

Faith in the Home

Sermon Notes for the Kiddos (and everybody else)
Luke 16:1-15 "Dishonest Rewards?"

Why does it feel like those who have power in this world are often corrupt? Why does it feel like those who live unrighteous lives often prosper in this world of ours? Why does it seem like being righteous is harder than being unrighteous? Jesus' parable of the "Dishonest Manager" gets to the heart of this issue.

Jesus tells a story of a man tasked with managing the wealth of a rich man. The rich man tells the manager to give an account because he heard his manager was wasting his possessions. The manager knows that he is hot water, but he also does not want to have the face the consequence of having to do hard labor because he was about to lose his job.

So, the manager devises a plan. This plan is to call on all who owe his master money and cut their debts by falsely slashing them. His hope was that one of them would give him a place to live once he lost his job. But the manager was rewarded for his shrewdness rather than getting fired by the rich man he worked for. Then Jesus tells us that, "The sons of this world are shrewder in dealing with this generation (world) than the sons of light."

We as Christians are the sons of light. That is why we often feel taken advantage of for living righteous lives and we may feel like we suffer more on account of it. Jesus then tells us, "To make friends for ourselves by means of unrighteous wealth so that we may enter into eternal dwellings."

What does this mean? The present religious leaders who heard Jesus scoffed at Him, Jesus said that they were like the unjust manager who sinned by covering his sin to maintain his status before man. So, what Jesus means by "making friends through unrighteous wealth to enter into eternal dwellings" is to give away the very thing that corrupts the hearts of mankind, money. We are to trust in Jesus for provision and protection over the love of money and individual power. Even though it seems that the corrupt don't receive justice, Jesus promises that they will.

Some Christians struggle with the love of money more than other Christians do. That said, all of us will face times where we will need to trust Jesus over money. Those who

seem to prosper in this broken world because they are unjust will be judged accordingly by God. Our own struggles as Christians in this world are short compared to the glorious eternal paradise that awaits us. If you are sinful with your money, there is forgiveness in Christ. Repenting and changing your ways may hurt in the short run, but we Christians who are promised the resurrection are in it for the long run. As the trials of the world press into us the more we lean into Jesus the more our faith will grow. Jesus is faithful and He gives us the strength to face this world. He gives us our eternal dwelling.

So how do we teach and model these things to our kids?

1. While we certainly live by grace because "grace through faith" in Jesus is what saves us, that doesn't mean that having Christian disciplines will not help us walk faithfully in this world. First of these, is taking time to read God's Word daily. 15-30 minutes a day will help you more than you will realize. We are inundated with the world. We need time with God. Reading a children's Bible with your kids in addition to your own reading is also important.
2. Have a list of people and things to pray about and then follow through by praying. It doesn't have to be long, and praying for your kids is important.
3. When it comes to money, it is never too early to have your children put a little money in the plate. That said, one biblical practice that will increase your faith and both challenge and bless you is the act of tithing (one tenth), this is giving at least 10% of your income to God (Amy and I do this as well). No, you don't need to tithe to get into heaven, but God does promise to bless you through that discipline. Read the book of Malachi 3 and you will find the only time in Scripture where God tells you to put Him to the test. That is the promise "to open the flood the gates of blessings" if you "bring the full tithe." (Malachi 3:10-12) This concept usually raises questions. This is one reason why you have a pastor. Feel free to call me.
4. This congregation is filled with people who regularly worship here at Shepherd of the Valley when they are in town and not sick. As your pastor I applaud you for that. We are all teaching the children here that we trust in Jesus and believe in His promises. By showing up we demonstrate that faith in Jesus is important.
5. Trust in Jesus. He is faithful and forgiving even when we stumble. He loves you!

Has this been helpful? Why/why not? Do you have any suggestions? Please contact Pastor Joel at luckemeyerj@gmail.com Thanks!