

SOLVING STRUGGLES

In Interpersonal Relationships

“Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

Ingredient #7: LOYALTY – GOD IS FAITHFUL – Luke 16:1-13, 19-31

Heavenly Father, as we approach Your Word, it's with an understanding that it's only going to be by the Spirit of God opening our eyes. We thank You for the prayer of the psalmist when he asks that You open his eyes that he may behold wondrous things out of Thy law. We want that, too. We want the eyes of our understanding to be enlightened that we can comprehend the height, the depth and know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge. And that we can more and more in our relationships manifest that love which is produced by the Spirit of God as we endeavor to effectively relate to those who are around us. As we look at a further facet of good interpersonal relationships we pray that we could be challenged and we could respond in such a way that we'd go away with this being something that we really want to implement in our own lives. May the parables we look at prove to be beneficial to instruct us and teach us in the way that we should go. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let's walk through the main ingredients.

1. A Relationship with God—we talked about the judge who had no respect for God or man.
2. Unconditional Love—there we talked about the prodigal son.
3. Compassion—the good Samaritan.
4. Forgiveness—this was Peter’s problem. How many times should I forgive?
5. Sensitivity—the ability to live in somebody else’s world and to be sensitive to their needs.
6. Integrity—Is God fair? We looked at the vineyard owner who paid a denarius for everybody that worked for him, whether he worked 12 hours, 9 hours, 6 hours, 3 hours or 1 hour, everybody got the same salary. And we pointed out the fact that God is fair.

Now we’re going to approach the subject of LOYALTY.

God is faithful. He is the absolute manifestation of loyalty and faithfulness. Loyalty is demonstrated in 1 Corinthians 13 when it talks about love.

1 Corinthians 13:7

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, you know, endures all things.

Love is there always the same, no matter what. That’s what

we're talking about when it comes to loyalty.

We're going to look at these two parables in Luke 16. Before we get there let's look at an Old Testament illustration of what we're talking about when it comes to loyalty and friendship.

Sometimes when we see it in flesh and blood it really helps us to get a handle on what we're talking about when we get into the parables.

The illustration we're going to look at is the relationship that David and Jonathan had together when it comes to loyalty.

Get in your mind, David is a young man who has been victorious on the field of battle. He has beaten and whipped Goliath and has become an instant hero, militarily. Jonathan happens to be the son of Saul, the king. This relationship is immediately established between the two of them and is one of the greatest illustrations of loyalty from somebody whose dad is terribly threatened and disloyal to David and the choice that Jonathan makes because of his friendship with David to be loyal to him.

Now let's read just a few passages. We'll jump into the life of David and pull out these various experiences of David and Jonathan just to show you in illustration form what it's like to be loyal.

1 Samuel 18:1ff

After David had finished talking with Saul, [now this is just after killing Goliath] Jonathan became one in spirit with David

and he loved him as himself. From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. [In other words, he was already threatened by him. He wanted to control him] And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and he gave it to David, along with his tunic and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

Now here's a rich man's son. David is probably in shorts and tennis shoes. He has come in out of shepherding the sheep to go and take these goodies to his brothers who are fighting in the battle and when he gets over there they've been hung up for forty days listening to the threats of this giant Philistine and David just is naive enough to trust the Lord and so he grabs 5 rocks and a sling and goes to the field of battle and whips the guy and becomes a hero. And Jonathan immediately responds to that and the relationship between the two of them is fantastic.

So the first thing Jonathan can do for David is give him his robe, and also gives him his sword and his belt. He's that kind of guy. You characterize guys sometimes as "they give you the shirt off their back."

That's the relationship that Jonathan obviously sustained with David. He'd do anything for him. There's total commitment to one another.

In the story there is an intense jealousy that sets in and Saul immediately wants to kill David. The whole thing is a drama around this friendship that's very awkward because here's the king's son having a close relationship with the number one

enemy to the king.

Here's what we read in 1 Samuel 19:

1 Samuel 19:1ff

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David but Jonathan was very fond of David and he warned him, "My father, Saul, is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning. Go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out." Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David. He has not wronged you and what he had done has benefited you greatly. He took his life into his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel and you saw it and you were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?" Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath, "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death." So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul and David was with Saul as before.

