

**Sermon Series: “Tap into God’s Rich Supply”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—11/18/2007**

**Title: “Setting the Bar High”**

**Text: Luke 16: 10-13**

**Intro:** “Skit on setting the bar higher”

**Theme:** Rather than driving to dumb-down God’s righteousness so that our commitments to him are more comfortable, we pray for and seek out the life and Spirit of Jesus in our lives that our devotion to God might be heightened.

***The story behind the principles***

- Jesus tells a story on financial management to illustrate management on an eternal level
  1. “**Squandering**” a trust given will eventually be called into account (**Print Luke 16: 1-2**)
  2. **Urgency** often gives birth to necessary action — righteous or wicked (**Print Luke 16: 3-4**)
    - a. **Ills.: African proverb. . .**
  3. **Prudent wisdom** is called for in our lives (**Print Luke 16: 5-8**)
    - a. Circumspect = careful consideration of all circumstances and possible consequences of a choice/action
    - b. Viewing decisions, actions, plans from an “eternal perspective” (steward, too late, realized his skewed view)
- Jesus does not condone the dishonesty of the steward but uses the master’s point of comparison (**print vs. 8**)

***Assessing and building the faithfulness of our spiritual/eternal management***

- Our core values are demonstrated more by what we do than by what we say
  1. *For God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7*
  2. How we handle our finances provides a highly accurate view of our heart’s priorities
  3. **Ills.: Check-book check-up**
- Not the possession of things but rather being possessed by them that gets in the way of Jesus in our lives
  1. *For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Tim. 6:10*
  2. The manager in the story became so consumed by pilfering the profits that he didn’t see the brewing storm
  3. How careful am I about “**all forms of greed**” in my life?(inheritance, generosity, financial fretting, wealth fantasy)
- Pursue righteousness, wisdom, and goodness at a higher level than anything else in your life
  1. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference between the **sons of this age** and the **sons of light**
    - a. We pursue power, prestige, position, and possession like people of the world and do anything to get/keep it
    - b. We become selfish and hoarding and refuse to manage the gifts which God has given for his purpose
  - c. **Ills.: Releasing your grip**
  2. *But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. . . Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed. 1 Tim 6: 11,18,19*
- Pay more attention to being faithful than being famous
  1. **Ills.: Faithful in small things**
  2. **Print Luke 16: 10-12**
  3. How are you in managing your health, your wealth, your children, your property when nobody but God is looking?
  4. *Don't obey bosses only while you're being watched, as if you merely wanted to please people. But obey like slaves who belong to Christ, who have a deep desire to do what God wants them to do. Serve eagerly as if you were serving your heavenly master and not merely serving human masters. You know that your heavenly master will reward all of us for whatever good we do, whether we're slaves or free people. Ephesians. 6:6-8*

- Make your devotion to the Lord your full-time job
  1. **Print Luke 16: 13**
  2. What does it look like to be devoted to the Father's priority? — just look at Jesus and you will see
  3. Jesus faithfully redeems us back from carnal, worldly, and destructive self-centeredness
    - a. *Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. Hebrews 3:6*
    - b. It is his devotion to us that moves our devotion — not threat or reprisal or guilt – choosing God over our stuff
    - c. **Ills.: Rich Mullins song “If I Stand”** (print words on screen as audio is played)

**Ills.:** (are we striving to be the best as God's managers or squandering opportunity and settling for a diminished spiritual return?)

### **African Proverb**

The man who tries to walk two roads will split his pants." **A West African proverb of the Maninka tribe**

### **Releasing your grip**

In her book *9 Steps to Financial Freedom*, Suze Orman writes about a time when she was in Mexico. There was a merchant who was selling parrots: they weren't in cages, and they didn't fly away. Orman was fascinated by this. She asked the merchant, "Do these birds just love you so much they have no desire to fly away?" He laughed. "No" he said, "I train them to think their perches mean safety and security. When they come to think this, they naturally wrap their claws tightly around the perch and don't want to release it. They keep themselves confined, as if they've forgotten they know how to fly." Was this hard to do? she asked. "With little birds it's very hard, sometimes even impossible," he said. "It's easy with the large birds." In her book, she writes: Suddenly a lightbulb went off in my head. We are just like those poor parrots. We have been taught to clutch our money as tightly as we can, as if our money is the perch of our safety and security. Just like those parrots, we have all forgotten how free we really are—with or without the perch. The more afraid we are, the tighter we hold on, and the more we have trapped ourselves. When she realized this she asked the merchant how he would go about "unteaching" this behavior. "Easy," he said, "You just show them how to release their grip, and then they can fly as free as they want." **Suze Orman, 9 Steps to Financial Freedom (Three Rivers Press, 2000), p. 262**

### **Faithful in small things**

On June 14, 2000, The New York Times reported: J. P. Morgan & Company, a bank worth \$21 billion, was disconnected from the Internet on June 13, 2000 for failure to pay a \$35 bill. The venerable Wall Street firm found itself without a Web site or an e-mail connection to the outside world because it had failed to renew the registration of [www.jpmorgan.com](http://www.jpmorgan.com), the domain name that serves as its address on the World Wide Web. Throughout the day, clients were unable to visit the Web site or exchange e-mail messages with the firm's bankers and traders. All that frustration could have been averted if Morgan had sent a check for \$35 for the annual registration fee to Network Solutions, a domain-name registrar in Herndon, Virginia. It pulled the plug on Morgan six weeks after Morgan's bill came due and after sending the firm at least three bills, said Chris Clough, vice president for corporate communications at Network Solutions. **Ted Olson, editor, ChristianityToday.com; source: Patrick McGeehan, "For Want of \$35, J.P. Morgan Loses Its Web Site and E-Mail," New York Times (6-14-00)**

### **Luke 16:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as *squandering* his possessions. <sup>2</sup>"And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'<sup>3</sup>"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; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.'<sup>5</sup>"And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'<sup>6</sup>"And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'<sup>7</sup>"Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'<sup>8</sup>"And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had *acted shrewdly*; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. <sup>9</sup>"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the *eternal dwellings*."

### **Luke 16:10-13**

<sup>10</sup>"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. <sup>11</sup>"Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? <sup>12</sup>"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? <sup>13</sup>"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."  
[NASB]

### **“If I Stand” Rich Mullins**

There's more that rises in the morning  
Than the sun More that shines in the night  
Than just the moon There's more than just this fire here  
That keeps me warm In a shelter that is larger  
Than this room There's a loyalty that's deeper  
Than mere sentiment A music higher than the songs  
That I can sing The stuff of earth competes  
For the allegiance I owe only to the giver  
Of all good things

Chorus: So if I stand let me stand on the promise  
That You will pull me through And if I can't let me fall on the  
grace That first brought me to You  
If I sing let me sing for the joy That has born in me these songs  
But if I weep let it be as a man  
Who is longing for his home

There's more that dances on the prairies  
Than the wind More that pulses in the ocean  
Than the tide There's a love that is fiercer  
Than the love between friends  
More gently than a mother's When her baby's at her side

Chorus: So if I stand let me stand on the promise  
That You will pull me through And if I can't let me fall on the  
grace That first brought me to You  
If I sing let me sing for the joy That has born in me these songs  
But if I weep let it be as a man  
Who is longing for his home