

Chapter 16 of Luke

Topic: The Right Use of Wealth

Structure of Chapter 16

- 1) 16:1-13 Jesus teaches about **sharing** wealth
- 2) 16:14-18 Jesus shows the response of those who **Refuse** to share
- 3) 16:19-31 Jesus shows the consequences for those who **Refuse** to share

- **Note** that Jesus begins and ends this chapter **with a parable**.
- **Note** that parables are necessary when people find it difficult to accept a revelation from Jesus about God's Will for their behaviour.

First Parable: Luke 16:1-8 – **WRONG** use of Money

In Ch 15 we had a **Son** who wasted his father's money; **now we have a STEWARD who wastes his** Master's money – **sins at home and at work**.

Ⓝ **This** parable is for Jesus' **disciples**, whereas **The Prodigal Son was for Jesus' opponents** – the Scribes and Pharisees.

- **The Steward** = Household Manager: often a slave who managed the property for his master (as Joseph did for Potiphar in Gen 39: 1-6).

16:1 **The Manager** had control over the **finances** of the estate. Like the younger son in the Parable of the Prodigal Son – his personal crisis came as a **result** of **mismanagement** of money and possessions.

→ how modern can we get! Since the financial crash of 2008 came
From the same source **AND** by Managers! From the Bank Managers to Property Managers!
They all squandered money and possessions **THEY DID NOT OWN!**

16:2 The owner demands a **proper Audit** of accounts from the Manager to try and find out what happened...
→ He demanded the Manager **RESIGN** (in our language)
→ He was dismissed from office

16:3 **Now we see the manager manage his future!** "What shall I do (now that I'm out of a job)?
→ the crisis forces a decision about the future.

16:4 He decides **to be good to others** in the hope that they will be good to him in his future needs.
Cf. **Lk 6:32-35** and **14:12-14**

16:5 **But** the steward **uses his master's goods** to gain friends – by reducing their bills
(Church leaders can abuse the Lord's Authority and goods – just for earthly gain)

16:6-7 Everything is done **quickly**, .'. without the Master's knowledge.
→ it is underhand work – but God **sees** everything...

16:8 Jesus approves of the way the manager got himself out of a sticky place → **not his morality!**
No one could approve of that!
→ the man 'did something' in a crisis: he was **not passive**...

- **'the children of light'**: these are the **disciples** and **followers** of Jesus who need to respond appropriately to the crisis of the Infant Church. **Passivity** would kill the Church Community.
- Jesus wants them to use their gifts and talents – as they did in the world before conversion – but He wants them used **for K.O.G.** now.

The Right Use of Money: 16:9-15

- 16:9**
- This is a response by Jesus to vs 4
The steward was trying to make worldly friends for himself (short-term)
But Jesus tells us to make friends in **Heaven**... forever
- Cf. Lk 12:33 *“Sell your possessions and give alms. Get yourselves purses that do not wear out, treasure that will not fail you → IN HEAVEN ← ... for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!!*
- (a) Wicked mammon (money): used for sinful things or in sinful ways
∴ **idolatry to money** to what it **can buy** makes it 'tainted' or wicked.
[Early Church held both money and possessions IN COMMON]
- (NB) St Luke encourages us to use money for almsgiving – Alms cleans it
Cf. Lk 11:41 *“Instead, give alms from what you have and then, indeed, everything will be clean for you”*
- Cf. Lk 12:33 *“Sell your possessions and give alms...”*
- 16:10** Faithful (reliable / trustworthy) in **tiny things** (ie) Money / possessions which are mere temporal things.
[Prodigal sons: not faithful]
- 16:11** How can God give us **True Riches** → that of K.O.G. and Heaven – if we can't be trusted with mere earthly things...

Note: that these transitory things are **LESS REAL** and definitely **less PERMANENT** than Heavenly, **Eternal Riches** → **What Jesus wants to give us is the K.O.G.**

Cf. Lk 22:28-29 **In chap 22 Jesus will say**

“you are the men who have stood by me faithfully in my trials: and now I CONFER A KINGDOM ON YOU just as my Father conferred one on me...”

Note: that we must choose between Heaven and Earth...

- 16:12** **Money and property** / possessions are **not ours**: we have **the use of them** – but they will fail us (vs 9) or run out / wear out Cf. **1 Tim 6:7**

Note: That money / possessions are **EXTERNAL to us** ∴ not 'ours'
Possession of God and His Kingdom are INTERNAL ∴ 'ours'

cf Lk 12:15 **Remember** *“Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life (temporal + eternal life) is NOT made secure by what he owns – even when he has more than he needs”.*

{ God or the world
 { Heaven or possessions

16:13 **Two Masters:** Again we must choose:

Lovers of Money Luke 16:14-31

- : Lovers of Money: their eternal future
- : **Avarice** is the root of social evil / disintegration
- Cf. 1 Tim 6:10 *“for the **love** of money is a root of all kinds of evil”*

16:14 **The Pharisees** – whom Jesus addressed in chap 15 because of their non-acceptance of the repentant sinners coming into the K.O.G. – are **still present** for Jesus’ teaching on money / possessions

→ They were the powerful, rich elite – who now laugh **AT HIM** for his teaching in chap 16!
Jesus is poor with no money or possessions: Lk 9:58, Mt 8:20

→ But this is not the first time they literally **scorn** Jesus
cf **Lk 6:25** *“alas for you who are rich...
alas for you who have your fill **now** ...”* etc

→ Jesus has just told them that they **CANNOT** serve God **and** money

(NB) - yet these are the **leaders** of **RELIGION!!**

(NB) - their position is, therefore, contrary to God’s Will

16:15 **Jesus responds with 3 V.I.P. points:**

- “you justify yourselves in people’s eyes”:* Cf. **the Lawyer in 10:29**
 - the sinners are justified **by God in their conversion**
 - the Pharisees seek **human** approval and glory...
- “God knows your HEARTS”* God reads us clearly: Cf. **Ps 139**

**Jesus had
already
told them**

Cf. The outside vs. the inside of the cup in **Lk 11:39-41**

*“oh you Pharisees! you clean the outside of cup and plate, while **INSIDE** yourselves you are filled with extortion and wickedness”*

- Jesus reveals the thoughts of hearts: **Lk 2:35; 5:22** and **9:47**

“An abomination in God’s sight”

The ‘abomination’: this word is used throughout the Old Testament Scriptures for some action or **thing** that is utterly reprehensible or unclean...