So here is a mediator reconciling the two but it's very temporary.

Now listen to chapter 20 and verse 1 because immediately Saul changes his mind and wants to kill him and because of that David has to flee.

1 Samuel 20:1

Then David fled from Naioth.

He fled north to Ramah to be with Samuel during this time. Saul chases him and finds him. Then he comes back to Jonathan, David does, and says, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he’s trying to take my life?”

“Never,” Jonathan replied, “You’re not going to die. Look, my father doesn’t do anything great or small without confiding in me. Why should he hide this from me? It’s not so.”

Immediately he takes an oath with him that this is not so. Now the next time there is a meal Saul literally tries to pin his own son against the wall with a spear, simply because of his relationship to David. So again Jonathan steps to the forefront to be a buffer. Remember that horrible experience in chapter 20 when Jonathan goes before his dad and discovers that his dad is going to kill him and so he comes to warn David and he takes the little boy with him and he says, “If the arrows go over the top, you have to leave. If the arrows fall in front, you can stay.”

Here’s David out here in this field waiting for the arrows to come and the arrows went over the top. We read this

1 Samuel 20:42

Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘the

Lord is witness between you and me and between your descendants and between my descendants forever.’ Then David left and Jonathan went back to town.

But the picture is one of David weeping more than Jonathan at the time of their departure. You would think that’s probably how it all ended, but that’s not the way it ended. Listen to this. This is so cool.

1 Samuel 23:16-18

And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and he helped him find strength in his God. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father, Saul, will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel and I will be second to you. Even my father, Saul, knows this.” The two of them made a covenant before the Lord. And Jonathan went home but David remained at Horesh.

Do you know what’s so dramatic about that? Here’s David out in the wilderness. Saul can’t find him anywhere and Jonathan goes to him immediately and finds him and tells him, “Look, it’s going to be fine. You’re going to be the next king and I’m going to be second to you.”

That’s the last time they saw each other. Shortly thereafter Jonathan dies as a casualty on the field of battle against the Philistines.

Now there is an illustration of loyalty and friendship. A loyalty that goes way beyond anything that we comprehend in interpersonal relationships and in our love and devotion to each

other. It serves as a suitable introduction to these parables we're gonna look at when it comes to talking about LOYALTY.

Pick up at verse 1 in Luke chapter 16 on your study. Basically what we're talking about in the passage is the stewardship or the responsibility toward one another.

Jesus is probably talking to the same audience that we had in chapter 15 when we were looking at the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. This must be the same audience.

This is a parable by CONTRAST. It's one of the most difficult parables in the New Testament to understand. We see loyalty in reverse. Disloyalty when money comes into the picture.

We're going to look at:

1. STORY #1—Luke 16:1-13
 - A. ACCOUNTABILITY—verses 1 and 2
 - B. WHAT SHALL I DO? or OUR ALTERNATIVES—verses 3-8
 - C. ADMONITION—verses 9 and 10
 - D. APPLICATION—verses 11-13

We'll look at the first parable and then we'll look at the second story in verses 19-31.

v. 1 Now He was also saying to the disciples: “There was a certain rich man who was having a manager of his estate, and this manager was accused to him as wasting his possessions.

“Now He was also saying to the disciples: “There was a certain rich man who was having a manager of his estate, and this manager was accused to him as wasting his possessions.”

This rich man obviously has made his money in olive oil and wheat and he has a manager over his estate. There have been those that have come to the owner and said, “Hey, look. This guy is disloyal. He is wasting your possessions.”

Genesis 39:6 is an illustration of what a manager ought to be like. This is Joseph:

Genesis 39:6

So he left everything in Joseph’s charge, and with him around, he did not concern himself with anything except the food that he ate.

Because of Joseph’s devoted loyalty to Potiphar, Potiphar didn’t worry about anything at the house. He basically turned it all over to him.

Now this manager is evidently accused by some business associates of living high on the hog.

In 1 Corinthians 4 it’s required of stewards that one be found

trustworthy, be faithful. There is a loyalty that ought to be there to those under whom you work and by whom you're employed. You expect that but this is not happening here.

