

**Sermon Text:** Luke 16:1-17 True Prosperity Gospel

**You can know true prosperity by managing wealth according to the gospel of the Kingdom.**

**1) The gospel calls you to manage your wealth according to God's standards (16:1-8, 15).**

- a) The wisdom of the gospel is divine, not human prudence.
  - i) "Parable of the Unjust Steward" (16:1-8) teaches that we should see the approaching change and behave accordingly.
    - (1) The steward saw his loss of income and sought to win favor with the debtors on his way out of his job.
    - (2) You should see the age to come invading this present age, calling you to adopt the virtues of God's Kingdom instead of the values of man's kingdoms, and act accordingly, particularly with wealth.
  - ii) 16:15b says, "For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."
- b) The prosperity of the gospel is not about the accumulation of money and earthly security, but about serving God as your only Master with your resources (see 16:11 "true riches").
  - i) Honor and Riches of Men—definitions of power, worth, and goodness are twisted; driven by materialism and narcissism
  - ii) True Honor and True Riches—knowing and serving God; driven by love for God and accountability to God
- c) Wealth includes physical, political, and social capital (power, esteem and influence).
- d) **Application:** Are you conscious of the principles upon which you use your wealth? Why do you have what you have? How can you use wealth in a God-honoring way?

**2) The gospel calls you to manage your wealth for the love of the saints (16:9).**

- a) "Unrighteous wealth" refers to the resources valued by human society.
- b) "When it fails" is biblical realism that everything under the sun is vanity (cf. Ecclesiastes 1:2).
- c) "Make friends . . . so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."
  - i) "Make friends" means to use your resources to meet the needs of others.
  - ii) "They" refers to the people of Christ (cf. Matthew 25:34-40).
  - iii) "Eternal dwellings" contrast with the temporal wealth used for ministry and hospitality in this life.
- d) **Application:** Do you care for the needs of the saints? How are you using your time, money, home, vehicle, surplus, etc.?

**3) The gospel calls you to manage your wealth as the servant of one Master—God (16:10-13).**

- a) "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest/unrighteous in very little is also dishonest/unrighteous in much" (16:10).
  - i) Faithfulness and righteousness are in relation to God as the Owner of all things, including you and your possessions. In the parable, the rich man heard that the dishonest manager "was wasting his possessions" (16:1). The question for all who are in Christ's Kingdom is this: "Am I wasting Christ's possessions?"
  - ii) "Very little" or "much" does not matter. The character of the servant is revealed in what he does with the Master's possessions.
- b) "The true riches" (16:11) refer to the wealth of the Kingdom of God.
- c) "No servant can serve two masters, for 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 God and money" (16:13).
  - i) "Money" is a Hebrew term (Mammon) with a "strongly negative connotation" (Louw-Nida)—"filthy lucre."
  - ii) The perversity of the love of money is that it produces hatred of God.
  - iii) Love and devotion to God is the weapon to slay the love of money (and any other controlling desire).
- d) **Application:** Which love is dominating your desires? Are you plagued with anxiety? Why? Are you constantly dissatisfied? Why? What does your calendar and your bank statement say about who your master is?

**4) The gospel calls you to repent of the false glory of men and enter fully into the Kingdom of God (16:14-17).**

- a) "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed Him" (16:14).

- i) Some Pharisees were “lovers of money”—not just coins, but the social honor of embodying the community’s standards.
- ii) “They ridiculed Him.” Their action betrays indignation.
- b) “You are those who justify yourselves before men” (16:15a). The Pharisees embodied their culture’s values externally. Thus, they had honor from men.
- c) “But God knows your hearts” (16:15b). God knows the real you (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Proverbs 21:2).
- d) “For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God” (16:15c). “Abomination” is associated with idolatry.
- e) “The Law and the Prophets were until John” (16:16a) refers to God’s covenant document (Law) and covenant prosecutors (Prophets including John the Baptist). Faithful stewardship is what God has always required of His people.
- f) “Since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached” (16:16b). The “good news” is that it is not too late. You can turn (repent) from sin and turn to God. The Kingdom of God is opened wide with mercy (Luke 3:3; 5:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 24:47).
- g) “And everyone forces his way into it” (16:16:c). KJV: “and everyone presseth into it.”
  - i) Repentance is a violent action of the soul.
  - ii) Shorter Catechism Q. 87 *What is repentance unto life?* Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.
- h) “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void” (16:17). The created order decays, but God’s Word never grows old and will never pass away.
- i) **Application:** Examine the stewardship of your life in the light of God’s Word. Where you are not living the virtues of the Kingdom of God repent.

**You can know true prosperity by managing wealth according to the gospel of the Kingdom.**

- Financial Freedom is not being debt free. Financial freedom is being a faithful steward of God’s possessions. Any other attitude toward wealth is bondage.
- Generosity with earthly wealth enlarges the soul for “the true riches.”
- As a steward of “the true riches” you can tell sinners the good news of the Kingdom of God.

**Doxology:** The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! The LORD is great in Zion; He is exalted over all the peoples. Let them praise Your great and awesome name! Holy is He! The King in His might loves justice. You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the LORD our God; worship at His footstool! Holy is He!—Psalm 99:1-5