

(Luke) 41 - Relationship-Chap16

by Ed Miller

The parable of the unfaithful steward teaches the importance of relationship with God and the danger of loving money.

Duration: 55:02

Scripture: Matthew 18:12-15, Luke 14:1-24, Luke 15:4 - 16:31

Topics: "Relationships"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the parable of the dishonest manager found in Luke 16:1-13. The key themes highlighted are the Pharisees' love for money and their lack of true relationship with God and others. The parable emphasizes the importance of cultivating genuine relationships rather than placing trust in material wealth. The preacher also draws a connection between this parable and the parable of the lost sheep in Matthew 18:12-15, highlighting the importance of seeking and restoring relationships that have been broken.

Transcript

I'll ask you to turn please to Luke chapter 16. In our study of the Gospel of Luke we're quite far along and so a practical review wouldn't really help too much because we've come too far. You notice that we have a little tape recorder here.

Every week we put this on a cassette tape and those tapes are offered free if you'd like them. See Lillian over there, she makes sure that you get this tape or any tape that you'd like. In our study we've come to chapter 16 and we're in the section which we call the Teaching Ministry of the Son of All Mankind.

Luke pretty logically divides his material up. In the first part of Luke Jesus is a doer and is full of action and there's all the miracles. And now we've come to the section where he's a teacher.

And for the sake of analysis we've divided it up into topics. And we're on the final topic now, salvation. Beginning from chapter 14.1 all the way to 17.10. In other words, 108 verses on this one topic.

And it's the topic of salvation, God's wonderful salvation. Two weeks ago I tried to show you how chapter 14 presents this topic in terms of man. In other words, what does his salvation mean to us? Last week we looked at chapter 15.

And chapter 15 turns it around and it's his salvation in terms of God. What does his salvation mean to him? And last week we saw that he's the happy shepherd that recovers the sheep. And he's the glad woman who has recovered the coin.

And he's the happy father who has recovered the prodigal, his wayward son. Now before we look at chapter 16, which I think is the core, the heart, the very pith of the message of salvation. I want to say one more thing about chapter 15.

We're not quite finished and I'd like to make a comment about verses 3 to 7. And how they relate to Matthew 18, 12 to 15. Follow along please as I read verses 3 to 7. So he told them this parable, saying, What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep, has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine in the open pasture, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it. When he has found it, he lays it upon his shoulders, rejoicing.

And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I tell you in the same way, there'll be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Now last week we looked at that, and I tried to point out that God, the reason Jesus brought this up, was to illustrate heaven's joy at the recovery of the lost sheep coming home.

In other words, I don't think there's any question that in this little parable, or part of the parable, the shepherd is the Lord. He's the one that goes after the lost. He's the seeker.

He's the one that puts the lost on his shoulders and comes back rejoicing. Perhaps you've seen a lot of pictures of the shepherd. I've seen so many that I enjoy.

I saw one where the shepherd is on a mountain, sort of leaning over a precipice, and there's a sheep and he's reaching out to get him. Saw another one where he has the sheep on his shoulders, and so on. I think the idea is that the shepherd is the Lord.

Now the reason I bring that up is because Matthew tells the same parable, but he applies it a little bit differently. And I didn't want to leave that without having you see the double application. Now listen to Matthew 18, beginning at verse 12.

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountain and go search for the one who is straying? If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than the ninety-nine which has not gone astray. And so it's not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish. Sounds the same, pretty much the same as Luke.

But there's this difference. In Luke, the shepherd is the Lord. In Matthew, the shepherd is not the Lord.

Now listen to the next verse, Matthew 18, verse 15. First he says, if the sheep goes astray, the shepherd goes to seek him. Then he says, if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private.

If he listens to you, you've won your brother. See in that passage, we are the shepherd. You're the shepherd, I'm the shepherd, we are the shepherd.

And we're to go after the one who has fallen, who has strayed, who has sinned. We should be as desirous to win back a fallen brother or sister as God is desirous to get them back. And we should be as happy when they come back as the Lord is happy when they come back.

