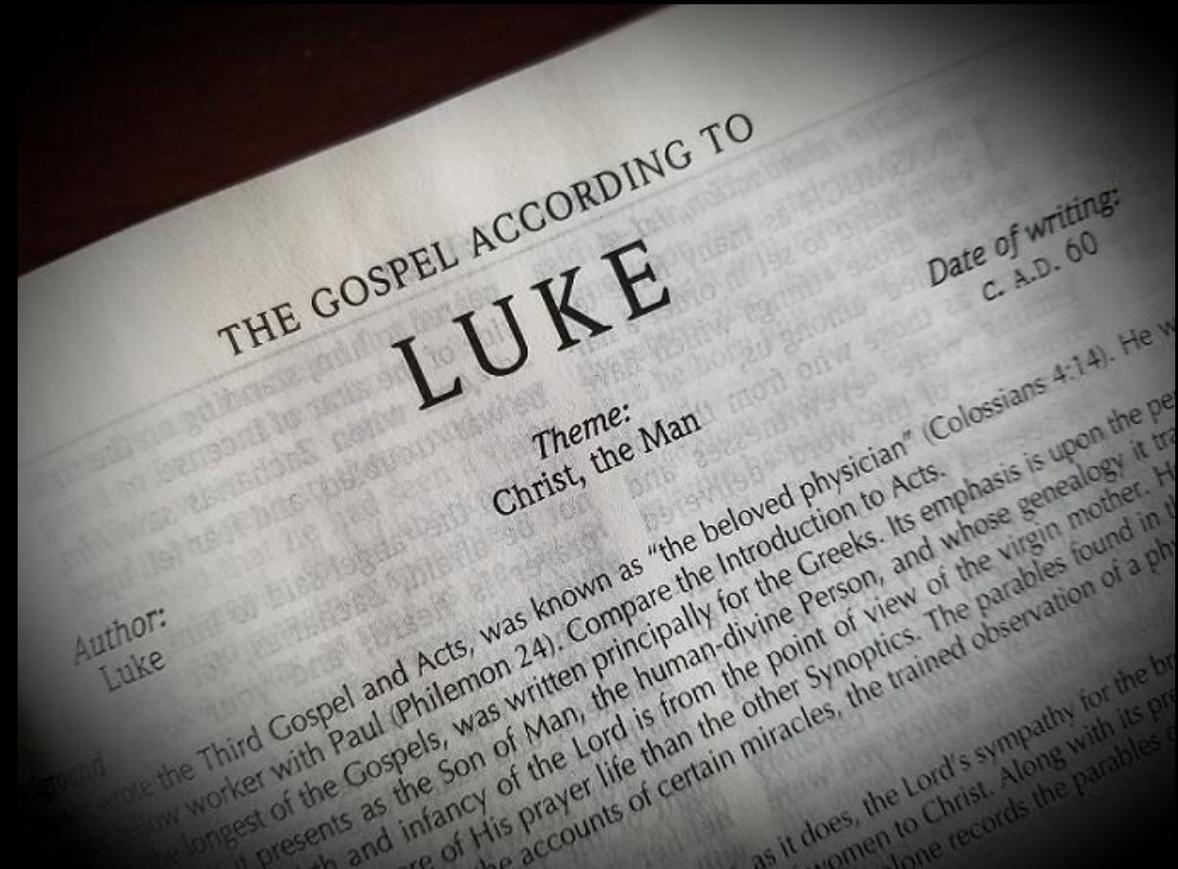


# Verse by Verse

## Luke 16



Previously in Luke

## Previously in Luke

- Last week we looked at three parables, of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost – or Prodigal Son.
- They all showed us how important lost sinners are to a loving God.
- He seeks them out as a shepherd would look for a sheep or a woman would look for a valuable coin.
- He then welcomes them home when they repent, like a loving father welcoming a long lost son.

# Luke 16 Introduction

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- In this chapter Jesus will show us our need to stay focused on eternity.
- Our experiences here are not meant to be permanent, but to prepare us for the life beyond.
- We will see the temporary nature of earthly riches.
- Jesus also teaches that suffering in this life can have immense value – if we allow it to lead us to God.

# Luke 16    Key Verse

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- Luke 16:13 (ESV)

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.

