**A Faithful Heart**

*Luke 16*

**Introduction**

1. In response to the disdain of the Pharisees regarding His interaction with “lesser” people, Jesus told 3 parables expressing the Father’s care for all His children (even the lost), and His corresponding efforts to save them all – **Luke 15** – Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son.
2. Immediately after, Jesus directed a parable to His disciples about spiritual prudence, and faithfulness of service to God – **Luke 16:1-13** – which included people who would have to evaluate life differently and change accordingly (**Luke 15:1** – tax collectors, sinners).
   1. **Luke 15** – God’s efforts to save.
   2. **Luke 16** – Man’s efforts to be saved.
3. The Pharisees could hear the parable (Jesus knowing such no doubt – meant for them to hear) and scoffed.
   1. These fancied themselves faithful servants of Jehovah – despised others (**Luke 15:2**).
   2. However, they did not have faithful hearts, and God and Jesus knew – **Luke 16:15** – though they fooled men.
4. Jesus’ parable (Unjust steward – **vv. 1-13**), His response to the Pharisees derision (**vv. 14-18**), and His illustration of the rich man and Lazarus (**vv. 19-31**) expose the hypocrisy of the Pharisees’ unfaithful heart.
5. The inverse – what is a faithful heart – is revealed as well, and we would do well to heed it.
6. The Parable of the Unjust Steward – Encouraging Spiritual Prudence
7. The Parable **(vv. 1-8a)**
   1. NOTE: Focus is on the shrewdness of the steward, not the (un)righteousness of his actions **(v. 8b)** – “There is a world of difference between ‘I applaud the dishonest steward because he acted cleverly’ and ‘I applaud the clever steward because he acted dishonestly’.” (Tyndale Commentaries)
   2. NOTE: Spoken to disciples **(v. 1),** though the Pharisees were listening and would scoff, and Jesus would turn response to them **(v. 14).**
   3. **(vv. 1-2)** – A steward accused of mishandling master’s goods and is to lose his stewardship.
      1. **Steward** – *oikonomos* – *oikos*, “a house,” *nomos*, “a law” (VINE); manager of a household or estate (BDAG) ***(“manager,” NIV)***
      2. To manage rich man’s business affairs and ensure profitability of his assets.
   4. **(vv. 3-4)** – thinking of what to do, decides on something that twill ensure his master’s debtors to receive him after he is put out – thinking of his future.
   5. **(vv. 5-7)** – His plan in action.
      1. **100 measures (*batos*, baths) of oil** – “8 or 9 gallons each” (NKJV, fn) = 800 gallons (yield of 146 olive trees)
         1. Reduced by 50% – 400 gallons.
      2. **100 measures (*koros*, a cor) of wheat** – “10 to 12 bushels” (NKJV, fn) = 1,000 bushels (yield of about 100 acres)
         1. Reduced by 20% – 800 bushels (ab. 80 acres)
      3. ***“unjust steward” (v. 8)*** – he had no authority to do this, and the master would take the loss.
      4. ***“‘Take your bill, and write…’”*** – leverage – could blackmail the debtor if he didn’t act as the steward desired – in his own writing.
   6. **(v. 8a)** – the master’s assessment of the action – **not commendation of his unjust actions which caused the master loss, but of his prudence in dealing with his own future** **(vv. 3-4).**
8. The Application **(vv. 8b-13)**
   1. **(v. 8b)** – careful planning for worldly future vs spiritual future (which the ***“sons of light”*** are cognizant of – **light of truth; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6**).
   2. **(v. 9)** – use your physical wealth to lay up spiritual treasure.
      1. **Unrighteous mammon** – like ***“sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3)*** – not inherently, but often used in unrighteousness ways.
      2. **Cf. 1 Timothy 6:18-19** – storing up for time to come.
      3. **Cf. Matthew 25:34-36, 40** – make friends – doing good to others, figuratively welcome you.
      4. ***“when it fails” (ESV, NASB)*** – i.e. the riches.
   3. **(vv. 10-12)** – unfaithfulness in use of earthly wealth manifests what will be with spiritual things, and so the latter will not be entrusted to you.
