

28 Parables of Jesus
 Fired Steward & Rich Man's Big Surprise
 Bible Sermon Study Notes: Pastor Cary Rodgers, Jr

COL Chapter 21: "A Great Gulf Fixed"

In Luke chapter 15 Jesus gives the Pharisees, His disciples, the publicans and others a series powerful parables about the lost sheep, the lost silver piece, and the lost prodigal son. Each one of these parable demonstrated the depth of love of Christ to seek and to save all sinners who are lost.

Jesus says,

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

For those who were once lost and given the blessed gift of Jesus' compassion, mercy, grace, and truth, what does God expect us to do with it?

Psalms 98:2-3

- 2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.
- 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Mark 16:15-16

- 15 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**
- 16 **He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

The followers of Christ who has been given the knowledge and truth of God's power and salvation are to GO into ALL the world and share the blessed gift of Jesus Christ with others!

After Jesus gave those powerful parables of the lost sheep, the lost silver piece, and the lost prodigal son in Luke chapter 15 what parable does Jesus give next beginning in Luke chapter 16?

Luke 16:1-9

- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 4 **I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.**
- 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?**
- 6 **And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.**
- 7 **Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.**
- 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.**
- 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.**

What is a steward?

Steward (Greek): *house distributor* (that is, *manager*), or *overseer*, that is, an employee in that capacity; by extension a fiscal *agent* (*treasurer*); figuratively a *preacher* (of the Gospel) – Strong's Dictionary

Who does the certain rich man and the steward represent in the parable?

The certain rich man is the architect of the world and our salvation, Jesus Christ and we, the professed people of God, supposed to be the stewards or managers of God's blessings and treasurers of truth to give to the world!

Luke 12:42-43

42 And the Lord said, **Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?**

43 **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**

What was the steward accused of by his boss, the certain rich man? Why was he fired!

Wasted his goods.

Whose goods did the steward waste? The rich man's.

Have you wasted God's goods? You're FIRED!

As stewards of God's treasurers of truth we are not to waste his goods of time, talents, temples, and treasury (money). We need to take account of all that God has blessed us with. ALL. To waste something that is not yours is stealing.

1 Peter 4:10-11

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Did the rich man give the steward an opportunity to make things right?

“Give and account of thy stewardship.” In other words, open the books. “If you have done wrong repent and turn from it. Make it right.” He would have to make restitution – pay back the rich man of what he had wasted.

What did the steward do?

Worried about his position instead of humbling himself in repentance. He continued on in his rebellion. He said that he was not going to “dig” to do manual labor or beg. He was too ashamed for that. He would rather continue on with the scheme and waste the rich man good.

In order to be accepted and possibly hired by the debtors he personally took it upon himself to lower the rich man debtor's debts.

Luke 16:

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Who lowered the debt standard? The steward...

Lesson:

Are we lowering the standard of truth in order to be accepted by others. We are all indebted to Gods 100%. Are we now saying that God does not require 100%?

Oil

Remember oil in the Bible represent the anointing of the holy spirit. In order to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which is His power, I must devote 100% of my life to Jesus Christ. I must abide in Him and His Word and He abide in me! Are many saying today that 50% of your devotion and life is enough!

Wheat

The wheat in the Word of God represents the Word of God, the Bread of Life, Jesus. We need to eat the entire 100% of the Word from the OT to NT. We must believe and live our lives in 100% based on the Word of God. Are many professed christian today saying that just 40% is okay? 99.9% is not good enough 100%!

Three Angel's Platform of Truth

Are you going to stay on the platform of TRUTH? God has tremendously blessed the Seventh-day Adventist movement with the truth of the three angels messages, but has the church corp denomination as stewards lessening the standard in order to fit in with the other churches and the world? The evidence has already been given time and time again that they have stepped off the platform of truth like ancient Israel.

At this most critical time when we are to give this Three Angel's message with power they have step off the platform.

A FIRM PLATFORM

Vision of the platform...Ellen White vision of those like the unjust steward that have step of the platform.

"I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps-- the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance.

The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it.