In this connection, and then we'll get back to Luke. Let me call attention to one other verse in the context of that shepherd. In Matthew 18, that is sometimes taken out of context.

Sometimes when you take a verse out of context, you do damage. Sometimes it works out of context. This one works out of context, but it's better in context.

Here's the verse, it's Matthew 18, 20. Where two or three are gathered together in my name. Can you finish it? I'll be with them.

There am I in the midst of them. Sometimes that verse is taken all by itself and usually to give encouragement to a small group of believers. You come to church, there's only a handful, and someone says, well, the Bible says where two or three are gathered together, I'll be in the midst.

Or you go to a prayer meeting and only one or two or three are there. And you quote that verse and you say, well, God promised he'd be here. And that's how that verse is used.

And like I say, even out of context, it contains a Bible truth. If there's only a handful, the Lord is in the midst. So it doesn't matter if there's one or two or ten or ten thousand.

But here's the context. Matthew 18, 20 is talking about the Christian shepherd going after the one who has sinned. I don't know if you've ever had to do that.

But I promise you this. It's not an easy thing. It's not an easy thing to have to go to a brother or a sister and confront them with what you think is a violation of some objective principle.

And the reason that's hard, of course, we don't want to judge. And it's hard to judge somebody else and go up to somebody and say, well, now, you know, you've gone astray from the Lord and we love you and we want you back. And it's hard.

And that's why God says go first privately and then take a brother and then take someone else. And then if he still won't listen, take it to the church. It's in that context.

When you go with somebody else on that hard mission to recover, to restore a sinning Christian, he says, now, don't worry, you're not alone. Where two or three are gathered, I'll be in the midst. And so it's precious out of context.

But how precious it is when we as shepherds have to go and recover that one who has sinned. And he's promised that on that mission, we are not on our own. On that mission, the Lord will be with us.

And if you've had that experience, you know he always gives the words to say and the right things to do or when to hug or whatever is necessary. The Lord prompts that. And I have seen the Lord in the midst in a situation like that.

So I just wanted to point that out because he uses the same parable but he applies it differently. In one, God's the good shepherd going after the sheep. In the other, we're the good shepherd going after the sheep.

But I suppose it's the same because when we go after the sheep, isn't that the Lord going after the sheep anyway? And so he's just going through us, his channel. That brings us to Luke chapter 16. If you'll turn there please.

You'll notice that there's two parts to this chapter. The first 18 verses is the parable of the unfaithful steward. And then verses 19 to 31, the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

Probably you're more familiar with that particular story. A couple of weeks ago, I told you truthfully and playfully that we may jump over this chapter because I didn't have a lot of light on the chapter. And I wasn't kidding about that.

One of my commentators called this the most difficult chapter in the Bible. Well, I don't know if it's the most difficult chapter in the Bible. I got a whole pile of chapters I could call the most difficult chapter in the Bible.

But I think as far as the main message of this chapter is concerned, it's simple. I don't doubt that there are knots in this chapter. I can't untie.

I'll tell you that right up front. And quite honestly, I think there are knots in this chapter that probably no one can untie. And maybe God will give light on it someday.

I don't know. But let me set before you what's clear in my own mind as far as the main point. And then we'll move on.

Let me begin by reading the parable that is so difficult to understand. And then I'll just sort of raise some of the problems with it. I don't want to raise more snakes than I can kill.

But we'll just look at some of the problems. And then look at least what the main point is. I think we can see that clearly.

Beginning at verse 1, he was saying to his disciples, there was a rich man who had a manager. And this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. He called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.

And the manager said to himself, What shall I do? Since my master is taking away the management from me, I'm not strong enough to dig. I'm ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do.

So that when I'm removed from the management, people will welcome me into their home. And he summoned each one of his master's debtors. He began saying to the first, How much do you owe my master? He said a hundred measures of oil.

He said to him, Take your bill. Sit down quickly. Write fifty.