- It is often associated with idolatry.
- The famous ‘abomination of desolation’ is the supreme act of idolatry
Cf. Mark 13:14 and Matt 24:15 – is something / someone who:
 - a) **REPLACES GOD** in the sanctuary of our hearts
 - b) **REPLACES GOD** in the sanctuary of our **Church**

- The word ‘bdelygmia’ (abomination) is also used in Scripture to designate:
 - a) sham outward worship (Is 1:13 / 66:3)

- b) immoral financial dealings (Deut 25:16)
- c) re-marrying a divorced wife! (Deut 24:4)

16:16 **THE WORD OF GOD STANDS IN TESTIMONY before us:**

- (i) Stage 1 = the Law and the Prophets
- (ii) Stage 2 = preaching of Jesus: **NEW LAW** and **NEW PROPHET**
 - Jesus urges **all** – everyone – to enter the K.O.G.
 - He acknowledges that it is **NOT easy** to convert: it's **a struggle**

He told us back in Lk 13:24, *“Try your best to enter by the narrow door because, I tell you, many will **try** to enter and will not succeed.”*

- (NB) ∴ Jesus is saying that we have to put **effort** into it.
- only the **bravest** and the **most** persevering **succeed in overcoming themselves** and surrendering to the Will of God for them.

16:17 **The Word of God** is **everlasting** and **will not FAIL**

- (NB) → it is **God's** truth – **not** man's word
 → so we can rely on it and guide our lives by it.

16:18 **Mosaic Law allowed divorce:** Deut 24:1-4
 Jesus forbids divorce, allowing no exceptions.

The Rich Man and Lazarus: Lk 16:19-31 (only in Luke)

- (NB) This parable **CONTRASTS** the Two groups being dealt with in chap 15 and 16.
 - **this shows the future for both groups: the two sons of God.**

- Both characters are given in **their extreme** form
 - a) **The Rich Man** (Dives is the Latin for Rich Man)
 - here represents Scribes and Pharisees and the Rich of Society: the highest level
 - b) **Lazarus** = God is my help: represents the materially poor, the destitute, the lowest level of society **materially**...
- The parable reflects the **BEATITUDES: Lk 6:20-25**
 Blessed are the poor, the hungry – those who weep now
 Woe to the Rich, filled with earthly things, pleasures / gratification

THE RICH MAN : is super-rich and super-self- indulgent: Cf. Amos 6:4-7

THE POOR MAN : is crippled and seriously ill – **the OUTCAST** who watches the wastage of food and money as he lies there dying from destitution...

DEATH : is the moment of Truth / **THE ETERNAL DIVIDER**

- **Death** sorts out the spiritual condition of each man
→ the **material** condition no longer applies in the spirit world.
- Death reveals **which one is 'Rich' or 'Poor' in God's sight...**

16:22 **Angels** carry the soul of Lazarus to **“Abraham’s bosom”**.

The idea is that he is on Abraham’s **lap** – happy as a child in his father’s arms.

- His earthly funeral would have been quick: a hole in the ground and the body dumped unceremoniously.

16:23 **The Rich Man** would have had a great funeral on earth – but he was **buried in Hell...** far away from Abraham!

16:24 **The Rich Man** begs **for mercy** (love given to one who does not deserve it) from Abraham - **TOO LATE!** He asks for the very thing he **REFUSED LAZARUS!**

- It is **too late** to ask for Mercy. He should have turned to God during his life on earth Cf. **Lk 17:13** (lepers) and **18:38** (Blind Man).
But, the mercy given would **depend** on **HIS CONVERSION**

16:25 Simple Justice meted out by “Father Abraham”: **The REVERSAL theme again!**

The Divine Reversal {

- The Rich Man had ‘good things in his lifetime... sufferings now’
- The Poor Man had sufferings in his lifetime... happiness now.

→ (NB) This is what Jesus **SAID** in The Beatitudes! **Lk 6:20-25**

16:26 **THE GREAT GULF** that exists between the Blessed and the Dammed
→ There is a definite ‘us’ and ‘them’ here...
→ There is no crossing over **this** divide! It is eternal!

- Jesus alone can bring us safely to the other side for he is **THE PONTIFEX** → **the BRIDGE**
- we walk over **Him** to Heaven.

16:27 Lazarus requests **sending a witness** from the dead to **“my Father’s house”- Israel.**

16:28 → (ie) Israel - But **Jesus** is the **Only Person** who ever rose from the dead and they did not accept **His** witness or that of the Early Church!

16:29 The reply from Heaven applies to us all in **every age**.
→ **They have THE SCRIPTURES – THE WORD OF GOD**
→ They can read, pray, study God’s Word **AND OBEY IT** anytime, for it is available to everyone

16:30 The **lost rich man** thinks that Israel will **repent** (ie) change its way of thinking if a witness from the dead came to them... **but God Himself came to them in the Incarnation and they refused to accept Him!**

16:31 Heaven’s reply is that if they do not listen to and obey God’s Word they will not be **OPEN** to any witness - as happened after the Resurrection of Jesus.