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## Pastor's Bible Study



**The Parable  
of the  
Dishonest  
Steward  
(Luke 16:1-13)**

*A Servant Church*

**SAINT MATTHEW**  
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*God's Love for God's People*

**Wednesday, February 4, 2020  
6:30 pm**

## THE PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST/UNJUST STEWARD

Luke 16:1-8 (1-15)

### NIV 1984 (New International Version)

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup> So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’<sup>3</sup> “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— <sup>4</sup> I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’<sup>5</sup> “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’<sup>6</sup> “‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’<sup>7</sup> “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ “‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’<sup>8</sup> “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.<sup>9</sup> I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.<sup>10</sup> “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.<sup>11</sup> So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?<sup>12</sup> And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?<sup>13</sup> “No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.”<sup>14</sup> The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.<sup>15</sup> He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.

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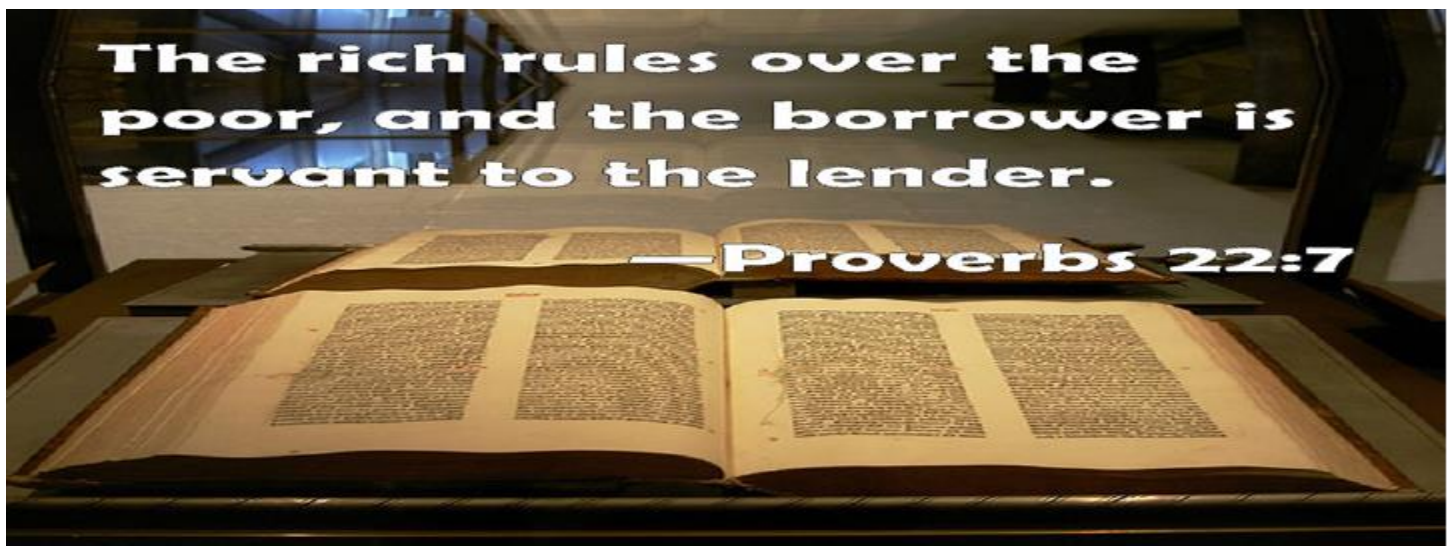
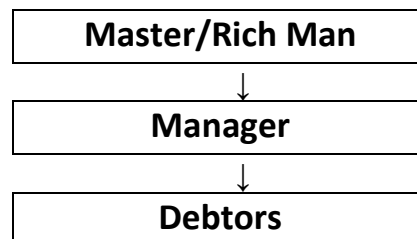
### MSG (The Message, Paraphrased)

