

Worldly Wealth for Heavenly Purposes

Money can accomplish great things

- Robert F Smith – name of speaker, 2019 grad service, Morehouse College (Atlanta, GA). Past May, at MH Col, as RFS delivering the grad speech he'd prepped for class of 2019, made incredbl annmnt: he/fam decided pay off, in full, every student loan of every grad in entire class. His donation comply elimtd all their stdnt loans, so that now those stdnts can begin careers w/o crushing burden of college debt. In speech, I'm "put little fuel in your bus." Well, that gift: ~\$40m. What wond, genrs use of worldly wealth! It shows how \$ can accplsh great things!
- \$ can accplsh great things, for God's kingdom. Today J encs: use WWHP. Today in gospel J speaks parb, teaches us to spend \$ on ministry. He wants us to use \$ he gives us (cert: take care fams), but also: spread gospel, tell others re J, share our faith, so that many more can go heaven. \$ can accplsh great things, for God's kingdom. So today J says: use WWHP.

The parable's details

- Lk 16, parb of shrewd (dishonest) mangr. Upfront: one hardest parbs in Bible, bec at first almost sounds like J teaching us be dishonest w/ our money, way mangr dishonest w/ his master's money. Obvly not what J wants us do. But what is he saying? **Vs. 1-2 (EHV)**. This mangr is clearly: cheater, wasteful spender, financial fraud, bad mangr; both he & his master knew it. So boss sends him termination notice and wants ledger books back. But mangr didn't like thought of being unemployed: **vs. 3**. So came up with a plan: **vs. 4** (see: trying make business connections w/ master's clients). **Vs. 5-7** (50% & 20% off!). Crook about get fired; so cheats master one last time by drastically reducing debt owed by customers for their purchases. Master would lose Ks \$s in sales. And this dishnst mangr of course hoping: these grateful customers will remember the sweet deal he cut them and help him find new job after fired.
- So: lot of fraud going on here! And since J tells this parb to teach a spiritual lesson, you'd think J would condemn this dishonesty. But you'd never believe what J says next: **vs. 8a**. Praised the guy! Clearly there's something about this savvy financial maneuver J wants us to learn from & imitate. But if it's not the dishonesty, then what is it?

The parable's meaning

- Here in **vs. 9**, J explains parb (unrghs mammon=WW). J saying: spend money, use WW, to make friends who will spend eternity with you in heaven. And these "friends" will get to heaven specifly bec of \$ you spend on ministry. And so what J really saying here: use WWHP; spend your money to spread gospel; give of your wealth to share your faith & tell others about their sin & Sav – bec when you do, they'll become fellow believers ("friends") who will someday spend eternity w/ you in heaven. That's why J: **vs. 9**. And so the way J wants us to imitate this dishonest manager is not by being dishonest, but in this way: knew had limited time to use resources available to him; so made most of that time, put those resources to work. In the same way, we have limited time to use recourses available to us; (even says "**so that when it runs out;**") our \$ & time on earth will eventually run out – before it does, we need make most of that time, put our resources to work. The dishonest mangr knew power of \$, used it to help himself. J wants us to know power of \$, use it to help others, for eternity. Use WWHP.

The parable's application

- Now, how we apply to our lives? J teaching us realize: \$ is one most powerful tools we have for spreading gospel. When we use our WW to spread gospel, people: come to faith, become Xians, learn love of J, find forgiveness in J, go heaven be with Jesus. That's what happens when we use WWHP. So: J wants every one us, (me/you): spend gen % of the \$ he gives us so others can hear gospel & come faith in J. And then, when we get to heaven, these "friends," Xians who came faith through our financial generosity, they **vs. 9c**; they'll be waiting for us in heaven to say, "Thank you, so much! If it weren't for you, I would have never come to know my Savior!" \$ can accplsh great things for God's kingdom! So today J says: use WWHP.