Just like the prodigal son in chapter 15 wasted his inheritance in the far country, so this guy is living it up on company bucks. He has a Cadillac, wears a Rolex, has a home with a swimming pool, sauna and tennis courts. He has extravagant entertainment costs for new clients, charging off trips to Hawaii, Europe and Acapulco and he's having a blast. He just got back from the Caribbean. Here all these people come to the head guy and say, "Hey look. He's wasting the profits of the company."

Proverbs 28:20

A faithful man will abound with blessings but he who makes haste to be rich will not go unpunished.

Tim Hansel, in his book *When I Relax, I Feel Guilty* says:

(When I Relax, I Feel Guilty by Tim Hansel)

Gordon Dahl said, "Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and to play at their worship." As a result, their meanings and values are distorted. Their relationships disintegrate faster than they can keep them in repair, and their lifestyles resemble a cast of characters in search of a plot.

(source unknown)

The key phrase is right there in verse 1:

“he is wasting his [master’s] possessions.”

He’s not loyal. Now with this erroneous attitude, this lover of money desires to become rich, he’s wasting the manager’s money.

v. 2 And having called him, he said to him: “What is this I am hearing concerning you? Give an account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.”

“And having called him, he said to him: ‘What is this I am hearing concerning you? Give an account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’”

That’s a good way to get fired. If you want to put that in layman’s terminology he says, “What’s this I’ve been hearing? Turn in your books, you’re done. You’re fired.”

So he gives a date or a period of time obviously as to when he’s going to be terminated so that he has time to do what he needs to do. He says, “We’re going to audit the books. And with the auditing, you’re going to be held accountable. Turn in your books, you’re fired.”

Now would you notice that the manager makes no defense. When a person makes no defense you know he’s got egg all over his face. He’s guilty of what he’s been doing. So here come the **ALTERNATIVES**.

Here comes this disloyal manager of the owner’s estate and

immediately stress reveals selfishness. The stress of survival will always reveal the selfishness of the heart and where your priorities really are. If you can have a friend after having gone through a crisis and be under stress, you have a very special treasure. Guard that with your life.

Someone who will continue to think unselfishly about their relationship with you and continue to be a giver in being involved with you in the midst of stress, is a very special person.

Let's just make it in principle form. Stress reveals loyalties. Stress reveals disloyalty.

You're not in the ministry very long before you find that out. If you think ministry is a piece of cake you've got another thing coming. Ministry would be a snap if it weren't for the people.

It is tough sledding sometimes because there are people out there who really just love. They're well-intentioned dragons and they'd just love, with their fire-breathing abilities, to eat ministers for lunch.

That's not to offset the other wonderful folks who really care sacrificially and are involved and will stay by you.

v. 3 And the manager said to himself: "What shall I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

"And the manager said to himself: 'What shall I do, because my

master is taking away the management from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.”

Where does he fit on our chart? Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

What’s the focus? I—ME—MY.

How many times does the word “I” and “me” occur in the verse?

We’ve got him in the lower left. We have some words there that can describe him for us. Try to put him on the chart. Pride. All those “self” words—self-indulgent, self-centered. He’s an individual who is totally absorbed with his own personal matters. He has no loyalty to the man who has hired him and taken care of him for all these years. That has gone out the window immediately with the stress.

What’s his problem?

“What am I going to do now that they’ve taken my job away from me? I’ve been sitting at a desk too long and I’m not strong enough to get on the other end of an idiot stick and begin to shovel. I can’t dig ditches. And then on top of that I don’t want to sit around and take an unemployment check. I don’t want to go begging with my hand out.”

So he looks at both these things. “I can’t go back to manual labor and I don’t want to be on the welfare line. So what am I going to do now since I can’t do that?”

So the crisis is here. “What am I gonna do?”

When a person loses his job, it’s pretty traumatic. If you’ve ever lost one, you know just exactly what we’re talking about. Immediately social acceptance is gone because you’re social life is built around your work. Now that you’ve been fired or you lost your job, socially, you’re an outcast.

Secondly, your security has had a tremendous blow. You don’t know what you’re going to do with your life.

Thirdly, your self-image has just gone down the drain. After all, you failed.

Here’s this guy and he says, “I’m too weak to get on the other end of a shovel and, on top of that, I’m just too proud to beg for a living.”

