

The Shrewd Steward

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of being shrewd stewards of God's gifts while preparing for His coming through active belief and faithfulness.

Duration: 15:25

Scripture: Luke 16:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Spiritual Preparedness", "Stewardship"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of being spiritually awake and prepared for the Lord's coming, urging believers to recognize the riches available through Christ. He draws from the parable of the shrewd steward in Luke 16, illustrating how the steward acted wisely in preparing for his future despite his unjust actions. Beach encourages the congregation to believe in God's promises and to be faithful stewards of what has been entrusted to them, highlighting that true riches come from faithfulness in small things. The sermon calls for a deeper understanding of God's grace and the need to act shrewdly in our spiritual lives, making friends through our resources in preparation for eternity.

Transcript

It is my belief this morning that the Holy Spirit is doing a couple things in our midst. Not all inclusively, you're not going to understand, just generalizing here. Only God knows what He's doing in our hearts.

But first of all, I believe the Holy Spirit is stirring us that we might awake and recognize what it is that the Lord wants us to have and possess as Christians. Secondly, I believe the Holy Spirit is awaking us that we might understand that it is His desire for us to prepare ourselves for His coming. To prepare ourselves for His coming.

And as we can begin to see what the Lord is doing in our midst, week after week, month after month, I sense, and I believe you sense too, that God has been stirring us over and over again and I sense that we're awaking out of sleep. And we are becoming enlightened as to what God is asking us to believe Him for. The riches of His grace, the riches of His person in our spirit and in our hearts this morning.

What is available to us through Christ. Over and over again, I believe Jesus is reaffirming what He told Mary and Martha. Only believe.

Only believe. And I believe the Lord is helping us to believe. And as our belief and as our faith grows in the knowledge of God and the knowledge of God's word, we're going to become eyewitnesses of His glory, of His power, of His majesty, of His ability, of His glory.

When the Lord can find a people that say, I believe and really believe in their heart, the Lord Jesus can then move in the midst. And we can see beautiful things. This will be Christ building up Zion, which represents you and I. We're living stones in Zion.

Now in Luke chapter 16, we're going to read a story. Before we read the story, I want to point out a few things to you. This entire discourse begins in Luke chapter 15, beginning with verses 1 and 2. In order to properly understand why Jesus spoke this parable, we have to understand those who were there and what they were thinking.

So let's go back to Luke chapter 15, verses 1 and 2. Now all the tax gatherers and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble among themselves, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. So the setting is this.

You've got a bunch of Pharisees, you've got a bunch of Pharisees and Sadducees who are there watching Jesus. Pharisees and scribes, and they're watching Jesus talk to and make friends with sinners. Gentiles, people who aren't religious.

And they were grumbling. They were saying, why does Jesus sit among sinners? So this is the setting in which Jesus is responding. Now you'll notice that Jesus tells a few parables before we get to Luke chapter 16.

The first parable, He talks about the lost sheep. The next parable, He talks about a woman who had ten silver coin and loses one coin. And then the third parable is about the prodigal son.

So what Jesus is doing, He's telling stories, illustrating, showing these Pharisees why He's sitting with the sinners. Each one of these stories has something in common. And here's what's in common with each one of these parables.

Somebody finds something that was lost. The prodigal son, somebody who was lost, comes home. So the setting here is religious people not understanding why Jesus would be so attracted to what they thought or who they thought would be lost, undone people.

This brings us to Luke chapter 16. Now He was also saying to the disciples, there was a certain rich man who had a steward. And this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

And he called him and said to him, What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward. And the steward said to himself, What shall I do since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I'm not strong enough to dig. I'm ashamed to beg.

I know what I shall do, the steward says, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes. And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, How much do you owe my master? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.

Then he said to another, And how much do you owe? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He said to him, Take your bill and write eighty. Notice verse number eight, as this perhaps is the key in understanding this entire story.

And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly. For the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much. And he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been found faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon or unrighteous riches, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been found faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? Then Jesus closes this story by saying, No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon or money. Now, going back to verse number 8, And his master praised the unrighteous steward, because he acted shrewdly. Now let's point out a few facts before we derive our lesson this morning.

This is a very simple lesson. It's not in-depth, but it's thought-provoking, and it ought to truly stir you and make you conscious, as Patrick said, make you conscious of the life to come. First of all, we have a man who was working for a rich man.

And this steward was placed over the rich man's money. And it came about that this steward was accused of squandering his employer's money. So the rich man, the employer comes and says, Listen, I want you to give me an account of your stewardship.

I want you to show me what you have been doing with that which I have made you oversee around. So we have a man who has been unjust, a man who has mismanaged another's goods. Now this is not what his master praised him for.

Let's face it. You're not going to be praised for being unjust, are you? You're not going to be praised for doing what is not right. So when we read in verse number 8, and his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly, he's not talking about his actions of being unjust in his dealings with his master's money.

That's not what he's talking about. But what this steward does from verse number 3 to 7 is what his master praises him for. Now let's see what he did and why his master praised him and why Jesus said that this action was something that the sons of light or the children of God are not doing.

And the steward said to himself, what shall I do? The steward began to think of his future. That's the first thing he did. He thought of his future.

What shall I do? My master is taking the stewardship away from me. I am not strong enough to dig. I am not ashamed to beg.

I know what I shall do so that when I am removed from the stewardship they will receive me into their homes. Listen. This unjust steward was shrewd because he thought of his future and he thought of a way

to make a provision for himself so that when he was out of a job he would be able to go somewhere and have a place to live.

Now remember, his boss did not praise him because he had squandered his goods. But his boss praised him because he was shrewd in that he thought of the future. Now look what this steward did.

He said, I know what I'll do so that when I am removed from the stewardship they will receive me into their homes. And he summoned each one of his master's debtors. And he began saying to the first, How much do you owe my master? Can you imagine this guy sitting in his office knowing that his master is going to come and make him give an account and throw him out of the job.

He calls up all of his master's debtors, those who owe his master money. And he says to the first one, How much do you owe my master? He says, A hundred measures of oil. And he said to him, Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty.

In other words, Listen, I know you owe my master a hundred, but I'll tell you what, I'm going to do you a favor. I'm going to be nice to you. See, remember why this guy's doing this.

He's doing this because he knows any minute now his master's going to come in and kick him out. And he doesn't want to dig and he doesn't want to beg. See, he's making provision for his future.

Here he is an unjust steward. And he's still thinking about his future. He's making provision for his future so that when he doesn't have a job, he'll have a place to go.

He's shrewd. So he gets the first debtor and says, I'll tell you what, chop it in half. I can imagine the guy on the phone, you know, of course they didn't have telephones, but we'll make it contemporary.

Hey, I really appreciate this. Oh, don't worry about it. Hey, we're friends, aren't we?

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