<sup>1-2</sup> Jesus said to his disciples, “There was once a rich man who had a manager. He got reports that the manager had been taking advantage of his position by running up huge personal expenses. So he called him in and said, ‘What’s this I hear about you? You’re fired. And I want a complete audit of your books.’<sup>3-4</sup> “The manager said to himself, ‘What am I going to do? I’ve lost my job as manager. I’m not strong enough for a laboring job, and I’m too proud to beg. . . . Ah, I’ve got a plan. Here’s what I’ll do . . . then when I’m turned out into the street, people will take me into their houses.’<sup>5</sup> “Then he went at it. One after another, he called in the people who were in debt to his master. He said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’<sup>6</sup> “He replied, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ “The manager said, ‘Here, take your bill, sit down here—quick now—write fifty.’<sup>7</sup> “To the next he said, ‘And you, what do you owe?’ “He answered, ‘A hundred sacks of wheat.’ “He said, ‘Take your bill, write in eighty.’<sup>8-9</sup> “Now here’s a surprise: The master praised the crooked manager! And why? Because he knew how to look after himself. Streetwise people are smarter in this regard than law-abiding citizens. They are on constant alert, looking for angles, surviving by their wits. I want you to be smart in the same way—but for what is *right*—using every adversity to stimulate you to creative survival, to

concentrate your attention on the bare essentials, so you'll live, really live, and not complacently just get by on good behavior." <sup>10-13</sup> Jesus went on to make these comments: If you're honest in small things, you'll be honest in big things; If you're a crook in small things, you'll be a crook in big things. If you're not honest in small jobs, who will put you in charge of the store? No worker can serve two bosses: He'll either hate the first and love the second Or adore the first and despise the second. You can't serve both God and the Bank. <sup>14-18</sup> When the Pharisees, a money-obsessed bunch, heard him say these things, they rolled their eyes, dismissing him as hopelessly out of touch. So Jesus spoke to them: "You are masters at making yourselves look good in front of others, but God knows what's behind the appearance. What society sees and calls monumental, God sees through and calls monstrous. God's Law and the Prophets climaxed in John; Now it's all kingdom of God—the glad news and compelling invitation to every man and woman. The sky will disintegrate and the earth dissolve before a single letter of God's Law wears out. Using the legalities of divorce as a cover for lust is adultery; Using the legalities of marriage as a cover for lust is adultery.

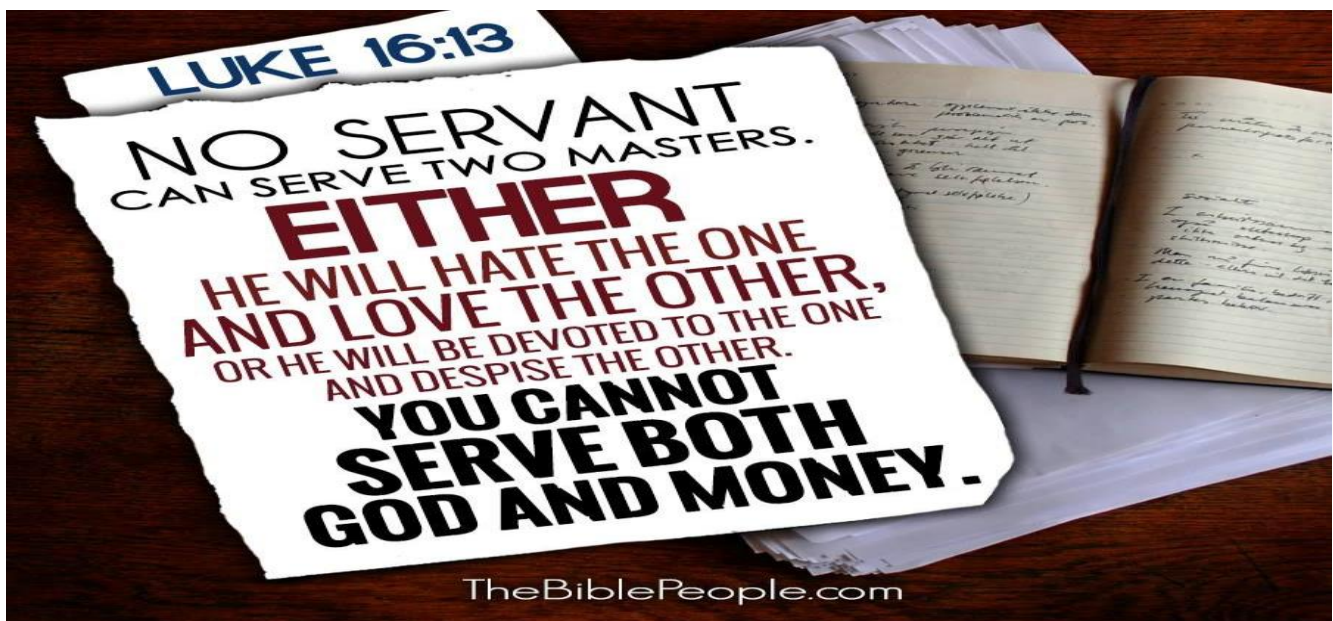
## I. ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

