

The Life and Ministry of Christ, Part 37

During the last months before the Lord's crucifixion, Jesus gave many parables. The Lord's parables served to bring insight and revelation to His disciples. In the parables, Jesus spoke kingdom mysteries. After giving them, Jesus explained the meanings so that His disciples would grasp the truths that they eventually taught to others.

Matthew 13:1 NKJV And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

Matthew 13:13 NKJV Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

The parables were intended to instruct believers so they would grow and have abundance. The unbelieving crowds failed to understand because they rejected Jesus and their own spiritual dullness compounded the hardness of their hearts. Parables helped those who were genuinely hungry for God to comprehend the wonderful truths Jesus was conveying. The two parables we are considering refer to stewardship and eternal values. The first was addressed to the disciples and the second to the Pharisees because of their response to the first parable.

The Unjust Manager - Luke 16:1-13

This is a most difficult parable to understand. On the surface it appears to justify cheating. The rich man in the parable represents God. The manager was entrusted with another's goods.

Luke 16:1 NLT Jesus told this story to His disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money.

The manager was incompetent and irresponsible with the rich man's goods.

Luke 16:2 NIV84 So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

He was called to give an account of the way he had handled his employer's property and money. When he was fired, the manager quickly developed a plan to help secure his future.

Luke 16:3-4 NIV84 The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here,

people will welcome me into their houses.’

Luke 16:5-6 NIV84 So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ “ ‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’

Luke 16:7 NIV84 Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’

We would call that fraudulent actions of taking what belongs to someone else. To properly understand the next verse, we must consider it with the following verses.

Luke 16:8 AMP And [his] master praised the dishonest (unjust) manager for acting shrewdly and prudently; for the sons of this age are shrewder and more prudent and wiser in [relation to] their own generation [to their own age and kind] than are the sons of light.

Pay attention to what was said this scoundrel did. The man’s actions were not praised, but his shrewd foresight or prudence was. He considered his situation, looked to the future, and planned for it.

Jesus was saying, when this unscrupulous man saw his condition he took it into account and laid up for his future need.

Luke 16:9 NLT Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.

We should use present gain for future reward.

We can learn from the people of the world. Use everything that you have to win the lost. The manager took action while he could to prepare for his times of need. To help clarify that He was not commending the unjust manager, Jesus made the following comment.

Luke 16:10-11 NLT If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?

God is watching how we use the things at our disposal. If we are faithful with what we have been given, then we can be trusted with greater things. Earthly possessions are small in comparison to eternal things.

Luke 16:12-13 NLT And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own? No one can serve two

masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

Notice the distinction between what is yours and what belongs to another. In this parable, Jesus is talking about God. We should consider how we handle all of the things the Lord has given us. Notice how the Pharisees responded to this parable.

Luke 16:14-15 NKJV Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

They had been somewhat successful in persuading others that they were pious. Jesus let them know that God knows the heart and then He told them they were an abomination in God’s sight.

Luke 16:16-17 NKJV The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.

These two verses refer to a decisive shift in God’s redemptive plan. This does not mean the Old Testament lost its authority, but that it rather pointed to the coming of the Messiah and the inauguration of God’s kingdom. Some object that the Law and Prophets were made out of date and were no longer in force. Jesus’ statement denies that philosophy and clearly stated that God’s righteous will is expressed in the Old Testament. That message was continued with the Apostle’s teaching that the Law and prophets point us to our need of a Savior, (Romans 7:7). When the era of the law and prophets ended, the prophecies and God’s redemptive plan found fulfillment in Jesus Christ. When the message of the Gospel is preached and the news of the kingdom of God is received, people’s hearts are set ablaze with extreme passion to enter and receive it.

Now, Jesus gave the parable of the rich man and Lazarus – Luke 16:19-31

There are two points that should be noted before we enter into this parable. First, riches do not equal righteousness. Second, the rich man was not in Hades because he was wealthy. Beyond stewardship, this parable revealed some deep facts about eternal rewards and what

happens after one dies.

Luke 16:19-21 NIV84 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

Luke 16:22–23 NKJV So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

NIV84 angels carried him to Abraham’s side.

TPT “*the angels of God came and escorted his spirit to paradise.*”

Luke 16:24 NKJV Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

Luke 16:25 NKJV But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

Luke 16:26 NKJV And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

Luke 16:27–28 NKJV Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

Luke 16:29–30 NKJV Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

Luke 16:31 NKJV But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

This parable shows us several things about what happens after a person dies and their spirit goes to hades (hell) or to paradise.

First, there were two chambers of the underworld.

Hades or hell is a place of torment and Abraham’s Bosom or Paradise is a place of bliss. Sheol or the grave was the abode of the dead in the underworld without distinction of righteousness or wickedness. The grave is not the same thing as hell. Before the cross, Paradise was known as Abraham’s Bosom, Luke 16:22; Acts 2:31. When Jesus was on the cross, He told the thief, “today you will be with Me in Paradise,”

(Luke 23:43).

Psalm 16:10 NKJV For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Psalm 86:13 NKJV For great is Your mercy toward me, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

After the resurrection of Christ, a major change occurred as Jesus led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. At that time paradise, which was in the realm of sheol, was vacated and Christians go directly into the presence of God. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Paul spoke of paradise and the third heaven interchangeably.

Philippians 1:21-23 NKJV For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

This parable offers these truths about hell.

1. It is a place of torments.
2. It is a place of knowledge.
3. Hell is a place of recognition (know others condition).
4. Hell is a place of flames without water or relief.
5. Nothing good can be taken into hell.
6. There is a great gulf fixed between torment and paradise.
7. No one can pass from hell to paradise or this world.

We also learn several things about the paradise of God.

1. It is a place in the bosom of God (Abraham's bosom is the paradise of God.) (Revelation 21:4)

2 Corinthians 5:8 NKJV We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 NKJV Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it.

2. Angels of God carry the righteous to paradise.
3. It is a place of comfort and rest.
4. It is a place of good things.
5. It is a place of cool water.

Where is paradise now?

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 NIV84 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—

whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows — was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

Revelation 2:7 NKJV He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Revelation 22:2 says the tree of life grows on both sides of the river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God.

The rich man begged that someone would be sent from Paradise to warn his father's house of the place of torment.

Luke 16:29-30 NIV84 “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’”

Luke 16:31 NIV84 “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Romans 10:14 NLT But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

Mark 16:15-16 NIV84 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”