Those who rejected the first message could not be benefited by the second; neither were they benefited by the midnight cry, which was to prepare them to enter with Jesus by faith into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. And by rejecting the two former messages, they have so darkened their understanding that they can see no light in the third angel's message, which shows the way into the most holy place. I saw that as the Jews crucified Jesus, so the nominal churches had crucified these messages, and therefore they have no knowledge of the way into the most holy, and they cannot be benefited by the intercession of Jesus there. Like the Jews, who offered their useless sacrifices, they offer up their useless prayers to the apartment which Jesus has left; and Satan, pleased with the deception, assumes a religious character, and leads the minds of these professed Christians to himself, working with his power, his signs and lying wonders, to fasten them in his snare. Some he deceives in one way, and some in another. He has different delusions prepared to affect different minds. Some look with horror upon one deception, while they readily receive another. Satan deceives some with Spiritualism. He also comes as an angel of light and spreads his influence over the land by means of false

reformations. The churches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them, when it is the work of another spirit. The excitement will die away and leave the world and the church in a worse condition than before.

I saw that God has honest children among the nominal Adventists and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers and people will be called out from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth may think that God is with them. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them to think that God is still working for the churches. But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant.” *Ellen White, Spiritual Gifts Volume 1: Chapter 29 A Firm Platform*

Are you going to stand on the firm foundation of truth? Or stay on “the ship” that is leading to destruction?

Like Israel of old we are stewards of God's truth. We are to be good stewards! Found doing the will and work of Jesus Christ. Staying on the firm foundation of the Three Angels Message.

What are key lessons that Jesus is teaching us about the parable of the unjust steward?

Luke 16:10-13

- 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.**
- 11 **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?**
- 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.**

Is being blessed with the “goods”, blessings of God's Truth an automatic ticket to heaven? No

What was the Pharisee's response to Jesus parable of the unjust steward and the lesson that He taught concerning it?

Luk 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Deride (Greek): **Thayer Definition:** 1) to deride by turning up the nose, to sneer at, to scoff at

What did Jesus say to the Pharisees next that teaches some very deep and profound lessons?

Luke 16:15-18

- 15 And he said unto them, **Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination [detestable] in the sight of God.**
- 16 **The law and the prophets [testimonies of the Messiah OT] were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**
- 17 **And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.** [God does not change nor His standards] – following text an example...
- 18 **Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.**

Verse 18 is an example in the law of God that God nor His law changes. His standards DO NOT CHANGE!

Verse 18 is referring to a dialogue that Jesus had with the Pharisee in Matthew 19:3 – 9.

The Pharisee in the past tried to challenge God's law... tempting Jesus that it has changed and the leaders have that right to change God's law based on circumstances.... What was God's answer to that in Matthew 19:3-9?

Matthew 19:3-9

- 3 The Pharisees also came unto him, **tempting him (trying to say God law changes)**, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?
- 4 And he answered and said unto them, **Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,**
- 5 **And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?**
- 6 **Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.**
- 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?
- 8 He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**
- 9 **And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**

Remember Israel and the Jewish leaders had both the law and the prophets (testimonies), richly blessed with these “goods” from God to share to the world!

What parable does Jesus give next that reveals the fate of the Pharisees and all who are like them?

Luke 16:19-31

- 19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:
- 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,
- 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.
- 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;
- 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.
- 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
- 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.
- 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.
- 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
- 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
- 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
- 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
- 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus is not teaching about the state of the dead. He is not teaching that wicked go straight to heaven or hell. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead know not anything. It is just a sleep for those who die in Christ. They will be resurrected at the second coming of Jesus.

“In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ's words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God. He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all--that no man is valued for his possessions; for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him.” COL 263

What is the main lesson of the parable?

“In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No after probation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God.” COL 260

Probation is a period of testing and observing the character of a person to see if he or she will receive the execution of punishment or be released.

The Judgment for ALL in sin is eternal death!

We ALL deserve the sentence of eternal death, but God has given ALL of us a way of escape through Jesus Christ.

We are on ALL on probation. Our characters are being tested and observed NOW.

There will be no second probation! You only get one probationary period.

Who does the rich man represent in this parable?

The rich man claimed to be a son of Abraham. He called him father in Luke 16:24. The rich man was rich because it was given to him to share and help others.

The rich man represents a class of professed people of God in which God expects them to share the rich “goods” of truth and abundant living to others in which He gave them.