      1. **Least = unrighteous mammon = another man’s**
         1. Least – transitory
         2. Unrighteous mammon – physical
         3. Another man’s – belongs to God, cannot take it with you.
      2. **Much = true riches = your own**
         1. Much – eternal
         2. True riches – spiritual, thus, true substance
         3. Your own – entrusted, but it becomes a part of you, and is yours forever.
            1. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 4:1; 2 Corinthians 3:18** – stewards of gospel but transformed by it.
            2. **Cf. 2 Peter 1:3-4** – things given to lead to participation in divine nature.
            3. **Consummation** – ***“everlasting home” (v. 9)***
   4. **(v. 13)** – faithfulness to God requires all else, including unrighteous mammon, to be servants of ours in use of our service to Him.
      1. About more than money.
      2. **Concerns the relation of everything in an individual’s mind to their ultimate purpose – in service of self, and prep for physical future; in service of God, and prep for spiritual future.**
   5. **Live and act with the sober-mindedness and corresponding shrewdness of one who has knowingly been entrusted with the gift of life itself to use it in such a way to serve and glorify the Giver of it, and thus be judged accordingly in the end – receiving what is truly yours to enjoy for eternity.**
9. The Pharisees’ Heart of Unbelief – Lacking Spiritual Prudence
10. God Knows Their Heart **(vv. 14-15)**
    1. ***“lovers of money”*** – not just guilty of not ***“make[ing] friends” (v. 9)*** by their mammon, but by **exploiting the ones they should help**, and acting as though righteous in the process – **cf. Matthew 23:14**
    2. **Justify yourselves** – **cf. Mark 7:9-13**
    3. **(v. 15b)** – their outward appearance which received praise from men is disgusting to God, as their hearts are corrupt – **cf. Matthew 23:27-28**
    4. Their circumcision is not of the heart – **cf. Romans 2:28-29**
11. Fruit of Their Unbelief **(vv. 16-18)**
    1. **Their avarice and following mistreatment of others was a manifestation of a more fundamental problem – unbelief.**
    2. **What shows their heart of unbelief even further than the poor stewardship of their “unrighteous mammon” was their poor stewardship of the law, ultimately, a failure to live it, teach it, protect it, and believe it.**
       1. **Cf. Matthew 23:2-3** – they say and do not do.
       2. They did not truly believe – hypocrites.
    3. Rejection of the Gospel of the Kingdom **(vv. 16-17)**
       1. **(v. 16)** – The law and prophets pointed to the Messianic kingdom of God – John was the Elijah to precede it (**cf. Malachi 4:5; Matthew 11:13-14**).
          1. ***“everyone is pressing into it”*** – they, with honest hearts, are eagerly seeking entrance.
          2. **Pharisees** – do not believe the law, nor John – **John 5:33, 37-40**
          3. Not only that, but they are seeking to keep others from accepting the truth – **cf. Matthew 23:13**
       2. **(v. 17)** – the law/prophets will see its fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah’s kingdom – MANIFESTS THEIR LACKING PRUDENCE **(v. 8** – they are only living for this world – **cf. John 11:48** – in vain).
          1. Jesus will fulfill – **Matthew 5:17-18; Galatians 3:24-25**
          2. They may resist, but in vain – **Psalm 2:1-6; Acts 4:24-28**
    4. Rejection of God’s Law on Marriage **(v. 18)**
       1. **A microcosm of their unfaithfulness as stewards of the law, thus, their imprudence concerning their own spiritual destiny.**
       2. Despite God’s intention from the beginning – **cf. Matthew 19:4-6** – contained in the law they were entrusted with.
       3. They seek to suspend the law by their traditions – **cf. Matthew 19:3, 7**
          1. **(v. 8)** – Moses (God through him) permitted the ungodly act to go on but did not authorize it.
