



## Jesus The Master Teacher

- He taught with unparalleled authority (Matthew 7:28-29).
- He challenged man's will & intellect (cf. John 7:17).
- It was even said by His opponents, *"never did a man speak the way this man speaks"* (John 7:46).
- Matthew noted that Jesus taught *"many things...in parables"* (Matthew 13:3).

## Jesus The Master Teacher

Note **Jesus' respect for scripture...**  
Matthew 4:4ff;19:5-9; 22:29

... And for *"... the will of My Father..."*  
Matt. 7:21, John 7:16-17,12:49-50; 14:10

This includes the **parables** Jesus taught which were **divinely inspired messages from God** – not just wise anecdotes.

## What Is A Parable?

Defined as:

**"a short, simple story designed to communicate a spiritual truth, religious principle, or moral lesson; a figure of speech in which truth is illustrated by a comparison or example drawn from everyday experiences."** (Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

The use of images, characters & situations from **everyday life** to help lead us to **TRUTH**.

## What Is A Parable?

- **Parables define the unknown by that which is known** and are meant to challenge the listener.
- **Universal appeal** - Jesus appealed to all mankind; young and old, educated and unlearned, rich and poor, and challenges each man's heart to apply and respond to the truth revealed.

## What Is A Parable?

**Such common things as...**

- Seeds, Trees,  
Oil lamps, Money,  
Stewards,  
Laborers, Judges,  
Homemakers,  
Wedding parties,  
Banquets &  
Children's games

**...Are used to teach about such weighty matters as**

- True **discipleship**,
- **Righteousness**;
- The **kingdom**,
- Godly **character**,
- Our **King**.

### The Purpose Of Parables

- The Lord's disciples had the very same question, "**why do You speak to them in parables?**" Matthew 13:10-15
- By Definition:
  - The Greek word "**parabole**" means "**to lay beside, to compare.**"  
(Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

### The Purpose Of Parables

- "**Parabole**" - "**to lay beside, to compare.**"

Common everyday **example** –  
**Seeds, Trees, Oil lamps, money, etc.**

How to get from there to here?

Application of **truth** –  
**Discipleship, Righteousness, God's Kingdom, etc**

This is where **conviction** takes place – where true **repentance** is found and where complete **submission** begins.

### The Purpose Of Parables

- **An earthly scenario** to lead to a **Spiritual application of divinely established truth.**
- **We have to utilize their hearts & minds** - make the comparison & learn from it.
- Consider **2 Samuel 12:1-7**,
  - "**you are the man**"

In our study of the parables, if we never get to the "**I am the man**" moment, then we've missed the boat. cf. Matthew 7:1-5

### Active Learners

**One of the purposes of a parable is to get the hearers mind to become active in the learning process.**

- It requires **diligent effort** on our part to learn the lessons (Ephesians 5:10).

Will we **ask, seek and knock?** (Matthew 7:7; 13:36; 15:15; Mark 7:17; cf. Acts 8:30-31; 2 Timothy 2:15)

## The Parable Of The Shrewd Steward

Luke 16:1-13

### Context

- Follows the parable of the prodigal son who was consumed by his sudden wealth. Luke 15:11-32
- Jesus follows the parable of a reckless fellow with someone the scriptures says also "**squandered**" yet is described as "**shrewd.**"

## The Story

The “**steward**” is **called into account** by his master to answer charges that he had “**squandered**” the assets placed in his charge.

- What did the steward conclude?
- He thought ahead.
- He took action.
- **The master** found out about this and **actually praised the steward** for his ability to act “**shrewdly**.”

## Defining Some Key Terms

1<sup>st</sup> - the Greek word for “**steward**” is “**oikonomos**” defined as “a house-distributor (i.e. **manager**), or **overseer**, i.e. an employee in that capacity; by extension, a **fiscal agent**” (Strong’s).

## Defining Some Key Terms

- “**Steward**” – “**oikonomos**”
- One “to whom the head of the house or proprietor has **entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures**, and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant and even to the children not yet of age” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon).

## Defining Some Key Terms

- “**Steward**” or “**oikonomos**”
  - Must remember that we are all stewards in our lives upon this earth (Luke 12:42; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 1 Peter 4:10).
  - Stewards of:
    - Our **Blessings**, our **time**, **God’s creation**, our **children**, our **bodies**, our **life**, **God’s word** and the **Lord’s Church**.