Now look what he does.

v. 4 I know what I should do, in order that when I am removed from the management, they will receive me into their homes.’

“I know what I shall do,”

He’s got the wheel’s spinning. When the survival wheels turn, you do it to them before they do it to you. It’s total disloyalty. Here it is by contrast. What are the options? This is what I’ll do:

“in order that when I am removed from the management, they

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will receive me into their homes.”

Isn't it interesting that when you immediately lose your job, your friends become very important to you? It's funny how you get your mind off material things and it's the people that really become important.

So he says, “I've got a plan. This is what I'm going to do. I'm going to focus on my friends. They are the customers of the man that I work for. What I'm going to do to make something out of this impossible situation is I am going to do something that is going to be very disloyal.

v. 5 And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he was saying to the first: 'How much are you owing my master?'

“And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he was saying to the first: 'How much are you owing my master?'"

These are all last minute favors to the customers of the boss in order to win their friendship before the deadline comes for his termination.

v. 6 And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

“And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'”

Isn't it interesting when you're doing something wrong you have to do it quickly? Just cancel it, cut it in half. Do it quick. Get it over with. Take your bill, sit down and let's cut it 50 percent.

What do you think the guy's thinking? He's thinking, "Wow! This is really neat. What a fine favor, thanks. I'll do it."

Now you know the thing about this parable is that Jesus is fully aware of dishonest employees, kickbacks, price fixing, embezzlement, selfishness, job jungle. He knows it. He knows exactly where you live and exist and what's going on out there. It's neat to see this parable because the Lord understood it. He knew human nature.

v. 7 Then he said to another: 'Now as for you how much are you owing?' And he said, 'One hundred measures of wheat.' He is saying to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

"Then he said to another: 'Now as for you how much are you owing?' And he said, 'One hundred measures of wheat.' He is saying to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'"

He cuts one bill 50 percent and he cuts the other bill 20 percent. He does last minute favors to customers to win their friendship so when the time comes for him to lose his job, these guys are going to remember him and maybe have something for him to do.

v. 8 And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he acted shrewdly: for the sons of this age

are shrewder in their dealings with their own kind than the sons of the light.

“And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he acted shrewdly: for the sons of this age are shrewder in their dealings with their own kind than the sons of the light.”

When you stop to think about it, the manager doesn't have anything he really can do in this situation other than commend his manager. He's between a rock and a hard place. If he goes back to his customers and says, “I fired this guy and none of those things count,” the customers are going to quit doing business with him because he didn't mean what he said. So he's thinking, “That fox put me between a rock and a hard place and I have to just go along with his benevolence. He is a shrewd character. The next time I'm going to be smarter and he's going to pay the piper.”

That's exactly the way the business world goes. He has to go along with what's been said. “He took it to me this time. I'll take to him the next time.”

He is commended for his shrewdness because he can't do anything in this situation. He saw the issues clearly. He had a care for the future. He made provision for what he knew was coming and he moved quickly. When you look at those things that guy would probably fit into the current business world.

What does the word “shrewdness” mean? Shrewdness is having the quality of thinking, scheming, planning, plotting, developing and putting deals together. Always thinking about creative

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strategy. Thinking of bigger and newer ways of doing things. The thing that we need to see in this passage is that here's a man who immediately becomes disloyal to his boss when there is money involved. He demonstrates in the final act, what he was doing in the other because he was wasting his money. He had no loyalty toward him.

Let's look at the admonition and then we'll get on to another one of the parables.

C. ADMONITION—verses 9 & 10

v. 9 And I am saying to you: Make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, in order that when it gives out they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

“And I am saying to you: Make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, in order that when it gives out they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.”

What is he saying? He is saying use your money in making friends with people who are not Christians. Help them to come into relationship with God so one of these days they'll be thankful in heaven for the fact that you cared enough to have a part in their salvation by discharging your stewardship and responsibility to build a relationship with them. We're commanded to do that—to make friends with the things which God has given us in order to reach them.

v. 10 He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful

also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”

D. The APPLICATION—verses 11-13

v. 11 If therefore, you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust you with that wealth which is genuine?

“If therefore,”—here comes the application—“you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust you with that wealth which is genuine?”