God had made the rich man a steward of His means, and it was his duty to attend to just such cases as that of the beggar. The command had been given, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5); and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18). The rich man was a Jew, and he was acquainted with the command of God. But he forgot that he was accountable for the use of his entrusted means and capabilities. The Lord's blessings rested upon him abundantly, but he employed them selfishly, to honor himself, not his Maker. In proportion to his abundance was his obligation to use his gifts for the uplifting of humanity. This was the Lord's command, but the rich man had no thought of his obligation to God. COL 261

The rich man was a selfish steward of God's goods! Like the unjust steward at the beginning of Luke 16, the rich man spent what God gave him on entertainment and amusements. The rich man “**fared sumptuously every day.**”

Who does the poor beggar, Lazarus, represent?

Let's look at the characters of the beggar.

His name reveals his character:

Lazarus (Greek)

Lazaros

Thayer Definition:

Lazarus = “whom God helps”

Hebrew name = Eleazar or Elazar ('el'âzâr) From compound El = God, Azar = help (protect or aid)

Mat 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The poor beggar who is helped by God recognized his dependence on God.

Also the poor beggar suffered and had sores. He was obviously persecuted and beaten.

Matthew 5:10-12

- 10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Based on the characteristics of the poor beggar, Lazarus, he represents a class of God people who have humble themselves, repented and turned from sin. They are the remnant people of God who have suffered “sores” for the truth of God's word. Those who were once dead in sin, but now humble and alive through the blood of Jesus Christ.

“Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ. When the trumpet sounds and all that are in the graves hear Christ's voice and come forth, they will receive their reward; for their faith in God was not a mere theory, but a reality.” COL 262

Why was the rich man surprised when he was in “hell” being tormented?

He thought that he was a “son” of Abraham with the automatic privilege to be saved.

Same condition

What did the Laodicean church say about themselves?

Rev 3:17 *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing....*

This is the same condition of the corp SDA church today. They have gone from Laodicean to Babylon!

Rich! RICH! RICH! with goods – but sit on the Three Angels Message... Billions of dollars in retirement and stock funds... wasting God's goods on themselves...

In this blind state of deception, many think that their membership in the corporate church will save them!

“There are many today who are following the same course. Though church members, they are unconverted. They may take part in the church service, they may chant the psalm, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God” (Psalm 42:1); but they testify to a falsehood. They are no more righteous in God's sight than is the veriest sinner. The soul that longs after the excitement of worldly pleasure, the mind that is full of love for display, cannot serve God. Like the rich man in the parable, such a one has no inclination to war against the lust of the flesh. He longs to indulge appetite. He chooses the atmosphere of sin. He is suddenly snatched away by death, and he goes down to the grave with the character formed during his lifetime in copartnership with Satanic agencies. In the grave he has no power to choose anything, be it good or evil; for in the day when a man dies, his thoughts perish. (Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.)” COL 270

Now knowing his fate, what was the rich man's request to Abraham?

- 27 *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*
 28 *For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

What was Abraham's response?

- 29 *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*
 30 *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*
 31 *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

“These words were proved true in the history of the Jewish nation. Christ's last and crowning miracle was the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, after he had been dead four days. The Jews were given this wonderful evidence of the Saviour's divinity, but they rejected it. Lazarus rose from the dead and bore his testimony before them, but they hardened their hearts against all evidence, and even sought to take his life. (John 12:9-11.)” COL 265

What is your response to the TRUTH?

Probation is soon closed. Are you still on the platform of truth? Are you a member of the church of Christ in heaven in the book of life?

Your lineage or church membership or affiliation will not save you. Only Jesus saves...

There is only one church with one foundation in which Christ is the head. Only the humble, obedient, diligent workers for Jesus are “members” of this one true church.

“God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; it is the people who love God and keep His commandments. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Where Christ is even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church.” The Upward Look p. 315 Ellen White

Appeal

Big church vs. Small Remnant

Matthew 7:13-14

- 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Briefly compare the big church as the rich man and the small remnant has the poor beggar as Lazarus helped by God!

Are you going to be like the fired steward and rich man or be a humble faithful remnant that stays on the firm platform on the Three Angels Message?

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power--all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these.” GC 606