## Defining Some Key Terms

2<sup>nd</sup> - the Greek word used for “**squandered**” means “to **scatter abroad**, disperse” (Strong’s and Thayer’s) and, when applied to physical possessions, carries the idea of **wastefulness**.

- i.e. The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
- It’s the opposite of being wise, prudent, careful & cautious.

## Defining Some Key Terms

- 3<sup>rd</sup> - What does acting “**shrewdly**” mean?
- Today in our culture, someone **conniving & manipulative** – if not dishonest?
  - Rather, the word “**fronimooos**” carries the simple meaning of **prudence and wisdom**.
  - For the master to say that the steward acted “**shrewdly**” was **definitely a complement & a positive affirmation** of what he had done.
  - **Do we understand why?**

## The Shrewd Steward

**“Shrewdly”** - did the steward in this parable act in a somewhat dishonest and/or unethical manner?

Perhaps we need to take another look at what a steward was...

Not from the perspective of our **modern-day Western commercial culture...**

But from the perspective of a **Middle Eastern first century culture.**

One scholar noted regarding stewards in first century times...

“scholars say that the person who is called in Greek the oikonomos (manager) was, in fact, **a contractor or business agent who operated on a flexible commission, much as tax collectors like Zacchaeus did for the Roman government...**”

“...In other words, these agents were **bound to collect from buyers the price their employer required** for his products. But **they could charge whatever they could get above that and keep the difference for their own commission.** Often the profit they made was enormous.”

## The Shrewd Steward

If those scholars are accurate...

- Explains the favorable reaction by the master. It fits the context.
- What he was likely doing was **ensuring that his master still received what was owed but giving up the profit that he had been seeking for his own.**

## The Shrewd Steward

He was **forsaking short term gain for long term benefits.**

Otherwise, **if the steward had given away what was rightfully owed his master just to secure his own favor later on...**

## The Real Point

What is our attitude towards riches in the “here and now”?

What is our attitude towards the material and monetary possessions?

Are we willing to use our blessings in such a way now that has a view towards our eternal future?



### The Real Point

Jesus states in verse 8, *“the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light,”*

Those of the world (*“sons of this age”*) are oftentimes able to use money and material blessings with a view towards their temporal future **more effectively than children of God (*“sons of light”*) are able to use it with a view towards their spiritual eternal future.**

### Our Stewardship

Don't forget - we are all just stewards of our possessions.

The godly steward is not governed by selfishness & personal gain but by **what's in the best interest of our Master and others. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)**

This is why in the parable the steward was praised by the master.

### Further Application

Read **Luke 16:9-13**

- Jesus uses **the Aramaic word “mammon”** to refer to money in this context.
- This word is found only here (verses 9, 11, 13) and in Matthew 6:24 (*“...you cannot serve God and mammon”*)

### Further Application

**Luke 16:9-13**

- In both contexts, **Jesus is giving money, wealth and riches personal characteristics - personifying mammon as a rival god.**
  - That's why Paul says **greed amounts to “idolatry”** (Colossians 3:5)

### Further Application

**Luke 16:9-13**

- Money - not just some abstract means of exchange - it is a **potential idol/god** that seeks to dominate & rule our lives. **Romans 6:16; 2 Peter 2:19**
- Even if not sinful, it can become that **“encumbrance”** which hinders our ability to run the Christian race. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

### Further Application

The insidious nature of money makes the warning in 1 Timothy 6:10 all the more serious.

- **“Snare”, “harmful”, “ruin & destruction”**

The teaching of this parable is twofold.

- Learn to use the money God blesses us with to His glory with a view to our long term spiritual goal.
- Or, we allow money to be our master & find ourselves eternally regretting (Luke 16:26) our inability to **“act shrewdly.”**

### Further Application

Where are our investments?

**Matthew 6:19-21**

- Illustrated in **Luke 12:13-21**
- **Verses 20-21**, *“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

We either use our money to serve God or we **try** to use God to serve our money.

Will we use our money and material possessions in such a way that we **prepare ourselves for an eternal future with God?**

Just as there was to be a day for the steward to *“give an account”* for that which had been entrusted to him (Luke 16:3), so **we also will have a “day of reckoning”** (Isaiah 2:12; cf. Romans 14:12) for our stewardship as well.