

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev Chris Tringham

Stories Jesus Told

No 6

## The Negligent Manager

Scripture Reading: Luke 16:1-17

Alfred Edersheim points out that 'the disciples' Luke mentions in v1 were not the disciples due to become apostles, but the tax gatherers and sinners referred to in chapter 15 v1 who were listening and learning. The word from which we get 'disciple' says Vine is *mathetas*, 'a learner' from a root word meaning 'thought accompanied by endeavour'. Thus there is a wider and narrower application of the word. The audience comprised the same group, disciples both elementary and advanced and the Pharisees and Scribes.

These next two parables consider the haves and have nots of all kinds, but let us not be sidetracked. Today's parable is about tenure and responsibility. As we study these parables, let us not just look at them, but at what God has entrusted to us. And let us not fear to ask ourselves the hard questions.

**First, Get the Main Lesson.** In this parable, the word 'mammon' is Aramaic for wealth. Unrighteous does not describe wealth but its value in the minds of men. In that sense there is unrighteous-wealth and righteous-wealth. Men of the world, and the Pharisees loved money. See verse 14. So do many of us. Wealth changes colour with the values of the holder. God holds a different set of values to those held by men. What men prize highly, God detests. God knows our hearts v15. What God detests is our corrupt nature. Edersheim says, 'To the secular nothing is sacred, and to the sacred nothing is secular.'

**The Story.** The manager wasted his master's assets. The word, wasted means 'to scatter', it is the same word used of the prodigal who wasted his inheritance. It was not fraud, but poor management of the resources with which he had been endowed. Thus he was called to account.

The manager may have been an agent with goods on consignment. When he discounted the bills of his clients, thus

putting them in his own debt, he may well have sacrificed his own commission. The deed was wholly legal as he still had a manager's authority, and the discount was legally attested in writing.

The master praised his manager's astuteness in providing for his own future v8a.

Jesus acknowledged that the children of this age are more astute (business driven) than the children of light (spiritually principled) v8b. They know how to deal with their own kind to their own advantage.

Jesus commended this wisdom, not any lack of principle involved, to his ex tax collector and ex sinner disciples for their adoption. "Use your material wealth, business connections, skills and the like, while you still have them, to make friends and influence people for the Kingdom. Thus you will have treasure in Heaven. Turn your capital in this world into capital in the next. You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead.

Added to that, a steward proven faithful

with the material on earth will be given proportionate control over the spiritual in the Kingdom to come v10-12. Either God or self interest will rule your life as a disciple. One must serve the other. In your life it is your decision. Which is it to be? V13. The Greek word for hate has three shades of meaning; the context governs which to adopt. They are a malicious and unjustifiable feeling; a right feeling of aversion to what is wrong; and as it is used here, a 'relative preference for one thing over another ...' Vine.

Wealth although not sinful of itself, must take second place to God. This is not someone wealth, but wealth entrusted to us. We have it on account, on consignment. One must be the master and the other the servant. Wealth is to be put to work for the Kingdom, not scattered in idle pursuit.

**Do We Feel We Have Nothing of Value?** The old Jewish writings have a parable which those Pharisees would have known well:

A king once appointed two administrators, one over gold and silver and the other straw. The second failed in his stewardship then complained that he did not have the same opportunity as the first. He was told, 'If you failed in relation to the straw, shall we commit to you the silver and gold?'

Has God committed us to a stewardship over straw? There are more things of value that can be turned to good account than just money. There was in this instance and ours, friendship. There was the authority he still had, though fleeting as he knew. There was

his knowledge of the trade and social customs of the day. He knew what would do, and what would not. He had his personality and knew how to make it work for him, his salesmanship. There was his standing as a businessman, his signature was still good in law on a document. We ought to list our assets for our own benefit. What are we doing with what God has given us? We too will be called to give account!

### The Pharisees also Responded

critically because they loved money and it was a tender spot with them.

Jesus spoke rather of their spiritual stewardship and pointed out that they were in the same predicament v16. Their assumed right of administration of the Scriptures ceased, said Jesus, with John. Now everyone is invited to come to the Kingdom. The invitation is to, 'Whosoever that believeth on the Son' John 3:16. Then Gentiles were kept in ignorance and God was lenient but now, under grace, all men are commanded to repent. See Acts 17:29-31.

He also spoke of their wasteful scattering of the wealth of the Kingdom. First Jesus reminded them that there will be an accounting of their stewardship, for not one stroke of the law will be lost. v17. However they had wasted it by their own lax application to their own lives and misdeeds v18. See Matthew 19:3-12

Reference: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim.  
*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, W E Vine.  
*The New Analytical Greek New Testament*, Wesley J Perschbacher, Ed.  
Bible quotations are from the NIV.

# Welcome

## Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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