



JESUS AS THE METAPHORICAL THEOLOGIAN

PARABLES IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD

LUKE CHAPTER 16



Four levels of this parable

- 1. Entertaining story**
- 2. Ethical example**
- 3. Revelation of the Kingdom (Theology)**
- 4. Hint of the character of the Lord (Christology)**

Visio Divina for Evangelicals

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Using Art & Scripture



Focus on the image:

- First impressions – What is the first thing that catches your eye?
- Thoughts – What comes to mind as you view the image?
- Emotions – What emotions arise as you look deeper at the image?
- Details - Notice color, shape, contrast, lighting, etc.

Focus on Scripture:

- Find and read aloud the Scripture passage from Luke 16:1-13.
- How does the image capture the basic message of the scripture?
- How does the image capture the details and nuances of the scripture?
- What attribute(s) of God does the image portray?



Luke 16:1-13 Parable of the Unjust Steward:

This parable is so misunderstood, it is rarely taught or discussed.

At first glance, it appears that Jesus is saying the steward is lying and cheating, now you go do the same.

Julian (Roman Emperor in the 4th century) used this text to cancel Christianity as the faith of the empire.

Parable structure (seven scenes):

He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

²And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’

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

⁴I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’

⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’

⁷Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’

⁸The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

Scene one:

Rich man had a steward, and charges were brought against him.

Who charged the steward? (community)

In the story: Master / Steward / Community

Understanding of Good and Evil in the parable.

Scene two:

Calls steward to account. (Shows cunning of the steward)

Master fires the steward. (Turn in the account books – according to Jewish law the steward no longer has binding power over the Master's good or business records)

“Remember Adam after the rebellion having the first discussion with God”

Silence is consent.

Scene three:

Steward talks to himself...

**I'm fired, but I need to deliver the
accounts.**

I'm not strong, but I am prideful.

Scene four:

Steward has an idea...

I need another job.

I need to align myself with future employers.

Scene five:

Steward calls the Master's debtors one by one.

Servants go to get the debtors. Debtors come to the steward.

Debtor declares their debt, debt is reduced by half.

Scene six:

Steward calls the next debtor.

Debtor declares their debt; debt is reduced by one fifth.

Scene seven:

The Master is being very generous.

Master pays the price for the salvation of the steward.

Son of darkness was smart enough to know to trust in the Master's generosity.

The poem that follows the parable:

Structure:

Complex chiastic structure (embedded)

Verse 9 paired with Verse 13 (chiastic bookends)

Verses 10, 11, and 12 are chiastic

Luke 16:9-13:

⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ “One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will 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 he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

Luke 16:9 (Parse the Greek):

"And I tell you, make **friends** for yourselves *by means of unrighteous wealth*, so that when it fails **they** may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

Chiastic Outline:

A (v9) – Use unrighteous wealth to gain eternal dwellings (eternal outcome)

B (v10) – Faithfulness in little things mirrors faithfulness in much (faithfulness principle)

C (v11) – Unfaithfulness with unrighteous wealth disqualifies you from true riches (judgment principle)

B' (v12) – Faithfulness with what belongs to another leads to receiving your own (faithfulness rewarded)

A' (v13) – You cannot serve both God and money (ultimate loyalty determines eternal destiny)

Key Takeaway:

Jesus isn't just giving random sayings —
He's building a **logical and moral staircase**:

- Wealth is temporary →
- Faithfulness now matters →
- It shapes your eternal future →
- You must pick your ultimate loyalty →
- God or money — you can't have both.