          2. **Cf. Deuteronomy 24:1-4** – does not command divorce, nor authorize, **but gives regulation concerning an act already being practiced** – to curb the sinful practice. **(cf. Malachi 2:16)**
             1. “hypothetical syllogism” – IF THIS HAPPENS (not that it is approved of God) THEN THIS IS THE CONSEQUENCE.
    5. **They did not live to please God and lay up spiritual treasure.**
       1. **They lived for the present worldly life, and they took what was spiritual (law) and abused it for their own temporal gain.**
       2. **They did not handle God’s word with care, faithfulness, and consistent application, but merely picked and chose what they wanted to keep, and utterly disregarded/disdained the rest.**
12. The Rich Man and Lazarus – Warning Against Unbelief
13. An Illustration of Unbelief and Imprudence **(vv. 19-31)**
    1. **(vv. 19-23)** – two characters of contrast.
       1. **Rich man** – well off, destination showing he lived for the world.
       2. **Lazarus** – afflicted and poor, destination showing he lived for God, and to receive an ***“everlasting home” (v. 9)***
          1. **Abraham’s bosom** – **cf. John 8:39** – identifying him as a man of faith, as was Abraham.
    2. **(vv. 24-26)** – the utter regret, and finality of destination.
    3. **(vv. 27-31)** – the self-exposure of his problem – the root that continues beyond death – and Abraham’s insistence on the word of God.
       1. **(vv. 27-28, 30)** – knowledge of his brother’s guilt, and conviction that a wonder/miracle (resurrection from the dead) is what they need to convince them to change.
       2. **(vv. 29-31)** – Abraham’s insistence that they have what they need, and the only thing that will bring them to faithfulness.
          1. Their problem is not proof, evidence, etc.
          2. **Their problem is unbelief**. **(cf. Hebrews 3:12-13** – deceitfulness of sin). (**cf. Matthew 16:4)**
          3. They had spiritual light **(v. 8)** but were only concerned with the physical.
14. The Application
    1. To live your life with total disregard for the word of God is to exist with eternal regret in an irreversible condition.
    2. **The hope for your *“everlasting home”* is your faithfulness in stewardship, and especially that of your handling of God’s word.**
       1. **(v. 9)** – according to God’s word, to use wealth in service of others – **(v. 10)** – manifests good stewardship.
       2. **(v. 25)** – Abraham makes it a point to say the rich man had his good things – **(v. 19** – abundance)
       3. **Was he a good steward?** – **(vv. 20-21)** – the whole context seems to indicate he had the means and opportunity, but Lazarus was left lacking.
       4. **Should the rich man have known/have been convinced?** – **(vv. 29, 31)** – he had Moses and the prophets.
          1. **Leviticus 19:18** – Love neighbor as self.
          2. **Micah 6:6-8** – do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God.
          3. **Isaiah 58:6-7** – fast God desires: don’t hide yourself from your own flesh (brethren).
    3. **Pharisees – loved money (had money), knew God’s law (didn’t believe it), were poor stewards, did not live for eternity but for the present.**
15. Applications
16. A faithful heart judges all things by the word of God, and acts accordingly – **(vv. 9-10); 1 Corinthians 2:15**
17. A faithful heart places God above all else, and serves Him only – **(v. 13)**
18. A faithful heart does not oppose or abuse God’s word in self-service, but investigates it in honesty, and submits in sincere faith – **(vv. 14-18)**
19. A faithful heart, with the focus on eternity and God’s will, considers each situation in the light of truth, and bears fruit in its season – **(vv. 19, 21, 29, 31)**
20. **AND GOD KNOWS YOUR HEART (V. 15)**

**Conclusion**

1. We need to possess a heart of faithfulness.
2. We are merely stewards entrusted with the things of God and directed as to proper action by His word.
3. We must have our hearts set on eternity, accept God’s requirements with joy, and live our lives as faithful stewards of His.
4. If we do so, eternal rest and reward awaits us after this life is over.