Then he said to another, How much do you owe? And he said a hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill. Write eighty.

And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he acted shrewdly. For the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of lies. I say to you, Make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness so that when it fails, they will receive you into their eternal dwelling.

Now before we look at what I think is the heart of that parable, let me point out just a couple of the problems. One of the problems is verse eight. The master praised the unrighteous steward because he acted shrewdly.

Now of course the question is, if this steward was ripping off the master, going to the creditors and saying, How much do you owe? Okay, cut it in half. How much do you owe? Okay, just write eighty percent instead. Why would he be praised? Why did the master say, Good job.

Some think it's really irony or mild sarcasm or even stronger sarcasm that he's saying it with his tongue in his cheek. In other words, he's saying, Oh, good job. Way to go.

Congratulations. Excellent. But he doesn't mean that.

He means the exact opposite of that. You can go up to somebody and say, Congratulations, but you don't mean you did a great job. You really mean the opposite of that.

Congratulations. You ripped me off badly. So either the manager was sincere or he was insincere.

If he was sincere, why did he praise him? If he was insincere, what's the point that Jesus is making? And so that's one of the problems. And that sort of leads to the next problem in verse eight and nine. Jesus is contrasting the sons of this age with the sons of light.

I assume he means Christians by sons of light. And you have to ask, what's that verse all about? I say to you, make friends for yourself by means of the wealth of unrighteousness so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwelling. Is he encouraging the sons of light to be as shrewd as the sons of this age? That wouldn't make a lot of sense.

What are the eternal dwellings? My commentators go all the way from he's talking about heaven to he's talking about hell. Well, it can't be both. What in the world is going on here? Now, I'm not trying to confuse you at all.

I'm trying to set before you why some early students of the word have walked very softly over this path. And I'm one of those. So much of this puzzles me.

And in verse 10 and 11 also have their problems. What is the faithful use of unrighteous wealth? What does he have in mind when he says, the true riches? What is the little thing? If you're faithful in a little thing, how does that tie into the parable? What was the little thing in the parable? And then verse 14. Now the Pharisees who were lovers of money were listening to these things and scoffing at him.

They heard the parable that I just read out loud and that you've read and studied. And they started to scoff. What were they scoffing at? What was it that the Pharisees heard that made them scoff? And who's pictured, who pictures the Pharisees in the parable? Are they the rich master? Are they the unfaithful steward? Are they the people whose bills were cut in half? Who are the Pharisees, if they're even in this parable? Then look at verse 15.

You have to ask the question, what's this all about? All of a sudden he brings up the law and the prophets. And then he says, since John the baptizer, people have been forcing their way. That's the Greek word there.

Actually the Greek word has to do with violence. By violence. They're pressing into the kingdom.

What's that all about? And then he ends the section in verse 18. Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. He who marries one who's divorced from a husband commits adultery.

What has that got to do with anything? And all of a sudden it's just like, you know, a word about, I remember one time hearing a sermon about Adam and Eve in the garden. It says, Adam in the garden, Adam out of the garden, and a word about baptism. And that was his outline.

Why bring that up? Well, this seems like, he gives this great parable and he says now a word about divorce. How does that all tie together? You'd think it'd be easy. There's only three groups.

There's the manager, there's the unfaithful steward, and there's those who got their debts reduced. Just identify them. Who's the master? Who's the unfaithful steward? Who got their bills reduced? But not so easy to identify them.

Most commentators believe the master might be God and he's given us a stewardship and we're accountable. And probably we're the unfaithful steward, they say. I listed just a handful of my commentators One said, the unfaithful steward is clearly the Jews.

Another one said, the unfaithful steward is the tax collector. Another one said, it's Pilate. Another one said, it's Judas.

Another one said, it's Satan. Another one said, it's Pharisee. I couldn't figure this one out.

One of my best commentators said, it's the apocryphal. How in the world could he see that? I don't know. He's certainly seeing something I'm not seeing.

