

**ST JOSEPH THE WORKER**  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**



**The Rich Man and Lazarus**  
**Stewardship and Eternity: Divine Principles in Luke 16**

Luke 16 brings the realities of our stewardship, our attitudes towards wealth, and our response to God's Word into sharp focus. It highlights the divine principles that govern our lives and eternity, urging us to act wisely in light of eternal consequences. As disciples of Jesus, it is an imperative call to faithful stewardship, compassion for the needy, and obedience to God's Word. Our choices in this life have ramifications that echo into eternity.

**Verses 1-13: The Parable of the Shrewd Manager**

Jesus shares a parable about a dishonest manager who, when faced with the loss of his job, shrewdly reduces the debts owed to his master by others to secure his future. Jesus emphasizes the wise use of worldly wealth to gain eternal rewards and the principle that he who is faithful with little will also be faithful with much.

**Verses 14-18: The Pharisees and Love of Money**

Jesus confronts the Pharisees, lovers of money, who scoffed at his teachings, emphasizing the value of the law and prophets and God's knowledge of the heart.

**Verses 19-31: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**

This parable depicts a rich man who lived in luxury while ignoring the poor man Lazarus at his gate. After death, Lazarus is comforted in Abraham's bosom while the rich man suffers in Hades. Jesus uses this parable to highlight the eternal implications of earthly choices, the importance of heeding God's Word, and the futility of post-death repentance.

**In Luke 16**, Jesus addresses important themes including the wise use of earthly wealth, the dangers of the love of money, and the implications of our choices in light of eternity. He uses two memorable parables – the Shrewd Manager and the Rich Man and Lazarus – to deliver lessons about stewardship, worldly wealth, and the afterlife.

**Themes**

Wise Stewardship  
Money and Righteousness  
Repentance and Judgment

**Topics**

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager  
The Pharisees and Love of Money  
The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

**People**

Jesus  
His Disciples  
**The Shrewd Manager**

The Rich Man  
Lazarus  
The Pharisees

**Locations**

The Place where Jesus was Teaching

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Luke 16

**The Parable of the Shrewd Manager**

**1** Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. **2** 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.’

**3** “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— **4** I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

**5** “So, he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

**6** “‘Nine hundred gallons[a] of olive oil,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’

**7** “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’

“‘A thousand bushels[b] of wheat,’ he replied.

“He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’

**8** “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are shrewder in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

**16:1–13** Following the emphasis in the previous subsection on the eternal celebration in store for those who have humbly trusted in Jesus (13:10—15:32), this fourth subsection of Luke 9:51—19:44 (16:1—18:8) focuses on living by faith in expectation of the final kingdom. The relationship between this life and the age to come, whether at death (16:9,22) or when the Son of Man returns (17:22–37; 18:8), continues to shape the priorities of this life. In chapter 16 Jesus’ authority as our Lord is such that he determines how we faithfully use the possessions of this age with a view to eternal realities beyond the grave.

**The parable of the shrewd manager**

begins with a description of the manager’s wasteful squandering of his master’s possessions and his consequent dismissal on the assumption that the records will confirm the charges. The manager, recognizing his predicament and anticipating the future, shrewdly devises a plan that will ensure provision for his future needs. So he calls in those who are in debt to his master and then reduces their debt. He reduces each debt by about 500 denarii—approximately a year-and-a-half’s wages for a day laborer! Since the master praises the manager in verse 8, the description of the manager as dishonest or unrighteous likely refers to his prior conduct of squandering that led to the master’s decision to take his position away. The debt reduction may have come out of his own commission. The manager’s shrewdness is characteristic of those who are wise in the ways of this world. Jesus’ point is that believers ought to live with a future, eternity-oriented mindset (v. 9). They should use the temporary and fleeting

9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

10 “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. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”

13 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.

#### Additional Teachings

16 “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17 It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

18 “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

#### The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on

wealth of this age for God’s eternal saving purposes. Jesus continues this contrast by describing worldly wealth as something small that—when used for God’s saving purposes—leads to reward in the age to come for faithful service (vv. 10–12). The conclusion clarifies that all of this is based on whether the ultimate master who receives our loyalty and service is God or money.

16:14–18 These verses continue the focus on material possessions as well as anticipate the story about Lazarus and the rich man that concludes this chapter. The Pharisees’ self-justifying presentation of themselves to impress others reveals their hearts and is an outworking of their love for money and antagonism toward God (cf. 13:30; 14:11; 18:13–14). Jesus’ authority to declare judgment (16:15) is demonstrated in his relationship to Old Testament Scripture. The temporal nature of “the Law and the Prophets” until John (v. 16) and the proclamation of the promised kingdom now in Jesus’ ministry are balanced by a reaffirmation of the eternal authority of the law as that which continues to point to Jesus (v. 17). The significance of this long-awaited arrival of the kingdom is that people must urgently enter it. Jesus’ teaching on divorce exemplifies the continuing validity of the law as taken up and elaborated upon authoritatively by Jesus in the new era of the kingdom. The permanency of marriage between a man and woman is assumed (cf. Mt 5:32; 19:9).

