

The great insight of the steward of unrighteousness [Luke 16: 1-13]

Illustration: The effects of being fired

Our text is framed by an estate lord calling his steward to account for wasting his possessions and summarily firing him

The parable is not a secular story about clever dishonesty even though Jesus seems to commend the dishonesty of the steward

- Focus: mercy of the lord [LORD] carried forward from Luke 15: Prodigal Son

The steward is a salaried manager; but who is the lord of the manor? [Merciful]

Illustration: Mercy

The steward gets fired – instead of protest – he acts prudently to extricate himself from future ruin

- The steward leaps into action using every moment of opportunity
- The adverb – *quickly* used in verse 6 is crucial to eternal context

The debtors are not surprised by the undisclosed actions of the steward

- Familiarity with a history of generous transactions
- The estate owner is a perfect example of the Sermon of the Plain

How does the estate manager react to the decisions of the steward?

- Past performance is the best predictor of future behavior
- He commends the steward for prudence

Another challenge shows up in the narrative – *the lord praises the man as a steward of unrighteousness* - how can this be?

- Prudence is practical wisdom and quick apprehension
- He cleverly deploys the available resources of his lord for survival

The Christian context arrives in verse 9: *I tell you, make friends of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.*

- Jesus exhorts the sons of light to prudence in eternal matters
- Prudence is the penetrating consideration of the means of grace

One great problem in the church involves adults attempting to manage problems in an unrighteous world with the faith of a child

Jesus concludes posing stark alternatives: ¹³ *No servant can serve two masters - you cannot serve God and mammon*

- The simple question for all disciples: are you trusting money or God?
- The Gospel is the only thing of lasting and eternal value in the world

In the end; the actions of the steward define stewardship – serving a merciful lord using the gifts of the lord

- Prudence trusts the grace and mercy of our Lord as our treasure
- Saint Paul provides the final commentary on our Gospel from Philippians 3:8 - *count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord - for his sake suffer the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order to gain Christ*