

Sermon Outline

Investing for Eternity: Living Now in the Light of Eternity

Luke 16:1-13

Proposition: Because we are God's stewards, we are to use our possessions in a sanctified way.

I Introduction

- A. 3 things that man aspires to have in this present life – security (financial), greatness and life (longevity).
- B. The Christian faith has an entirely different and opposite view from the world, on all three areas.
- C. Hence to live in the light of the gospel amidst a surroundings that has an opposite way of life, we need a heart transplant that only the Holy Spirit can give. It is a sanctified way of life, a life that is set apart for God's glory.

II We are to use our possessions in an enterprising way

- A. Context
 1. The parable is about an unjust steward or a dishonest manager, who was hired to manage a rich man's possessions, possibly a trading house.
 2. When word got around to the rich man that he was wasting the company's funds, he was fired.
 3. So very quickly before handing in the books, he came up with a plan. The idea was to put people in his debt and as a result of that he could draw on their goodwill when he needed them. Even though he would not be working for the rich men any longer, he could still support a decent life with the friends he had made.
 4. What is the owner's reaction? You would have thought that the rich man would have gone wild with anger and be cursing. Instead in verse 8 we read the staggering statement that the master commended the dishonest manager for acting shrewdly.
- B. Nature of the commendation.
 1. What the commendation is not about. The manager was not commended for his dishonesty or his way of life.
 2. What the commendation is about. The manager was strictly commended for his shrewdness—his application of his entrepreneurial skills, his sharp and savvy ability to plan strategically and execute them, albeit for personal survival.
 3. In Mat 10:16 Jesus said to his disciples "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. He wanted his followers, didn't he, to be wise in the midst of their dangerous mission. And in case they were caught in their mission

they were to be harmless. The manager in this case must be said, was not harmless.

C. Stewards of God's possessions

1. In its context, there is a thread linking between this parable and the earlier parable of the Lost or Prodigal Son. The similarity here is that both main characters of the parables were wasteful of possessions that were not theirs.
2. We are reminded by the Lord Jesus very clearly in this parable that we are managers of God's possessions

D. People of this world more shrewd than people of light

1. It is from this specific perspective and from the commendation given that Jesus breaks into this parable and makes this factual and relevant observation that the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind, than are the people of the light.
2. There is here a contrast – sons of this world and sons of light. 1 The 5:5, Eph 5:8
3. Nonetheless, Jesus is affirming here that the sons of the world are more shrewd in their management of their affairs amongst themselves. It might be unpleasant to our ears
 - It is not because the sons of light are less clever and poorer endowed in their possessions. God sends the rain and sin on all regardless.
 - It is because of the lack of application.
 - The sons of light compromise their application because of unclear and cloudy goals. This will unfold as we go along this passage.
 - They are careless in managing God's possessions. Not particularly passionate about managing on behalf of God to multiply its value and good.
4. There are number of pretty obvious evidence of this lack in the sons of light
5. When the worldly people set about to plan a business strategy they tend to be far more ingenious in their methodology and their application
 - They are more entrepreneurial. They are more innovative and creative.
 - They don't stop at problems and obstacles. They dare to dream. They have the "can do" approach.
6. In the same way when people sit down to mastermind a plan to achieving profits for expanding their business or territory,
 - They are meticulous and detail. They leave no stone unturned
 - They want to seize every opportunity.
7. Compare this with the way children of light operate in terms of eternal perspective in business of the kingdom of Christ.

- If the average business people were to follow what the children of light does with the same resources they have, they would go completely bankrupt.
 - Some of you would say we are not selling product. Yes, it is not the point here. But look at their shrewdness. Should the business of the kingdom be done less enterprisingly. Is the kingdom of God of less significant?
8. Then again look at the drive behind that shrewdness. You can't have strategy and no drive to implement it.
 - They study their manuals, SOPs, action plans as if their lives depend on it.
 - Compare this with the average Christian and his knowledge of the Scriptures. Half the time we don't even know our God's SOP to reach the world for Jesus. We spend time arguing the methods to use.
 9. They have the perseverance in their application of their plan. Think of the telemarketers who keep calling you. And the real estate and insurance agents.

E. Implication of Jesus' reflective observation.

1. The obvious thrust behind Jesus sad reflection of the characteristic of the children of light is that we should use our resources wisely to meet the goals and purpose for which the resources have been entrusted to us for a season.
2. My view is that this lack or weakness on the part of the children of light will always be there because it's Jesus' regretful reflection on human weakness. Nonetheless the exhortation is for us to do better as children of light.
3. It's a natural inclination as redeemed sinners to do otherwise.
4. In this telling observation Jesus is seeking his redeemed people to put on by grace, a sanctified mindset that comes with growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and his mission in order to build his (not ours) kingdom using his (not ours) resources.
5. As God's managers, we should be more and more savvy and entrepreneurial in how we invest the resources put in our trust.

III We are to use our possessions in a manner that builds eternal friendship.

A. We are to use our possessions shrewdly. But how?

1. Jesus in v 9 says we are to use our worldly or unrighteous wealth to make friends so that when it is gone you will be welcomed into the eternal dwellings.
2. In v 4, the shrewd manager the oil and wheat to make friends of his debtors so that he is able to call upon them to return his favour, when required and they will welcome him into their homes.

