, does he thank that servant because he did those things which were commanded him? And Jesus said, no way, I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants. We haven't done any more than what was our duty to do.

My attitude after I've come in from serving the Lord and the Lord gives me another task to do and I'm so tired, I feel, oh, I can't move. But I go to the hospital, I make the call, I pray for them and encourage them. I about fall asleep driving home, catch myself a couple of times almost running off the road.

And as I'm trudging upstairs to bed, I think, oh, Lord, you ought to really lay a heavy one on me now. Look how good I am. Look what I've done for you.

Surely, Lord, you ought to bless me now. I'm so good. Lord says, no, no.

Say, I'm an unprofitable servant. I've only done that which was my duty to do. I'm a servant.

What is my duty? To obey my master. Not to be looking for glory, not to be looking for thanks, not to be looking for pats on the back. They tell me that I'm a difficult one to work for.

Because I don't pat people on the back. Now, I know that's difficult in marriage and God help me. I'm trying.

I know. It is a failing of mine because my wife isn't my servant, she's my wife, and it is a great failing of mine not to give her more recognition for those good traits, those beautiful traits that she has. I just.

You know, accept it, and but I don't I don't give her recognition, I don't say, oh, sweetheart, that was the most delicious dinner. You seasoned that roast just perfectly. Oh, that was good.

I just don't say those things. I wish I could. I wish I did, but I don't.

But if she burns the carrots, I say, oh, you burn the carrots, huh? Now, what makes us so stupid that we can't learn? But yet, as a position of a servant, I shouldn't really be looking for these little perks. I'm only done what is my duty to do. Now, it came to pass as he was on his way to Jerusalem that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood far off, which, of course, was the law of the land. If you were a leper, you had to cry unclean and could not allow anyone to approach you. And they lifted up their voices.

They cried. They yelled. They said, Jesus, master, have mercy on us.

And when he saw them, he said to them, go your way and show yourself to the priest. And it came to pass as they went, they were cleansed. Again, I like this because it shows us the variety with which Jesus worked his works among men.

He was never in a pattern. He didn't do things by set patterns because he didn't want us to get set into rituals or into patterns. He wanted us to just be free to the working of God in different ways.

In another case, a leper came and said, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. And Jesus touched him and said, I will be the clean. Go show yourself to the priest.

And immediately his leprosy left him. Now, here they stood afar off. It doesn't say anything about Jesus touching them.

They just cried out and Jesus called back and said, go show yourself to the priest. Now, this was the necessary thing. This is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing, Leviticus 13.

He has to go to the priest and he's to show himself to the priest to examine him. If he finds no new skin blotches and so forth, he puts him in a house and he sits there for seven days, comes back again before the priest and he looks over him again and there's no new eruptions or blotches. Then the man is proclaimed clean by the priest.

He goes out and gets a couple of doves and he brings one in. The priest kills the dove, pours the blood in the water basin. He takes the other dove and dips it in this bloody water and turns it free.

And the bloody water dove flies away with the blood sprinkling down. And the guy is cleansed of his leprosy and he's able to go back into the community. So that was the first step back to restoration.

Go show yourself to the priest. So by faith, as they started towards the priest, now it doesn't say they were cleansed immediately, but as they went, they were cleansed. They started out in faith towards the priest and as they were going to look, wow, it's gone.

Unreal. And one of them, one of them returned when he saw that he was healed. He turned back.

And with a loud voice, he glorified God. And he fell down in his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

Now, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, nor the Samaritans with the Jews. But misery had made common brothers of these men. But it's significant that out of the ten, only one gave thanks.

And Jesus said unto him. Were there not ten who were cleansed, where are the nine? This indicates that the Lord is looking for thanks when he has worked in a person's life. He's looking for that response.

And he misses it when he is when it is not there. Weren't there ten that were cleansed? Where are the nine? And he said unto him. There are not found that return to give glory to God, save this stranger.

And he said to him, arise, go your way, your faith has made you whole. He received more than just the healing of his leprosy. He received salvation.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come. He's heading now towards Jerusalem. When's the kingdom of God going to come? When you get to Jerusalem, you're going to do it.