- Also says, **vs. 10-11**. This is very sharp warning. J basically saying: if I'm one who gives you WW, and if I ask you spend some your WW to share gospel, and if you don't, if you're unfaithful with that task, why should I let you into heaven? If you don't care re others getting to heaven, why should I care re you getting to heaven? That's very scary warning vs greed. I know, there's part all us, says: that's my hard earned money; no church tell me how spend it. Well, this isn't church telling you how spend \$; it's J! And what he's trying do: beat down that greedy idolater in all us that doesn't want use \$ for God's purposes – only wants spend \$ on selves. And notice, J is quick to add: **vs. 13**. Can't have two gods: either worship JC or \$; but can't fit both on top pedestal in your heart. J wants you knock down \$ as your god so that he has room to reign. But the \$-god is so enticing. So J's warning is very clear: bring down \$-god in your heart, or else you'll lose blessings of J. Greedy stinginess toward God's mission of salvation is a serious sin that leaves us deeply indebted to God – a debt that's too great for us to pay.
- A debt, therefore, that J, in love, paid for us. Jesus paid debt of our sin, even our sin of greed. Reduced our bill, not by 20% or 50% but 100%. Paid our debt in full – kind of like how Morehouse College students got their students loans paid in full. They didn't earn/deserve it – simply a gracious gift from gen donor. God's forgiveness of our sins: simply a gracious gift from gen donor, our Sav JC, who willingly shed his blood on cross to pay off our debt! And if that weren't enough, J also graciously lavishes on us abundant financial wealth, as well – he gives us money.
- So, what are we, the forgiven children of God, going do with money he gives us? Obviously: we're going provide for fams, take care our needs. But we're also going use WWHP. We're going spend \$ on ministry, so that someday the people who come faith bec our offs will welcome us into heaven. We're going be gen w/ our offs to our church & synod. We're going give gen % of income (10% always the right starting place), bec \$ can acmplsh great things for God's kingdom. Just think what our offs do:
 - support weekly public worship of hundreds of Xians gathering around W&S here in this church.
 - support team dedicated called workers, who can devote fulltime attention to sharing gospel of Jesus (pulpit & classroom, hospital & nursing home, bedside & graveside).
 - maintain this beautiful sanctuary and this excellent Lutheran elementary school, where every day students hear gospel & grow in faith.
 - support work of WI synod, which trains gospel mesngrs, then sends those gospel mesngrs to serve Jesus as teachers in our classrooms, pastors in our congs, and missionaries in distant lands.
- This is what our offs do! They spread gospel of Xp! \$ can acplsh great things for God's kingdom. None us may ever be in position to do what RFS did this past May, when he donated \$40m to pay off student debt of each graduate from the Morehouse Col class 2019. But J paid our debt in full – debt of our sin. And now he instructs us how use the \$ he gives us. He wants us spend \$ on ministry, to make friends that we'll someday see in heaven. Let's not let our greed get in the way. Instead let's use our WWHP.

Luke 16:1-13 (Evangelical Heritage Version)

Jesus also said to his disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager who was accused of wasting his possessions. ² The rich man called him in and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you can no longer be manager.'

³ "The manager said to himself, 'What will I do, since my master is taking away the management position from me? I am not strong enough to dig. I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from my position as manager, people will receive me into their houses.'

⁵ "He called each one of his master's debtors to him. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

⁶ He said, 'Six hundred gallons of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and write three hundred.'⁷ Then he said to another, 'How much do you owe?' And he said, 'Six hundred bushels of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and write four hundred and eighty.'

⁸ "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the children of the light are. ⁹ I tell you, make friends for yourselves with unrighteous *mammon*, so that when it runs out, they will welcome you into the eternal dwellings. ¹⁰ The person who is faithful with very little is also faithful with much. And the person who is unrighteous with very little is also unrighteous with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been faithful with unrighteous *mammon*, who will entrust you with what is really valuable? ¹² If you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you something to be your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters. Indeed, 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 *mammon*."