

THE PUZZLING STATEMENTS OF JESUS

The meaning of Money

(Luke 16:1-13)

In the parable of the shrewd manager, Jesus unlocks the puzzle of money for us.

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 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.' "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.' "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.' "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.' "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than the people of light (Luke 16:1-9)

1. SHREWDNESS

Jesus is not commending the manager's dishonesty, he is commending his shrewdness.

I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16)

Definition: "Shrewd" = astute, with acute perception and sound judgment; a practical, hardheaded cleverness and judgment. "Shrewd" suggests wisdom, depth of insight, and farsightedness.

- a. The manager was shrewd because he acted quickly.
- b. The manager used whatever he had in his hand to the best advantage.
- c. The manager understood the people around him.

The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the children of life (Luke 16:8)

2. INVESTMENT

Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves so that when it is gone you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings (Luke 16:9)

- a. One day everything you have will all be gone
"Use money to gain friends so that when it is gone..."

- b. Money can impact eternity

Jesus said, *Use money to make friends ... so that they may welcome you into eternal dwellings (Luke 16:9b)*

3. TRUST

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with very much and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with very much (Luke 16:10)

4. CHOICE

"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Luke 16:13)

WHAT NOW?

Choose how you will manage your money and possessions ...

- If we love money and possessions we will use people.
- If we hate money and possessions we will ignore people's need because we have no resources to do anything about it.
- If we feel guilty about our money and possessions we become ineffective through worrying about whether or not we're managing our resources well

BUT ...

- If we USE our money and possessions to make friends, to meet people's needs, we can make a huge difference not just in this world, but also in the next.