

Expository Thoughts On Luke - Luke 16:1-12

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Transcript

THE PARABLE OF THE SHREWD MANAGER

The passage we have now read is a difficult one. There are knots in it which perhaps will never be untied, until the Lord comes again. We might reasonably expect that a book written by inspiration, as the Bible is, would contain things hard to be understood. The fault lies not in the book, but in our own feeble understandings. If we learn nothing else from the passage before us, let us learn humility.

Let us beware, in the first place, that we do not draw from these verses lessons which they were never meant to teach.

The steward, whom our Lord describes, is not set before us as a pattern of morality. He is distinctly called the "unjust steward." The Lord Jesus never meant to sanction dishonesty, and unfair dealing between man and man. This steward cheated his master, and broke the eighth commandment. His master was struck with his cunning and forethought, when he heard of it, and "commended" him, as a shrewd and far-seeing man. But there is no proof that his master was pleased with his conduct. Above all, there is not a word to show that the man was praised by Christ. In short, in his treatment of his master, the steward is a beacon to be avoided, and not a pattern to be followed.

The caution, now laid down, is very necessary. Commercial dishonesty is unhappily very common in these latter days. Fair dealing between man and man is increasingly rare. Men do things in the way of business, which will not stand the test of the Bible. In "making haste to be rich," thousands are continually committing actions which are not strictly innocent. (Prov. 28:20.)

Sharpness and smartness, in bargaining, and buying, and selling, and pushing trade, are often covering over things that ought not to be. The generation of "the unjust steward" is still a very large one. Let us not forget this. Whenever we do to others what we would not like others to do to us, we may be sure, whatever the world may say, that we are wrong in the sight of Christ.

Let us observe, in the second place, that one principal lesson of the parable before us, is the wisdom of providing against coming evil.

The conduct of the unjust steward, when he received notice to give up his place, was undeniably skillful. Dishonest as he was in striking off from the bills of debtors anything that was due to his master, he certainly by so doing made for himself friends. Wicked as he was, he had an eye to the future. Disgraceful as his measures were, he provided well for himself. He did not sit still in idleness, and see himself reduced

to poverty without a struggle. He schemed, and planned, and contrived, and boldly carried his plans into execution. And the result was that when he lost one home he secured another.

What a striking contrast between the steward\

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