

## Little Things

Harmony M.B.C., February 15, 2009 (Evening)

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Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

Luke 16:5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors *unto him*, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord?

Luke 16:6 And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

We have read the first 9 verses of our text to provide a background for the deeply spiritual and challenging lesson that our Lord teaches in verses 10-13. But before we look at this lesson, I want to say just a few words about verse 9 because it has been confusing to a lot of people down through history.

If we can understand the way that Christ used words and phrases to convey enormous messages, we can get to what He was telling us here. First, He is in fact telling us to make friends out of earthly riches or wealth...in whatever form it appears in your culture. He is not telling us to get a lot of friends who are rich. He is talking about the riches or wealth that exists in the world. All the personification of wealth that exists in the world serves to support, propagate, and empower unrighteousness. But in Him telling us to make friends of this resource, He is advising us to make it useful to the Kingdom of God...make it useful to the Lord Himself and to His purposes. That is, make it a friend of the spiritual world. Now, when you see His lesson in that light you

can tell that it agrees with all other spiritual teachings. Christ understood that the only way wealth could be harmless to the child of God was if that child of God bent that wealth to serve the purposes of his spiritual life and the spiritual objectives of the Kingdom. If you make friends with a person, that person benefits from his association with you and if he is a true friend, he will accommodate your objectives in life...he will promote what makes you happy and successful. This is the idea of "friend" in our Lord's statement here.

The last part of verse 9 should be understood like this: It will be your handling of the wealth, the materialism, the riches of this world that will be one of the things that will testify for you or testify against you in the hereafter. Our Lord is clear that our works will be judged. A lot of our works have to deal directly with the material things of this world. These works will certainly be considered in the light of how we handled those material things, when we stand before the Lord.

Now, let's look at Christ's lesson contained in vv. 10-13.

**I. V. 10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.**

- However anyone else may measure faithfulness in small things, Jesus values it highly  
Details about ethics and conscientiousness are important
- Many of these details are dealt with by us internally
- The beginning of ethical and moral compromise almost always starts with small things

**II. Vv. 11-12 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?**

- The Lord determines how much He will grow us in spiritual riches based on how well we handle the material things of this life
- A commitment to faithfulness in earthly things (specifically the wealth of this world) will open the path for greater spiritual growth and blessings.

**III. V. 13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**

- There are two kinds of relationships among humans regarding God and wealth:
  - 1) A certain person hates God and loves wealth; or loves God and hates wealth
  - 2) A certain person holds to (prizes, pursues, has a passion for) wealth and discounts God; or prizes, pursues, and has a passion for God and discounts wealth
- Either we will serve God and make all aspects of wealth our slave; and as a result make it a slave to the Kingdom's purposes, or else we will be a slave to worldly wealth and not serve God.