When you come to a thorny passage like this, let me make this suggestion. Always start with that which is 100% clear. And then move toward that which is thorny.

Sometime when you find what's 100% clear, you don't care anymore about what's thorny. Because what's 100% clear satisfies your heart. So there's a lot of things I'm going to leave thorny.

But let me give you what I know to be 100% clear. I was studying this. I spent a lot of time studying this recently.

Actually, I was about to jump over it because I couldn't even find that which was 100% clear when I first started. A dear brother from Delaware, the Lord gave him insight as we studied together. So I'm actually sharing a little bit of his insight with you.

Before we touch on that main point, let me give you four things that I think act as keys to give you the heart of God in this parable. There are four simple keys. The first is verse 14.

Verse 14, Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to these things. So however you would surface the parable, it has to do, at least with that, somehow those who were listening were in love with money. That becomes sort of a key.

Another key is in verse 15. Our Lord Jesus said after it was over to the Pharisees, You justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your heart. Now that becomes key.

They were external. They were doing something on the outside, but God sees the heart. The third key is in verse 13.

After it was all over, our Lord Jesus contrasted their love with money with love with God. And here's what he said. He said, No man can serve two masses.

Either he'll love the one and hate the other, or he'll cling to the one and despise the other. You can't serve God and man. God and mammoth.

And so that becomes a key. Even though these people were religious leaders, they didn't have a clue about relationship with God. And they were just in love with money.

And I think the biggest clue of all, and I'll leave this to be explained, I'll just read it, is verse 9. 16.9. I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they may receive you into their eternal dwelling. I don't think it's tongue in cheek. I don't think it's irony.

I think it's real. And I'll explain that as we go along. Let me retell the story in my own words with those four keys in mind.

This idea that the Pharisees were lovers of money and they were just living externally and God sees the heart and so on. Let me try to tell the story. I think in one word, the summary of the parable can be summarized by the word relationship.

Relationship. You see, they, the religious leaders, the Pharisees, had taught and pushed religion. But they didn't have a clue about relationship with God.

Not relationship with God, not relationship with people, and not relationship with their wives. The parable begins or ends by reminding us that those who were listening were lovers of money. King James Version uses the word mammon.

I like the word mammon because it brings in the idea of worship. Mammon comes from two words. One means that which is deposited and the other one means trust.

They were trusting that which is deposited. Don't do that. I'm not to do that.

And that's what mammon was. It was just they were in love with their money and they served money. And because of that, Jesus said in verse 13 that it was their master.

You can't serve God and mammon. You can't have both. Now in the parable in 16.1, the unfaithful steward started out that way.

He was squandering his master's money. He was taking it all in and wasting it and living unto himself. And it seems as if he was a lover of money the same way.

But you know the story. When he was found out in verse 2 about to lose his job, he didn't know what to do. He said, I don't want to beg and I don't want to work.

I don't think I can do any hard labor. And so his plan went something like this. I'm putting it in my own words to get the point across.

He's saying, you know, when I gathered money, I thought that was the end of life, just gathering all this money and embezzling and squandering all this money. But I'm in a place now in my life where I don't need money. I need friends.

And I don't have friends. And I better do something to get myself a friend or two because I've brought myself to this situation where I'm not going to have any more money to squander and I don't have any friends. And somebody's going to have to befriend me to help me to take me in.

And so he decided to use the money to buy friends. And that's what he did. In verse 6, he said to this first man, how much do you owe? He said a hundred measures of oil.

If the commentators are telling the truth, that was about a two or three year debt that he cut in half. That was a big debt to be cut in half. And the wheat was even more.

That was like a seven year debt that he cut down 20%. And he was using the money to make friends. Now, of course, in the parable, he's still self-centered.

He's still doing it only for himself and he likes his idea and he's going to make friends. But he stumbled on a great truth. And I think the Lord told the parable to capture that truth.

And the truth is simply this. Relationships are more important and more valuable than money. A lot more valuable.

