

FOLLOW-THROUGH

Small Group Discussion around the Sunday Message
Luke 16:1-13, The Parable of the Shrewd Manager
October 8, 2006

Introduction

1. Read Luke 16:1-8
2. If you were looking for someone to manage your business, what kind of qualities would you look for?
3. What qualities do you see in the manager?
4. This has historically been one of the hardest parables to understand. Having read through it, what problem in application do you see?



Getting Inside the Parable

1. With what motivation did the manager seek the debtors?
2. What reaction would you have expected from the master? Why do you think he reacted in the way that he did?
3. In the way Jesus teaches this he is essentially telling his disciples to be like the dishonest manager? Why so you think that it?

Digging Deeper

1. Many have tried to rationalize the behavior of the manager. Most have said that he tried to redeem himself by...
 - Maybe taking his commission off of the price when meeting with the debtors
 - Maybe he was returning his dishonest and bloated prices back to the norm
 - Maybe having a meeting like this with the debtors would bring honor and a good name to the master

The problem with this is that Jesus makes it a point to say that he acted out of self-interest. What is the lesson that you think Jesus is wanting to get across?
2. I think Jesus is making a comparison between what is earthly and temporary and what is eternal. In other words, don't fall in love with what you have or you will miss true treasure in heaven. What evidence do you see that would support this?
3. Read vs. 9 again. This is a hard verse to understand. Most of us spend most of our money on whom? And if we are, as the verse says, spending it on friends, what does that say about our attachment to money?
4. Read Luke 20:20-26. What do you think is significant about Jesus answer?
5. To the Hebrews, those Jesus was to, there was an understanding that you are not supposed to carry graven images of men, like a coin with Caesar's picture on it. It was also believed, as we do today, that man was created in the image of God. So, if a coin with Caesar's image on it is Caesar's then to whom does a man with God's image on him belong to? What is significant about that?
6. Read Luke 16:13 again. The word there translated as Money is the word *Mamman*, which means more literally, earthly treasure sought after with unjust intentions. It was often referred to as a false idol. How do you think the passage, "you can not serve both God and money" relates to this?
7. What are some ways that people in our culture are challenged by this?
8. In the end, Jesus is challenging his disciples and us to abandon the pursuit of earthly treasure and to chase after heavenly treasure. How can we best do that? What does that look like?
9. Close with prayer, focusing on the true treasure of God's kingdom.