- A. One of the more difficult parables to interpret. Several questions to consider:
1. Is the **“master”** symbolic of Jesus?
  2. If the master is Jesus, why would the master commend a dishonest, shrewd manager?
  3. Where does the parable end? Beginning, middle or end of vs. 8?
  4. Are vss. 10-12 and vs. 13 part of the parable?
- B. Understanding the hierarchical (financial) power structure of the Parable



### C. Significant Points of the Parable

1. Manager accused of wasting the rich man's possessions. Doesn't say who made the accusation. **"They said..."**
2. Manager was called in and was confronted with what the Master heard. He was asked to give an account of his management.
3. Manager was fired on the spot (No forgiveness? No second chance?).
4. Manager takes action to save himself.
  - a. Calls debtors in and has them adjust their bills (he has the power and authority to do this).
    - i. First debtor owed the Master 800 gallons of oil = yield of 146 olive trees. Gave him a 50% discount.
    - ii. Second debtor owed 1,000 bushels of wheat. He was told to change it to 800 bushels of wheat. 20% discount.
  - b. The development of "good will."
5. The odd part of the parable – vs. 8. Being commended for shrewd behavior.
6. Another odd statement – vs. 9
7. Additional teachings related to finances and management – Vss. 10-15

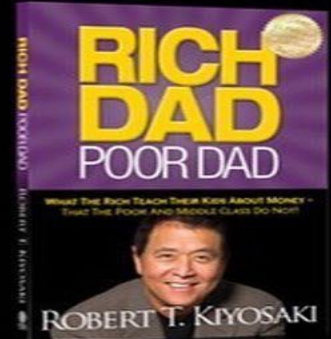


## II. LESSONS - SPIRITUAL & LIFE APPLICATIONS/QUESTIONS

- A. How do we handle things that belong to others?
- B. What are the effects of **"calling somebody in"** based on what you may have heard?
- C. Why was the Manager fired? Was the firing justified?
- D. The Manager indicated the kind of job he would **NOT** do if fired. What do you think about this?
- E. Was the Master right for commending the shrewdness of the Manager? Yes, no, why?
- F. Should the Master have been more involved or hands-on in his financial affairs?
- G. What are the lessons we learn about money management here?

# 10 LESSONS FROM RICH DAD, POOR DAD

1. Learn to **listen**
2. Pay **yourself** first
3. Buy luxuries **last**, not first
4. **Reduce** expenses & liabilities
5. Aim for more **valuable** assets
6. Be in **control** over your emotions
7. Work to **learn**, don't work to earn
8. You become what you study - **read** a lot
9. **Reinvest** excess cash generated by assets
10. Surround yourself with people **smarter** than you



## Next Bible Study Focus:

**“ Everything You Need to Know About The Book of Genesis”**

Join us on the St. Matthew Prayer Line tomorrow morning at 6:30 am

**NEW PHONE NUMBER: (206) 806-9984, NO Access Code Needed!**

## NOTES

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