And he answered and said unto them, the kingdom of God does not come with observation. The word there in the Greek is a word that means with outward manifestation or an outward show. You're not going to see an outward display of the kingdom at this time.

Neither shall they say lo here or lo there, for behold, the kingdom of God is entos you, among you, within you is a poor translation here. It's really the kingdom of God is among you. It would be wrong to say that the kingdom of God was in the Pharisees.

The kingdom of God is in the life of every man who is submitted to the king. Or to God is king. But with Jesus there, the kingdom of God was among them.

He was a demonstration of a man submitted to the authority of God. And he said unto his disciples, the days will come when you shall desire to see one of the days of the son of man and you will not see it. And they shall say unto you, look, it's here, look, it's there.

Now, don't go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that lighted out of the one part of the heaven shines to another part under the heaven, so shall the son of man be in his day. Oh, the kingdom of God has come.

It's over here. Let's go over and see the kingdom. It came secretly.

Now it's going to be like lightning. Everybody's going to see it when it happens. But before he comes in this glory.

He first must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the son of man, for they were eating, they were drinking, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built.

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. What is Jesus saying? The kingdom of heaven, when it comes. It'll be as in the days of Noah.

It will be as in the days of Lot. People will be going on with business as usual, eating, drinking, marrying wives, buying, selling, planting, building business as usual. Now, verse 29, I feel is significant.

But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. I do not believe that God's judgment will come upon the earth until the church is taken out. I do not believe that the church is going to face the wrath of God, the great judgment period mentioned in the Bible or the great tribulation period.

But I believe that Lot is a classic sign of God's ability to deliver the righteous while reserving the ungodly for the day of judgment, as Peter tells us in his second epistle. Even thus shall it be in the day that the son of man is revealed in that day, which he shall be, he which shall be upon the housetop and his stuff is in the house. Let him not come down to take it away.

And he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. For remember, Lot's wife, who, of course, in turning back, turned to a pillar of salt. Get out of there.

Escape. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it. Whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed, the one will be taken, the other will be left. Two shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken, the other left. Two shall be in the field, one shall be taken, the other left.

And they answered and said unto him, where, Lord? And he said unto them, wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Now, this last portion is difficult of interpretation, and there are two basic interpretations. There are those who interpret this as the person who is taken is the one who is in trouble because he is taken to the judgment.

One is taken where, Lord? Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. And so they say they are taken to be put into the great battle of Armageddon, where the birds are going to come and feast upon the body of the people. One interpretation.

The other interpretation is that this actually is a reference to the rapture of the church. Taken up to escape the great tribulation period. So you can see that the two interpretations are exactly opposite.

For in the second interpretation, the one who is taken is blessed because he won't have to be in the great tribulation. The problem with the first interpretation is eagles are not a bird of prey that is upon the human bodies. They do prey upon livestock, live animals, but they are not as the vultures who eat the animals.

Human flesh. They do not eat the carcasses of people. So to interpret the ethos, which is eagles as vultures, is wrong.

But yet those who make the first interpretation are always translating ethos as vultures. But that is not a true translation of the Greek ethos, which is eagles. There is another word for the vultures that feed upon the flesh of men at the great battle of Armageddon.

What is being referred to wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together. There are those who see that as the body of Jesus Christ. Wherever the body of Christ is, there will the eagles, his victorious saints, be gathered together.

And so you have two interpretations. You have a choice between the two. They are diametrically opposed.

Both can't be right. And when you get into a place like that. I just find that it's probably best to file it away and say, well, I'll just wait for further information, shall we pray.

Father, we thank you for your word, a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path to guide us. As we walk with thee. And Lord, we pray that we might walk in the light of thy truth, the path illumined by your Holy Spirit.

Thank you, Lord, for your truth that has set us free. Bless now, Lord, and may we grow in grace and in our knowledge of you. And Lord, we would with your disciples pray, increase our faith.

Work in our lives, Lord, in Jesus name, Amen. May the Lord be with you. Bless you.

We praise the Lord for his goodness to us. The opportunity of just growing in our walk and in our fellowship. And may you be enriched this week as the love of Christ works in your life and works through your life.

And let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works, they'll glorify your father, which is in heaven.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6531.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-luke-16-17/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net