

Sunday School Lesson for the Month of October 2015

What The Bible Says About Stewardship

(Luke 12:13-21)

Sunday, October 4, 2015

Perhaps no area in life is more sensitive than our finances. We may be open about every other part of our life, but the moment someone questions us about our money or possessions, we become very defensive. Nonetheless, some of Jesus' most relevant parables and teachings are about the stewardship of our possessions. Jesus knows the joy that awaits believers when they attain the level of commitment where they completely surrender all they have to God, including the stewardship of their possessions.

Luke 12:13-21 contains one of Jesus' clearest commentaries on stewardship. He begins by using a parable to illustrate the truth he wanted to drive home to their hearts. And this particular story was precipitated by an incident that arose between two brothers. Evidently their father had died, and one brother was not pleased with the way the estate had been divided. He asked Jesus, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me." The law gave two-thirds to the older son and one-third to the younger son. This son felt he was not getting his legal share, so he appealed to Jesus for help in getting his share. He was in the congregation listening to Jesus preach and there is a strong possibility that the man was even a follower of Jesus. The reason why I say that is because this man knew Jesus well enough to approach Him about the matter in the midst of a huge crowd. What the man wanted was significant. He wanted material possessions; money and property. He appealed to Jesus for help in getting what had probably been stolen from him. More than likely the property was rightfully his anyway. It would have been an act of justice to straighten out the inheritance. But Jesus refused to do so.

He even addressed the man as a stranger. Jesus refused to become involved in worldly affairs in settling property and money disputes. This man exposed a serious flaw in his spiritual life. Jesus had just preached a message on trusting God for the necessities of life, for God cares and will provide. Apparently, this man had not heard the message Jesus preached. He was bodily present, but he was too preoccupied with the thoughts of property and money to have really heard the word and receive the message.

Listening to the word being preached does not mean that we "hear the word," or that we learn from it. The word salvation and spiritual maturity do not rub off on a wandering mind or on a worldly life. The contrast between the mind and attitude

of the man and of Jesus is significant. The man's mind was set on the things of the world; property, money, wealth and selfishness. The Lord's mind was set on higher and nobler things. His mind was on salvation and life: heaven and eternity. The mission of Jesus was not to give man property but to give man life, both abundant and eternal. Property is nothing without life.

The charge of Jesus was strong. There was a double warning: "take heed, beware." The warning was to be given close attention. The word "beware," means to guard oneself from some enemy. The big sin of man is covetousness. This is the big sin of the world – desiring more and more. But you need to understand that a man's happiness and comfort, soul and body do not depend upon what he has; many poor people are happy and comfortable with healthy souls and bodies. Life does not consist in possessions – a beautiful home, the latest clothes, a new car, property, money, or wealth. The big "I" shows that the covetous man is aggressively self-centered. Notice here how Jesus gets the fact of man's covetousness across; He shares a parable about a man who was also aggressively self-centered. In just three short verses, describing his thoughts, the rich man in the parable said, "I" six times and "my" five times. The man's attention was solely upon himself. He was an immature, egocentric, materialistic minded man.

Sunday, October 11, 2015

I. The First lesson in this parable is the danger of a false sense of security in one's possessions.

Here we see a man who has become a success in his work. "What a fortunate man!" This man was tremendously blessed materially, but he did not thank God for his blessings. The man called the fruits of the ground and the possessions he had, "my fruit" and "my goods." The man called his soul, "my soul." There is no indication he had given his soul to God. He became puffed up and prideful with what he had done. He began to think bigger and bigger; I and I; and My and My – which is the big mistake of man's selfishness, self-indulgence, and extravagant living. All too often we think of security in terms of relief from financial strain. And we rationalize that it is good to be rich. Yet Jesus said, one of the hardest things in life is for a rich man to keep his riches and God in proper perspective.

In Matthew 13:22, Jesus spoke of "the deceitfulness of riches." Wealth can give us false sense of security. It can mislead and make us think more highly of ourselves than we should think. We start to rely on our money and our status in life rather than on God. Therefore, anything that gives us a sense of security other than God is false and hopelessly unreliable.

Sunday, October 18, 2015

II. The Second lesson is Jesus' parable is the foolishness of planning without God.

In the midst of his false security, this rich farmer who had pushed God aside, made some clever and even admirable plans: He did not intend to play the miser and drive himself to acquire more and more. He was going to retire and enjoy life. So he made detailed plans to enjoy the wealth he had accumulated. The shocking thing here is that he only thought these things. He never did them! They were only thoughts of his heart! But he failed to recognize that God might have other plans for him. In short, this man had not consulted God and his plans exploded because he had considered himself and himself only. In our human nature, we try to master our circumstances and leave God out. It's bad thing to leave God out of your plans. God said to this clever schemer, "You fool!" God had other plans!

Sunday, October 25, 2015

III. The Third lesson is the tragedy of a bankrupt soul.

The rich farmer was not rich toward God on the night that God demanded his life. It was God who now spoke. It was God who knew the thoughts of the man. It was God who knew the man was to die that night. The man did not know it, nor did anyone else. He was planning for the future. The man was to die that night. Everyone has his night to die, and this was his night. The man's soul was required. God required and demanded it. His soul was not going to cease existing; it was just to exist in another world. Existence was not over for this man; his soul was simply to be in another world, in the spiritual dimension of existence.

The man was called, a "fool" by God. He had lived as a fool: living entirely for himself. He had refused to think about the truth concerning the uncertainty of life. There was good possibility that he might not live as long as he hoped to live.

The reason you shouldn't get wrapped up in your money is because money is not a permanent possession. Someone else will inherit what you leave behind. The man left every penny behind. He took nothing with him. This is a point we seldom think about. He could take nothing with him because the strength, the energy, the power, the life of his body had left. The Bible tells us that the life of a man's body is his spirit and the spirit lives forever. When the spirit left, that man's strength, energy, and power were gone. His body had to lie down. His spirit was spiritual; of another dimension of being which belonged to another world – another life. Therefore, all material possessions had to be left behind.

That is why it is foolish to spend your life laying up material possessions.