What the Lord is doing is taking in a whole area of stewardship and responsibility and touching lives for the glory of God. That’s what He’s saying in this particular parable.

v. 12 And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?

“And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?”

v. 13 No household slave is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You are not

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able to serve God and wealth.”

“No household slave is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and wealth.”

He’s saying, “Learn how it really is to be loyal.” The Lord hates that about us and that we are so disloyal to Him.

In 1 John 2:15-17 He says:

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world neither the things that are in the world...

James 4:4

You adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the love of the world is enmity with God?

That’s how He feels about our personal disloyalty and our botched-up priorities as far as our relationship with Him.

1 Kings 18:21

...Choose you this day whom you will serve.

Joshua 24:14, 15

...As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

And he's going to be loyal to the Lord and faithful to Him.

Now we could spend a lot of time on STEWARDSHIP but that's not our purpose. The purpose is to see in bold relief how money creates a problem of disloyalty.

Do you want to see great illustrations of this? In the settlement of estates sometimes, when there are family members and money involved, you can see horrendous illustrations of criticism, distrust and disloyalty. In this particular parable, that is set out in bold relief.

There's one more parable and it involves a rich man, too. It's down in verse 19 and following.

This is a very interesting parable. We see a rich man who demonstrates the Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting right away.

A. THE RICH MAN AND THE POOR MAN ALIVE—16:19-21

v. 19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was in the habit of clothing himself in purple and fine linen faring sumptuously every day.

“Now there was a certain rich man, and he was in the habit of clothing himself in purple and fine linen faring sumptuously every day.”

You can take almost all the words in the lower left-hand corner

and immediately you fit them to this guy. He's wearing the latest clothes, he's eating all the gourmet foods, he is living it up on what he has been able to acquire in his lifetime. He's become extremely selfish and possessive. He knows nothing about loyalty and faithfulness and love for someone else.

He's self-sufficient. He's calloused. He's egotistical. He's anxiety ridden and he's insulated from personal need. None of the things that we've talked about as ingredients of interpersonal relationships are part of this man's life.

He's allowed his wealth to harden his heart. He's "faring sumptuously every day."

What does that tell you? He's living in a beautiful home, has fabulous meals, has a limousine, tennis court, swimming pool, servants, and condos in beautiful locations. He has everything to go with it. Here he is "faring sumptuously every day." He is indolent, living a life of self-indulgence.

Let's notice together the next character.

v. 20 And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

"And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,"

Now here is the second character. He's very, very poor. He has some physical problems. He's laying at the gate of this wealthy man. As he lays there in his poverty and his sickness and his

hunger and his loneliness, look what happens.

v. 21 And eagerly desiring to be fed with those things which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

“And eagerly desiring to be fed with those things which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.”

Here the man is in total misery and is so hardened in his heart that he just drives past him every day, clicks the gate opener, and goes in as though the guy is not even there. There's nothing at all to demonstrate any friendship.

That's the rich man and the poor man alive. Let's see them dead for just a second. If you have some problems with this particular parable, you need to remember that the person who's telling this parable has some inside information and the reality of this comes out in bold relief. This is not a fun and games or a mythological story. This is for real.

B. THE RICH MAN AND THE POOR MAN DEAD—16:22, 23

v. 22 Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

“Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.”

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This poor man has a relationship with God. He is a righteous poor man and he's immediately carried away to Abraham's bosom. That's the place of the righteous dead before Christ died on the cross. It says the "rich man" was just "buried."

It is obvious that in the burial of "the rich man," he is buried and we're going to see where he ends up.

v. 23 And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torment, he is seeing Abraham from far away, and Lazarus, in his bosom.

"And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torment, he is seeing Abraham from far away, and Lazarus, in his bosom."

He believed Satan's lie. He's lived selfishly. He's lived with Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting all of his life and now as he dies, he's gone to the place of eternal torment. While he's there, he sees "far away" Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. Immediately there is something that he wants. Here comes his first request. It's a request for himself:

C. REQUEST #1—16:24-26

v. 24 And he cried out and said: 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, in order that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.'

"And he cried out and said: 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me,

and send Lazarus, in order that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.”

Is he still selfish? What’s he doing? He’s saying, “Have mercy on me. Oh, send that guy that’s been laying at my gate—I never had time to do anything for—and let him dip his finger in water and come and cool my tongue; for I am perishing, or in agony in these flames.”

