

## The Unrighteous Stewart Explained

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Several years ago I heard a preacher deliver a sermon on 'The Unrighteous Stewart.' The sermon was so bad that I was left feeling confused. This preacher had tried to explain that it is alright to steal as that was his understanding of this story. I knew Jesus never meant the lesson to be one of theft so I prayed and asked for HIS understanding of the story and this is what Jesus gave me. I want to share it here with you.

Luke 16:1 ? 8

To understand this story we must look at the scene laid out before us. Jesus had evidently just left the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees which he had entered in chapter 14:1 to teach and eat. We see him in chapter 14:25 leaving with multitudes following him which included the Pharisees who were looking for any excuse to accuse him of breaking the law. In chapter 15:1 he is accused of receiving and eating with sinners, and Jesus again begins to teach.

It must be kept in mind that Jesus was a Jew and his earthly ministry was to the Jewish Nation. In Matthew 15:24, Jesus says 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' And in Matthew 10:5 when he sends his disciples out, he tells them, 'Do not go in the way of the Gentiles.' The ministry of Jesus was a microcosm of that which the Jewish Nation should have been. Jesus being one man was going to do what the Jewish Nation as the 'Chosen People' should have done. And only by being God the Son born in the flesh could he accomplish that which the children of Abraham had failed.

God had chosen the Hebrew Nation to be a witness to the world that there is but one God, a powerful God and a loving God. God manifested his power through the Jews and blessed them with the circumcision to set them apart from the Gentiles. Blessed them with the priesthood and gave to them both the written law and the oral law. God bestowed upon them blessings upon blessings. Throughout all of this the Jews began to think of themselves as the only people of God, and instead of being witnesses to the world of God, they became recluses, hoarding the gifts and blessings given to them by God. So Jesus came to be that witness so the world should not be lost. But first he had to be a witness to the very people who in the first place had been made witnesses and failed.

The story of the unrighteous steward was told for the benefit of the Pharisees who were the doctors of the law and should understand that the Blessings, Gifts and Promises which they had hoarded and squandered were now going to be given freely to all, administered under a new steward (Jesus Himself) and that while there was still time they should endeavor to give what was given to them by God to those who were to receive the blessings under the new covenant which would shortly be instituted.

Breaking down this parable by verses, we have:

Verse 1-2

Lu 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

The rich man is God who is rich and freely gives of his wealth. The steward is the Jewish nation who were given the responsibility of administering the wealth of God. But because Gods wealth was being wasted, the Jews were to be replaced by a new steward (Jesus Christ).

Verse 3-7

Lu 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Here they are being told that if they would understand this, they should plan for the future. They will no longer be in a position to take what isn't theirs because God's blessings would come by way of another steward. If they are not to be left out in the cold they must take that which they stole and give to them who are in debt. In that way they will be remembered when those who are in debt have the blessings and the former stewards are in debt.

Verse 8

Lu 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

The Lord commends the former steward not for his unrighteousness, but because he made provisions for his future. Though he will no longer be in a position to administer the blessings from God, he can still be a partaker of those blessings.

### **Short note about the author**

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