16:19–31 This story (most likely a parable based on Luke’s introductory formula; see 10:30; 14:16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:12; 20:9) about Lazarus and the rich man illustrates Jesus’ warnings about loving money rather than God, his teaching on God’s knowledge of the heart, and God’s judgment of that which is seemingly outwardly impressive. The story also illustrates Jesus’ teaching on the sufficiency of the Law and the Prophets to warn of judgment to come even as he authoritatively portrays the permanence and pain of that judgment. The rich man’s daily

me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

25 “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

**27** “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, **28** for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

**29** “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

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

**31** “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

#### Footnotes

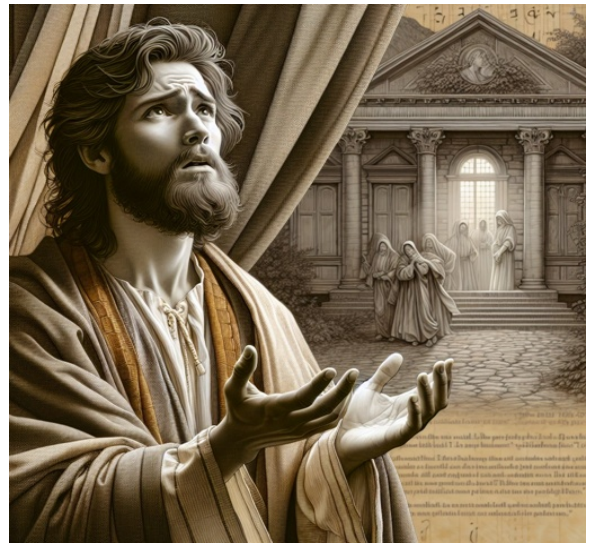
Luke 16:6 Or about 3,000 liters

Luke 16:7 Or about 30 tons



LUKE 16:29

experience of luxurious living is contrasted with Lazarus’s longing for even a little nourishment from the bits of waste from the rich man’s table and with the disgrace of unclean dogs licking his sores (16:19–21). Outwardly it appears that the rich man is blessed, while Lazarus is abandoned. Then the scene shifts to contrasting the circumstances of the two men after life on earth. Lazarus is welcomed to Abraham’s side (heaven) and the rich man is in Hades. “Hades” is further explained in this context as a place of punishment. The rich man requests refreshment for his tongue only, showing how severely he is tormented (v. 24). The separation between the rich man and Lazarus is fixed and therefore unchangeable; the torment is everlasting.



LUKE 16: 27-28

The rich man realizes Lazarus cannot help him, so he redirects his requests so that his brothers are warned. He tells Abraham that a visit from the afterlife is required for his family to be saved (v. 30). The man still expects Lazarus to be his messenger, and he implies he needed such special warning too. Abraham’s reference to “Moses and the Prophets” as a summary for the entire Old Testament demonstrates the complete sufficiency of Scripture to warn about the prospect of judgment after death. In this account, Jesus is not teaching that the difference between heaven and hell is poverty or wealth. **Instead, he clarifies that outward appearances can be deceiving and that the reality of a heart that is right with God through humble trust in him, evidenced in love for people, is what matters**

**Bible Study Questions**

1. What does the parable of the shrewd manager teach us about stewardship and the use of worldly wealth?
2. How does Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees challenge our attitudes towards money and righteousness?
3. What insights can we gain from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus about the consequences of our actions and choices?
4. How does the statement "You cannot serve both God and money" impact your personal financial decisions?
5. What can we learn from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus about our responsibilities towards those in need?
6. How does the idea of faithfulness in small things translate into your daily life?
7. How do the Pharisees' reactions to Jesus' teachings challenge religious hypocrisy in our time?
8. How does the parable of the rich man and Lazarus illustrate the concept of judgment after death?
9. What steps can you take to ensure your stewardship of resources aligns with God's principles?
10. How does this chapter challenge societal norms and expectations about wealth and success?
11. How does the fate of the rich man and Lazarus affect your understanding of justice and fairness?
12. How does Jesus' statement about divorce in verse 18 tie into the overall narrative of this chapter?
13. What lessons can we draw from the rich man's unfulfilled request to warn his brothers?
14. How does the idea of earthly choices having eternal implications influence your actions and decisions?
15. In what ways does this chapter highlight the importance of responding to God's Word in this life?
16. How do you balance the pursuit of worldly resources and spiritual riches in your life?
17. How does the chapter inspire us to evaluate our attitudes and actions towards those less fortunate in our communities?
18. How does this chapter challenge our understanding of repentance and conversion?
19. How can we use our resources to 'make friends' for the kingdom of God, as advised in the parable of the shrewd manager?
20. How do these teachings and parables guide us in living as followers of Christ in the present-day world?