The one thing that you really have to come to grips with is that wherever Christ talks about eternal torment, there is flame. He talks about the lake of fire (Revelation 20). He talks here about torment from flame.

We have to remember that the Lord has inside information on all of this. There’s these verses:

2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9

In flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not wish to know our God.

We have the sobering picture of what it’s like not to know Him. This man hasn’t changed one bit other than he is suffering greatly.

v. 25 But Abraham said: ‘Child, remember that you received good things during your life, and likewise, Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

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“But Abraham said: ‘Child, remember that you received good things during your life, and likewise, Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.’”

Grace always runs out at the point of death. This is a tremendous illustration, by the way, to those who believe in reincarnation. There’s no second trip around.

Hebrews 9:27

It is appointed unto a man once to die and after that, the judgment.

There’s going to be no more grace. It’s not going to be possible now for Lazarus to give any grace, to comfort you in your agony. It’s now total justice and judgment that is going to take place.

v. 26 And in all these regions between us and you a great chasm has been placed, in order that those who are desiring to come over from here to you may not be able (to do so); and that none may cross over from there to us.’

“And in all these regions between us and you a great chasm has been placed, in order that those who are desiring to come over from here to you may not be able (to do so); and that none may cross over from there to us.”

“I’m sorry. It’s totally impossible.” Now that he hears that, he’s got another request. Here comes his second request.

D. REQUEST #2—16:27-31

v. 27 And he said: ‘Then I am begging you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—

“And he said: ‘Then I am begging you, Father, that you send him to my father’s house—”

Why?

v. 28 For I am having five brothers--in order that he may be warning them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

“For I am having five brothers--in order that he may be warning them, lest they also come to this place of torment.”

v. 29 But Abraham is saying: ‘They are having Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.’

“But Abraham is saying: ‘They are having Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.’”

v. 30 But he said: ‘No! father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

“But he said: ‘No! father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’”

Will they? What’s he saying?

“They will repent like I never had time to do because I never got out of Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting to Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting.”

There has to come conversion. There has to come change. There has to come the brokenness that leads to a relationship to Jesus Christ and he never did that. Isn't it interesting that he says, “Could someone go back and tell them so that they would indeed repent?”

v. 31 But he said to him: ‘If they are not hearing Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should arise from the dead.’

“But he said to him: ‘If they are not hearing Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should arise from the dead.’”

There's no hope.

When you look at those two stories, you look at the story of a dishonest manager. He is disloyal.

Isn't it interesting that the Lord is faithful? He is loyal. He is loyal to Lazarus and to his faith, even though he is poor and he's suffering.

The Lord is faithful to him and loyal to him. Out there in eternity one of the things that Lazarus can say is, “Lord, You are faithful and You've been loyal to me.”

What about the rich man? He has to face up to the fact that he never availed himself of the Lord's faithfulness or he never put himself in a position to let the Lord be loyal to him. He just had to do it all on his own and he lived for the here and now and he never made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. As a result of that, he's suffering eternally in torment.

We need to remember that loyalty is probably one of the greatest needs of our day. When you see couples breaking up their marriages because of a third party, you've got a manifestation of disloyalty. When you see so much sin and violence in the lives of individuals, you realize that they're being disloyal to their Lord.

If you really want to be miserable, be disloyal to a loyal Lord. He will always be faithful.

Lamentations 3:22, 23

It is of the Lord's mercies that we're not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness.

"I am the Lord God and I change not."

He is there the same yesterday, today and forever. He is totally unmoved in His love and devotion. He does not express greater loyalty to anyone and less for anybody else because of what they're going through. He is loyal and He's faithful. He wants that from us more than anything else.

If you find yourself in relationships where you're tempted to be

disloyal because of the stresses of circumstances like the manager, you'll learn well from that lesson. If you're without Christ, you'll have a good sobering look at your future. God is faithful, but when grace runs out and you die, judgment is the only alternative if you've not received Christ as your Savior.

Satan is constantly there accusing the brethren. It's one of his major names and his characteristics. It is easy to listen to his message rather than to the message of the Lord saying, "I love you and I long for a personal relationship with you."