I believe that's why the Master praised him in verse 8. Because he saw you can't have relationships with a purse. You just can't do it. You can't have relationships with money.

In verse 14, the Bible says that the Pharisees who were lovers of money scoffed when they heard Jesus say this. And I think what they were scoffing at was the manager's response. He was praising the unfaithful servant.

Praising him because he was giving the money away in order to have friends. And I think that's what they were laughing at. See, the Pharisees couldn't take that in.

They said, that is dumb. Jesus, who is he telling that story for? Nobody who has money is going to praise somebody for giving it away. Or for stealing it or embezzling it.

See, that was the Pharisees' big problem. They were claiming to be religious leaders but they didn't have relationships with God. They didn't have relationships with people.

They were just giving them rules. Do this and do that and do the other thing. And I think that's why he brought in divorce.

Because they didn't have relationships with their wives either. And it was easy for them to just say, well, divorce. It just didn't end it.

Because they had no clue about relationships. They were clinging to the vanity and the vexation of this world symbolized by money. And they thought money was everything.

I think... Giving these poor people rules. Do this. Do that.

Don't go here. Don't go there. Restriction.

Regulation. When John the baptizer came along, he started preaching relationship. Behold the Lamb of God.

And now people are storming into the kingdom because they are resisting rules and religion. And they're responding to relationship. And I think that's what Jesus was trying to get at.

I told you that verse 9 I think was the key of keys. I say to you, make friends for yourself by means of the wealth of unrighteousness. So when it fails, I'll underscore that please.

When it fails. Not if. When it fails.

And what he was saying is it's going to fail. It's going to fail. All of this stuff.

You love money. You love things. You love material.

You don't care about people. You don't care about your wives. You don't care about your husband.

You don't care about the Lord. There's no relationship. It's all rules and regulation.

And he said, what's going to happen when it fails? You better have a friend. I think that was his big point of this whole paragraph. It will fail.

I love that idea that when it fails. Yesterday morning, I had the privilege to go in the hospital and visit with a man. And I took him to Psalm 73, verse 26.

When my flesh and my heart fail, it will certainly fail. Not if. When my heart and flesh fail, the Lord is the strength of my heart.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? On the earth I desire nothing but thee. The nearness of God is my good. I shared that with him yesterday morning.

6.30 last night, he went to be in the presence. When it fails, and it will fail. Heart and strength are going to fail.

And this is also going to fail. Now, the message is not use your money to buy friends. That misses the point completely.

That's the illustration beyond the question. But that's not the point. The point that Jesus is making is this.

You can't have relationship with things, and if you're going to have to choose between a friend and things, you better choose a friend. And this guy stumbled on that, and Jesus just called attention to that. Nothing is more valuable than a friend.

And I think you walk with the Lord long enough, and you're old enough, and have experience enough to know the value of friendship. In this connection, I love Proverbs 18.24. There is a friend, can you finish it? That sticks, that sticks closer than a brother. You know, I love to put Christ everywhere, and I'll put some, people sometimes think I'm putting Christ where he's not.

Well, I'd rather see him where he's not than miss him where he is. And so I like to put him a lot of times in the Bible. But, in this verse, 18.24, there's a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

And most people read that and say, wow, that's the Lord. The Lord is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. And I don't want to take that from you.

He is. He's a friend that sticks closer than a brother. But that's not what Proverbs is talking about.

Proverbs is talking about human friends. Supernatural friends. I don't know if God has given you a friend that sticks closer than a brother.

But if he has, bless God for that friend. I don't think you're going to make a lot of friends in your life. Actually, real friends are only going to be a handful.

You're just going to have a few. Treasure those real friends. I don't know if you are a friend, that sticks closer than a brother.

If you're not, ask God to make you that kind of a friend to somebody else. But I think the point that he's making here is this. If you have a supernatural friend, it is worth the world.

There's nothing that can be compared to that. He takes this idea of relationships first on the level of a friend and then he takes it to marriage and the level of a man and a wife and then of course he lifts it up to the Lord. These were the religious leaders and they didn't love God.

