

The Good News About Jesus as Luke Wrote It

Chapter 16:1-31

HoneyBee base version for oral translation

September 2023 Draft¹

Background

- Wealthy landowners usually had a manager to oversee their estates.
- The manager kept track of debts they owed to other people or debts that other people owed to them.
- Debtors would write a promise, called a note or a bill, to pay a certain amount of money or a certain amount of produce, and leave this with the manager. Thus, it was easy, though dishonest, for a manager and a debtor to scheme together by writing a smaller promise, paying a bribe to the manager.
- Debtors wrote their promissory note in their own hand, so that a later alteration would seem legitimate.
- Digging was the lowest form of labor done by slaves or by the unskilled.

History

- Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, doing miracles and teaching in homes, to crowds, and his disciples, in towns along the way.
- In 16:31, Jesus intimates both his soon resurrection and continued opposition.

Themes

- Make use of earthly wealth to prepare for eternity.
- No one can serve two masters equally. Everyone must choose between serving God and serving money.
- Divorce followed by marriage to another is adultery.
- Humans look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.
- In the afterlife, God justly repays both the righteous and the wicked.

Jesus teaches how to use money to please God²

¹ Jesus also told this parable to his disciples:

“Once there was a rich man who had a money manager. One day, someone came and said to him, ‘Your money manager is mismanaging³ your wealth/business.’² So the rich man summoned his manager and said to him, ‘Others have given me a bad report about you^(sg) and I am not happy with you/your work! So, bring to me the written notes that you have from those who owe me money!⁴ Then I will dismiss/release you *from your job*’

¹ Licensed for use under Creative Commons. Text in *italics* is implied from historical or cultural context. Superscripted ^(pl) means plural, ^(sg) singular, ^(inc) inclusive, ^(exc) exclusive pronoun.

² OR Parable about the clever manager. OR Prepare for your eternal future by what you do now on earth.

³ OR managing badly. OR wasting.

⁴ OR give me a written account. OR go prepare a final paper/list to show what you have done with my money. (“Notes” were written by debtors or signed by debtors in their own hand.)

³ Then the manager thought to himself, 'My boss is going to dismiss/release me, and I do not know what I shall do. I am not strong enough to work by digging / farming, and I would be ashamed to beg for money.'⁴ Suddenly he had an idea. 'I know what I will do, so that other people will welcome/accept me into their homes *and provide for me*⁵ after my boss dismisses me.'

⁵ So one by one he summoned the people who owed money to his master. He asked the first one, 'How much do you^(sg) owe to my boss?' ⁶ The man replied, '100 drums⁶ olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Here is your promissory / debtor's note. Take it, and quickly write a new one saying that you owe 50 drums!'⁷

⁷ He asked another man, 'How much do you owe?' The man replied, '1000 baskets wheat.'⁸ The manager said to him, 'Take your promissory / debtor's note and write a new one saying that you owe 800 bushels!'⁹ The manager did similar things for the others who were in debt to his master/boss.

⁸ That manager was cheating his boss, but the rich man admired the dishonest manager¹⁰ for the clever thing he had done.¹¹ *The truth is that* ungodly¹² people in this world often act more wisely toward other people than godly¹³ people act.

⁹ So, *my disciples*, I tell you^(pl) this:¹⁴ Use the wealth that you have here on earth to help others, so that they will become your friends *who will live forever*. Then, when you die and you cannot take any wealth with you, they / there will be those who¹⁵ will welcome you into a new home that will last forever."

⁵ OR *and hire me to work for them*.

⁶ OR 3000 liters. (Use a measurement and container that is commonly used in your culture.)

⁷ OR 1500 litres. (Whatever measurement you used, make it half as much.)

⁸ OR 25,000 kilograms grain. OR 1000 bags grain/flour/maize. (In your translation, use a measurement and container that is commonly used in your culture. Use a food that is common to buy in your culture.)

⁹ OR 20,000 kilograms grain. OR 800 bags grain/flour/maize.

¹⁰ OR but the rich man admired the dishonest manager. (The rich man / boss did not respect his manager for being dishonest. Jesus also is not suggesting to follow the manager's dishonest actions.)

¹¹ OR for being clever to provide for himself in the future. OR for doing something that will help him get his food later. (for the clever thing he had done OR for being clever to provide for himself in the future OR for doing something that will help him get his food later [The rich man / boss respected his manager for thinking about his future (actively securing provision for his future) rather than passively "accepting fate".])

¹² OR non-believing.

¹³ OR believing.

¹⁴ OR here is the lesson from the parable: OR this is the thing to learn from the story:

¹⁵ OR your friends (who have been able to get to heaven because you used your earthly wealth wisely). OR God and his angels. OR your friends who are with God and his angels. [The Greek here (literally "they") is somewhat ambiguous; it does not explicitly say who is doing the welcoming.

Interpretations for the welcomers are: (a) friends (who have been able to get to heaven because of the good use of earthly wealth) (b) God and his angels.