3. Extending this illustration, Jesus is actually saying in v 10 that using the earthly wealth, which maybe more than mere money, that God has given us, we are not to aim at friendship that will welcome us not into homes in “the now” but instead to use them in such a way as to build friendship that will welcome us into homes that are in “the then”, in eternity.
- B. The challenge is to use our earthly wealth to build friendship for “the then” (heaven).
1. Question is how can such friendship in heaven be build, such that we are welcomed into the homes or rooms in Father’s House. Joh 14:2
 2. The key to that response is found in Luk 14: 12 -14 in the parable of the banquet. Here we are told in clear terms by the Lord himself when we are to put up an invitation list for a party:
 - Not just friends or brothers or relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid
 - Instead invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just or in the then ie heaven.
 - The point is not that we are prohibited from inviting rich friends, brothers and neighbours to our parties. Here we are talking investing for eternal friendships.
 3. Hence Jesus is saying if you use your wealth to the benefit of those who cannot repay you and if you make friends of the poor, the lame the blind there will be blessings and reward in heaven.
 - Although there might not be immediate benefit here, when you get to heaven there will be people welcoming you gladly with open arms there.
 - In the same spirit, Jesus said in Luk 6:32-33 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.
 - There is ministry and there is ministry.
 4. You want to invest your worldly wealth meaningfully. Invest in people who cannot repay. to bring blessing to them and at the same time contributing to our eternal welfare. Invest in the gospel. And you will have true riches in contrast with unrighteous wealth. .
 5. Clearly Jesus is also pointing out that there is a way to abuse that which is given to us by being dishonest and unfaithful. That is in verses 10 - 12. Mat 25:35-46 can be quite discomfoting:

IV We are to use our possessions a manner that is in view of heaven.

- A. Instead of figuring out how to use the resources for “the now”, Jesus is directing his followers to utilize the resources with a focus on “the then”.

Now you see why this parable is especially directed to the disciples. Only the disciples can understand what stewardship and what the future “then” and heaven are all about.

1. Jesus wants his disciples to adopt a strategy of shrewdness and have an eye of investing resources entrusted to them in a way that does not necessarily give any immediate benefit but more importantly prepares for them eternal treasures, the true riches
 2. It is about investing for eternity.
- B. This is not so much different as what financial consultants and annuities funds companies are doing.
- C. If we can understand what these retirement and financial planners are doing, we can understand what Jesus is saying here.
1. The difference is Jesus’ focus is not so much about benefits in this lifetime but in eternity, in the then, in heaven.
 2. With the same goal in mind, Jesus says in Mat 6:19-20 – Do not lay treasures on earth.... But lay up treasures in heaven.
 3. In other words, he is saying do not be concerned with what you are leaving behind but be concerned with what you are sending ahead to heaven.
 4. The world always ask of its sons, how well you're doing and how much have you gathered and are leaving behind as legacy or inheritance
 5. When I retired, people keep asking me- what will I do? It as if without a regular secular job, there is no meaning to life. Shouldn’t our lives be more than secular work?
 6. So the message from Jesus is how well you are doing and how much are sending send forward to heaven.
 7. Because what is ahead is your final destination. It is home. The Father’s house. What is left behind in this kampong hut in the now, will pass away with the coming of new heaven and earth..
 8. Home in our Father’s house is where you live forever. There is where the quality of life matters. There is where the rewards and treasures matter.
- D. Having said all that, why are we so slow to live now in the view of heaven?
1. Because we are not grip by the reality of eternity and of heaven. Is it because of lack of knowledge? No.
 2. It basically boils down to lack of conviction and unbelief. As I examined my heart, I realize I am in the same situation as the father of the boy who had the deaf and mute spirit who wept in response to Jesus rebuke and said, I believe. Help my unbelief. Mk 9:24
 3. To be fair the concept of heaven is not easy to get a grip on.
 - How many of us really desire to go to heaven? Does the thought of heaven thrills us, excites us?

- E. Heaven is where God is gloriously present and where his love is gloriously manifested.
1. Heaven is where the righteous us, may be with him, see him as he is, and love, serve, praise, and enjoy Him perfectly.
 2. There all our sin shall be taken away, and we shall be perfectly conformed to God, and shall spend an eternity in exalted exercises of love to him, and in the enjoyment of his love.
 3. Its treasures are about rewards for faithfulness that climax in the enjoyment of God. It is comes from whatever of beauty, tenderness, faith, or love we have touch other's lives with.
- F. As soon as the reality of eternity grips our lives, it changes the way in which we view everything.
1. When the glimpse of eternity or even when God were to pull back the curtains, even for just a little bit, and allow all the light to shine in. It begins to change the way in which we view, not the least of all, our money, time, health, talents.
 - The focus shift from self to others.
 - From hoarding and saving to sharing.
 - From getting repaid in kind to no concern of being repaid.
 - It's about realigning our priorities passionately to that of God's.
 - It is a different lifestyle altogether. We think how to maximize the use of our resources in view of the kingdom's good.
 2. The resources that we have now are either used in such a way that it sends treasures ahead or it will die (fail) with us. Think about that for a moment. What is the punchline in Mat 6:19 after exhorting to lay up treasures I heaven – for where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. If our treasure is earthbound, our heart is chained to the earth. It's another of Jesus' piercing observation.
 3. The sanctified manner to use our resources as God's stewards wisely is to be found in the living in the now, in the light of heaven.
- G. Let the light of eternity shine in
1. That we may heed the Lord's call, let's plead with our gracious Lord regularly- Lord help our unbelief that we align our priorities to live now in the light of eternity. Convict us by your Spirit of the reality of heaven. Transform your sons of light to use the unrighteous wealth in a sanctified manner.
 2. It's God's kingdom. Its' His resources. We are His people, His instruments. He will bless us with the desires of our hearts as we seek Him in delight. Come and bless us.