In the characters that we've seen—the dishonest manager and in the rich man—we've seen Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting. The formula fits.

If people are going to move out of Incorrect Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting, they have to take a trip through Correct Negative Thinking/Feeling/Acting to get over to Correct Positive Thinking/Feeling/Acting.

Father, we bow in Your presence. We've looked at a couple of parables that have taught us some things and we've also looked at David and Jonathan. Father, teach us how to make personal commitments to one another to be loyal. Teach us how to make those commitments to our spouses, that we would be loyal in the face of temptation. That adversity and stress in our relationships would not reveal selfishness but a steadfastness, a willingness to always be the same and to always be there, solid as a rock. Father, to our children, they expect of us that stability, that maturity of adulthood. Teach us how to be to them, when they're struggling with things in their lives, that

quality of stability and faithfulness. Father, we pray that we would manifest Your love that does believe all things, that does endure all things and continues to hope. When there abides faith, hope and love, the greatest of these is love. Let that be part of our lives. Father, we pray that our own personal relationship with You would be one of undivided loyalty. That we would not allow the love of the world, the love of our own fleshly desires and the pride of life to rob us of the joy of single-hearted commitment and devotion to You and to our Savior. For it's in the Savior's name we pray. Amen.

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SOLVING STRUGGLES

In Interpersonal Relationships

“Learning to Live, Love and Listen to Each Other”

Ingredient #7: LOYALTY – GOD IS FAITHFUL – Luke 16:1-13, 19-31

NOTES

I. Story #1 – Luke 16:1-13

A. Accountability – verses 1-2

v. 1 Now He was also saying to the disciples: “There was a certain rich man who was having a manager of his estate, and this manager was accused to him as wasting his possessions.

v. 2 And having called him, he said to him: ‘What is this I am hearing concerning you? Give an account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’

B. Alternatives (What shall I do?) – verses 3-8

v. 3 And the manager said to himself: ‘What shall I do, because my master is taking away the management from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

v. 4 I know what I shall do, in order that when I am removed from the management, they will receive me into their homes.’

v. 5 And he summoned each one of his master’s debtors, and he was saying to the first: ‘How much are you owing my master?’

v. 6 And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’

v. 7 Then he said to another: ‘Now as for you how much are you owing?’ And he said, ‘One hundred measures of wheat.’ He is saying to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

v. 8 And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are shrewder in their dealings with their own kind than the sons of the light.

C. Admonition – verses 9-10

v. 9 And I am saying to you: Make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness; in order that when it gives out, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

v. 10 He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

D. Application – verses 11-13

v. 11 If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust you with that wealth which is genuine?

v. 12 And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

v. 13 No household slave is able to serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You are not able to serve God and wealth.”

II. Story #2 – Luke 16:19-31

A. Rich Man and Poor Man Alive – verses 19-21

v. 19 Now there was a certain rich man, and he was in the habit of clothing himself in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day.

v. 20 And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

v. 21 and eagerly desiring to be fed with those things which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

B. Rich Man and Poor Man Dead – verses 22-23

v. 22 Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.

v. 23 And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torment, he is seeing Abraham from far away, and Lazarus in his bosom.

C. Request #1 – verses 24-26

v. 24 And he cried out and said: ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, in order that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’

v. 25 But Abraham said: ‘Child, remember that you received good things during your life, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.’

v. 26 And in all these regions between us and you a great chasm has been placed, in order that those who are desiring to come over from here to you may not be able [to do so]; and that none may cross over from there to us.’

D. Request #2 – verses 27-31

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v. 28 for I am having five brothers—in order that he may be warning them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

v. 29 But Abraham is saying: ‘They are having Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.’

v. 30 But he said: ‘No! Father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

v. 31 But he said to him: ‘If they are not hearing Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should arise from the dead.’

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: The Lord expects us to be wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.

Lesson #2: We are commanded to use our resources and possessions to touch people’s lives with the gospel.

Lesson #3: We are to be shrewd saints—praying, planning, preparing and proceeding.

Lesson #4: We are to use our present opportunities with a view to future rewards.

Lesson #5: The Lord is delighted when we are faithful.

Lesson #6: Grace turns to justice after death.

Lesson #7: The manager made provision and the rich man didn't.