Isn't that amazing? A religious leader! And he says, you're just in love with things. And then he takes them from temporal things into eternity. The true riches are the spiritual riches.

And that's what he means in verse 9. They'll receive you into their eternal riches, into their eternal dwelling. This man said, I've learned by giving it away they will take me in. He said, now there's a spiritual side to that.

I wish the sons of light, he said, could learn this, that these things mean nothing. Learn to be generous. I think that's his point.

And make friends. And you'll be blessed for all eternity, not only for time. And they'll welcome you into their everlasting dwelling.

God sees the heart and salvation has to do with relationship. Relationship has to do with people, with husbands and wives and friends and of course the Lord himself. Now, following this, it's not an accident, if you'll glance down, it's not an accident that he followed up this parable with the story of Lazarus and the rich man.

Because what he's doing, it's the same point with a different conclusion. They were laughing. They were mocking.

They were saying, this is not going to come to an end. When it ends, it's not going to come to an end. We have money.

We love money. We're going to get money. Money is everything.

And so he said, let me tell you a story. Even if it doesn't come to an end here, it's going to come to an end. And he told the story of the rich man and Lazarus the story of the poor rich man and the rich poor man.

You follow what he was saying? The rich man who was dressed in purple was the poor man because he was rich in this world and poor toward God. The beggar was the poor rich man. He was poor here, but he was rich toward God.

Follow along please. Let me just read this. Verse 19.

There was a rich man. He habitually dressed in purple, fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate covered with sores, longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table.

Besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sore. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abram's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

In Hades, he lifted up his eyes being in torment. He saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. He cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.

Send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water. Cool my tongue. I'm in agony in this flame.

Abraham said, Child, remember during your life you received your good things. Likewise, Lazarus, bad things. Now he's being comforted here and you're in agony.

Beside all this, between us and you, there's a great chasm fixed so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able. None of us may cross over from there to us. And he said, I beg you, Father, send him to my father's house.

I have five brothers in order that he may warn them so that they will not come to this place of torment. Abraham said, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

He said, No, Father Abraham. If someone goes to them from the dead, then they will repent. He said to them, If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they'll not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

Now some say this is another parable. Some say it's not a parable because if it's a parable, it would be the only time in a parable he named names and places. And so usually a parable is true to lie.

But this might be true lie. He might have just pulled back the veil and said, This really happened and this is how it is. Of course, there's a lot of questions here too that I can't answer and I won't pretend to answer.

Most of the commentary just get into all this Hades and Sheol and Gehenna and Paradise and Abraham's bosom and all of that kind of thing, which completely in my mind misses the point. I think what he's saying is this. Time is the time to make relationships.

It will come. And when it comes, it's too late. And dying time is fixing time.

There's a great chasm fixed. And I think that's his point there. Now he's into relationships.

You notice this man, this rich man, now he's into relationships. Father Abraham. Now he wants a relationship.

Send brother Lazarus. I have five brothers. He wants all this relationship.

It's too late now. Dying time was fixing time. And relationships are made in time.

This contrast is sort of taking these Pharisees to the end result. Verse 19, the man dressed in purple, fine linen, living joyously every day. He was poverty stricken because he didn't have relationships with God.

Let me just say in passing, I'm thankful for verse 24. This is really off the wall. When I read this, you know the angels, when he died, the angels carried him to Abram's bosom.

Those of you who know me, Lillian can vouch for it, my daughter Kathy there. I get lost in my driveway. I just can't.

I was born without a compass. She was born without a thermostat. And when I read this, it really did bless me that when I die, there's a convoy of angels to show me the way.

That just blessed me. After I die, at least it's pictured here. It used to bother me that this parable or this story looked like it taught.

It doesn't teach this, but it looks like it teaches that if you're rich on the earth, you're not going to make it to heaven. And if you're poor on the earth, you're going to make it to heaven. I can see that someone can read verse 25.