Perhaps the best way to translate this portion is however your major language Bible does it, or leaving it a bit ambiguous.]

¹⁰ Now regarding the manager's dishonesty/unfaithfulness, people who faithfully manage small matters will also faithfully manage important matters. People who are dishonest in the way that they handle small matters will be dishonest in the way that they handle important matters.¹⁶

¹¹ So, if you do not faithfully manage the wealth *that you have* here on earth, then *God* will not give you much reward. ¹² And if you do not faithfully manage things that belong to someone else, then *God* will not give you much to belong to you.

¹³ No servant is able to serve two different masters at the same time. *If he tried to do so, then he would prefer one more than the other one. Or he would be loyal to one and despise the other one. Similarly, you cannot please God if you are trying to get as much money as you can.*"

¹⁴ Some Pharisees were there who loved to *acquire* money. When they heard Jesus say this, they scoffed at him. ¹⁵ So, he said to them, "You try to make other people think that you are good, but God knows that you are not good. In fact, God despises the actions by which people try to make themselves seem to be good.

¹⁶ *After the time in which God gave his laws to Moses, and spoke to people through his prophets, he said nothing more.*¹⁷ But after/since John the baptizer came, *he and I and our disciples have been preaching good/sweet news about entering God's kingdom by believing in me, that I am the Messiah, God's king. And many people are entering God's kingdom.*

¹⁷ Everything that Moses and the other prophets wrote¹⁸ *about me will happen exactly as they said.* The sky and the earth may change/disappear, but God's message will always remain.¹⁹ ¹⁸ *For example, because God considers that a marriage lasts until either the husband or the wife dies, he considers that any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is disobeying / breaking God's law. He also considers that any man, who marries a woman whose husband has divorced her, is also disobeying / breaking God's law.*"²⁰

Poor Lazarus and a rich man both die²¹

¹⁹ Jesus also told this story:

"Once there was a rich man who wore expensive, purple, linen garments. He ate plenty every day, enjoying his wealth. ²⁰ There was also a poor man/beggar whose name was Lazarus, whose body was covered with sores. Every day, someone left Lazarus lying near the main gate to the rich man's house. ²¹ Stray dogs would come and lick Lazarus' sores. He was so hungry that he

¹⁶ It seems as tho' in vs 9, Jesus is interpreting the main point/principle of his parable (i.e. it is wise to secure your future). But now here in verse 10ff, it seems he wants to deal with any possible misunderstanding about the boss respecting his dishonest manager (i.e. dealing with the issue of unfaithfulness). Would it be helpful to insert a little discourse intro?

¹⁷ OR he was silent. (After God gave messages to his last prophets Daniel and Zechariah etc, when Israel and Judah were exiled, there was about 400 years when God was silent and he did not give any messages to his prophets. God began to speak again through his prophets when John the baptizer was born.)

¹⁸ Jews referred to the Hebrew Bible, the Original/Old Testament as (a) the Law, (b) the Law and the Prophets), or (c) The Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets.

¹⁹ OR never lose its power. OR never change. OR remain powerful.

²⁰ OR committing adultery. [Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:19; Mark 10:11-12]

²¹ OR Jesus continues his teaching on wealth with a story about life after death.

wanted to eat the food scraps that fell from the table where the rich man ate. ²² One day, the poor man died,²² but angels from God carried him to be *comforted* with his ancestor Abraham.

The rich man also died, *and his relatives* placed his body *in a tomb*.²³ ²³ *The rich man went down into Hades/Hell*,²⁴ where he was suffering great pain. He looked up and saw Abraham far away, and he saw Lazarus sitting with Abraham. ²⁴ So he shouted, 'Father Abraham, I am suffering in this fire! So please pity me, and send Lazarus here to dip his finger in water and touch my tongue to cool it!'

²⁵ But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that while you^(sg) were alive on earth, you enjoyed many good things. But Lazarus suffered *every day*. Now *it is right/just/good* that he is happy here, and that you are suffering. ²⁶ Besides that, there is a deep ravine/pit between you^(sg) and us^(exc). So, those who want to go from here to where you^(sg) are, cannot do so. Likewise, no one can cross/travel from where you^(sg) are, to where we^(exc) are.'

²⁷ Then the rich man said, 'If that is so, Father Abraham, then I ask you^(sg) to send Lazarus to my father's house. ²⁸ I have five (*younger*) brothers who live there. Tell Lazarus to warn them to repent, so that they do not also come to this place, where people suffer great pain!' ²⁹ But Abraham replied, 'Your brothers must go listen *to the priests reading* what Moses and the other prophets wrote!'

³⁰ But the rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham, *they need more than that*. If someone who has died becomes alive again and goes back to them and warns them, then they will repent from their sinful behavior.' ³¹ Abraham said to him, 'No! If they do not listen to what Moses and the other prophets wrote/said, then even if someone came alive again, *and went and warned them*, he could not convince them to repent.' "

²² OR the poor man died and someone buried his body.

²³ OR buried his body.

²⁴ OR In the place where unrighteous dead people go to wait for God to judge them.