

NIV Luke 16:1 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 "'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

7 "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.'

8 "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.

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 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."

Joe and Sam are make believe people, but people you know. Joe and Sam worship together at Beautiful Shepherd Lutheran Church, sometimes. Joe is there most Sundays, but during football season Sam has the dish. When Joe asks Sam where he is some Sundays, Sam says, well, 'I've got the dish, and the Panthers are on. I can't miss them.' Joe asks, 'Don't you know what God says in the 3rd Commandment? Remember the Sabbath Day. But Sam answers, 'I believe in God. Football wasn't around in Jesus' day. He can't mean a real fan to miss.'

There is a name for this kind of behavior in today's world. It is called compartmentalization. People think they act one way, well in church for instance. But, when they are in their financial part of life, or their leisure part of life, or their work part of life, they can act with a different set of principals. Many today think that way.

That is the pattern of our whole world. Everyone believes in honesty, until it might hurt their pocketbook. Have you ever heard someone who claims to be a person of integrity say, 'Everyone cheat the tax man, look how they waste our money.'? Maybe you've heard someone say, 'Looking at pornography can't hurt. I'm not cheating on my spouse.' Maybe you've heard

someone say, 'Yes, I believe in equal rights, but those Arabs aren't to be trusted.'
Compartmentalization can happen in the educational system where people may say, 'I believe in God in Church. In school I believe in science and math.'

You and I know that people may act that way, but this kind of behavior is against God's call to discipleship. What we call 'compartmentalization', living with different values, is sin. Please remember Jesus' words, **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."**

Living with changing principals is not only lacking commitment to ourselves, it lacks commitment to God. Talking the talk, but not walking the walk causes untold turmoil in our lives and hurt in the world. At the present time a number of legislators are on trial for calling themselves honest, and being accused of taking bribes. Not all have been convicted. But, those who have been convicted said they believed in one thing, and then acted in a different way. If nothing else, look at the legal fees, the loss of reputation, the loss of position. You see, when we deal with changable values, we give a horrible witness to God, and we cause trouble for ourselves.

In our parable Jesus is talking about a Jewish man, a man who would claim to have faith. But when he was fired he figured, God couldn't mean for me to be without support, so he basically stole from his boss. He followed God, maybe, when it was convenient, but when it caused trouble, he did what felt good for himself.

Jesus says, **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."**

Jesus is calling his followers to be consistent in following him, to not just plan to be faithful in large situations when they come along, but to be faithful in the small things too.

Joe wondered why Sam could say He believed in God, but ignore the 3rd commandment. But, when Sam was with Joe, Joe's mouth often caused trouble. Joe was likely to talk about others. He used God's name in vain. Four letter words came streaming out in times of anger. Sam asked Joe, 'Why can you criticize my worship attendance, but use a foul mouth yourself?' Compartmentalization is a pattern of life today, but discipleship has always been hard. Being faithful with very little, has always been hard.

Today we have a baptism. They are all special, but today Peter Ray Isackson Jr. will be called as a child of God. God calls him as a disciple to follow Jesus. Peter Ray will face temptations, like all of us have. When I talked to his parents yesterday they said, 'Yes, like all babies he throws his tantrums.' He is born with sinful desires like all of us. So, in baptism, and in his plan for us, Jesus provides help. When God's children are called, Jesus intends faithfulness. When they sin, he forgives. In baptism, we are told we die to sin and rise to walk in newness of life.

Jesus is faithful and trustworthy, even if we aren't all the time. Jesus continually calls us to repentance, forgiveness, and to grow in a knowledge of his faithfulness, so we can follow Him.

Just because we can't be perfect, doesn't mean that God wants us to give up. Discipleship means continuing to be faithful, not just in some things, but in everything. When we are disciples, we don't compartmentalize, we live our whole lives for Jesus, even in the difficult areas.

Joe and Sam continued to visit. Joe said to Sam, 'I should watch how I speak. Sometimes my mouth just goes off.' Sam said, 'I should be faithful in my worship. I could video tape the football games.' Together they agreed to hold each other accountable. They would admit their failings to each other, seek God's forgiveness and help, and work to be faithful in the small things as well as the big things. With God's help, they grew in faithfulness. In a world already full of trouble, they caused less trouble for themselves. God calls us to faith in Him, and lives of faithfulness, lives of discipleship, not compartmentalization.