Abraham said, Child, remember during your life you received good things, Lazarus bad things. Now he's comforted here and you are in agony. We know that's not the case.

There are many millionaires that are going to heaven. The Bible says not many. Why? It doesn't say not any.

It says not many rich. It doesn't say not any. Abraham was a millionaire.

Solomon was a millionaire and so on. The point is that if that was what this parable or this story was teaching, the man who didn't make it to heaven would have said this. Send someone back to my brothers and tell them to feed the guy outside the door.

Tell them to be generous. Tell them to give their money away. But he didn't say that.

You know what he said? Send somebody back and tell them to repent. He knew. He knew the issue.

Tell them to repent and repentance means to turn from their sins. In verse 30, this guy thought it would help if someone came back from the dead. Did you notice how our Lord Jesus said they have Moses and the prophet? I don't know if he did this on purpose.

You know, this guy's name was Lazarus. About a month later, he raised somebody named Lazarus. If someone comes back from the dead, they'll believe.

Did you remember John chapter 12, what they tried to do when Lazarus was raised? They tried to kill him. The Pharisees sought a way to kill him rather than to believe. What do you think it means when it says they have Moses and the prophet? Right there.

They have the Bible. If they don't believe the Bible... See, the Bible says that this world's going to pass away. That mammon is not the way to go.

It's relationship with God. It's relationship with one another. It's friends.

That's what it's all about. It's one another and it's the Lord. It's knowing.

It's not a bunch of rules. It's relationship. And when your heart hears that you can have a relationship with God, don't you want to storm the kingdom? That's what happened there.

And the Pharisees were so jealous because Jesus was getting a following and all these sinners were coming. And they were mad. They said, we don't understand it.

We told them 17 things not to do on the Sabbath day. Why don't they listen to us? And he would say, it's relationship. And that causes you to storm the kingdom.

And here is the sign. Now, is there another sign besides this? And the answer is yes. One more.

Matthew chapter 12. It says, A wicked generation seeks a sign. No sign will be given except the sign of Jonah.

And you know what the sign of Jonah is? The sign of Jonah. You remember what happened to Jonah? A guy ran from the Lord and he went down to the bottom of the sea and he had weeds wrapped around his head and he was resisting. And God had mercy.

And he quoted Psalm 2, or rather Psalm 3, and he said, Salvation's from the Lord. And God had mercy. And God had mercy and brought him back.

And now he's alive. He was dead. A rebellious person that by the mercy of God would... That's the sign.

And when God takes a person like me and raises me up, that's the only sign they're going to have. That God had mercy on you. That's the sign.

They've got the Bible and they've seen what God has done in your life. They've seen what God has done in my life. And God said, they'll have no other sign.

They would not believe if there was another sign. And that sounds logical. If someone comes back, surely they're going to believe.

It sounds logical if there's something... It won't. They have the Bible. And they have you.

You're Jonah. I'm Jonah. God brought us up from the bottom of the sea when we were rebellious.

When we turned on Him. He brought us back and the whales spit us out and vomited us on the shore. We're standing alive.

Why? God had mercy. That's the sign. There's one more thing He's going to do.

And we'll pick that up next time. 17, 1-10. And we'll look at that next time.

That is now... That'll be the foundation of salvation. Chapter 14, what does salvation mean to men? Chapter 15, what does salvation mean to God? Chapter 16, what is the heart of real salvation? And the answer is relationship. Not rules.

Relationship. And then now we're going to look the next time at the foundation of it all. And just to give you an answer in advance, the pure, unadulterated grace of God.

That's 17, 1-10. Comments or questions? Hi, Ben. Hi, John.

Wow. Ben said something. Sorry.

This is... with Lazarus. Oh, no. Before that, whereas God's saying, use your money not to focus on... or with a company, but evidently, so... I don't think... Closing prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you. Meditate on these things. We thank you, Lord, for light that you give us in your word.

Thank you for ministering to Michelle as she meditated on these things. Now, Lord, we commit our day and our week unto you. See you and enjoy.

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