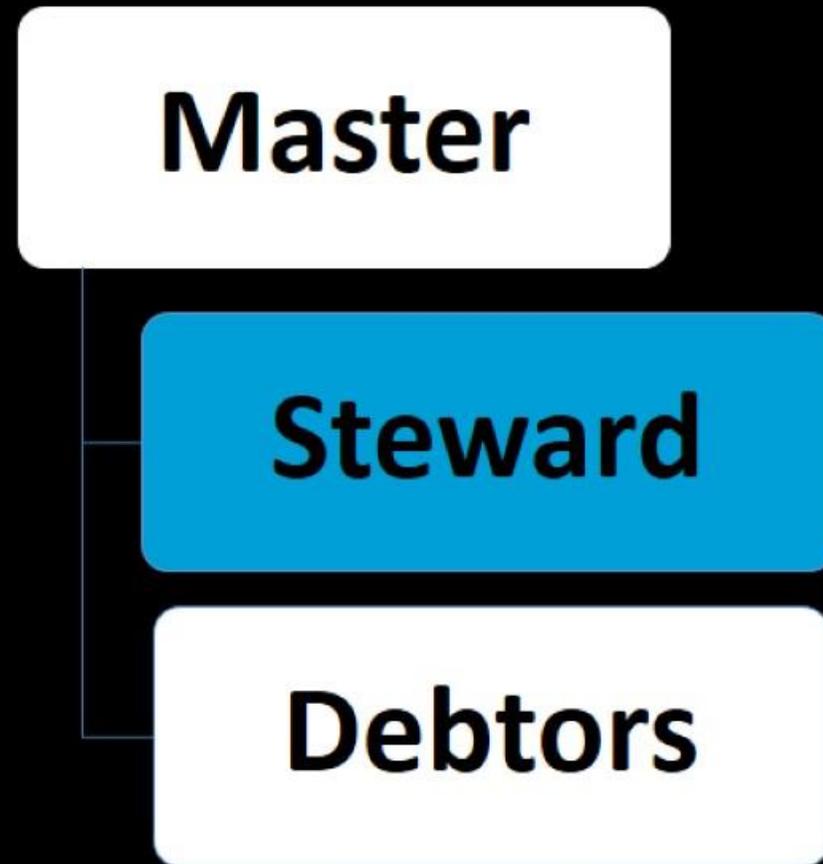
# Luke 16    Outline

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1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13
2. The Law and the Kingdom 16:14-17
3. Divorce and Remarriage 16:18
4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

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# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- 16:9, 11, 13 wealth, money = *mammon*
- “mammon of unrighteousness” in vv. 9 & 11 does not mean “money gained by dishonesty.”
- It is more like “worldly wealth” or “worldly riches” and is translated that way in several English versions
- For example, see the Common English Bible, Good News Translation, NET, NIV and NLT.

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- Sometimes people are bothered by Jesus using a dishonest person to teach a positive lesson.
- There are a few things to know that will help us.

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

1. This kind of unscrupulous person was a standard character in ancient comedies.

- Anyone familiar with Greco-Roman plays would have immediately recognized him.
- Luke writes for a more Greco-Roman audience, which could be why he alone of Gospel authors includes it.

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

2. It is possible that what the manager did by reducing debts was perfectly legal.

- The amounts that he cuts off may have represented his own markups – his commissions.
- He was still dishonest before that and was still going to lose his job for that reason.
- He had more to gain by winning favor with the debtors than by collecting on his markups.

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

3. The master commended the manager, not for his dishonesty, but for his shrewdness (v.8).

- He was clever and the master had to admit it.
- Even if the manager had no right to lower the debts, his boss already said he was going to fire him.
- The manager now had nothing left to lose!

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- Jesus often gave his lessons with a “how much more” type of comparison.

Luke 11:13 (ESV)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- Jesus often gave his lessons with a “how much more” type of comparison.

Luke 12:24 (ESV)

Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- Jesus often gave his lessons with a “how much more” type of comparison.

Luke 12:28 (ESV)

But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- And so from this parable, in order to clarify the lesson, we can word it,

“If the dishonest manager used his opportunities to ensure his future well-being in this world, how much more should we use our opportunities to ensure our well-being in the next world!”

- What have we really got to lose?

# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

*(1) All of God's people will be called to give a reckoning of the nature of their service to him.*

*– Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary*



# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

*(2) Preparation for that reckoning should involve a prudent, shrewd use of all our resources, especially in the area of finances.*

*– Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary*



# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

*(3) Such prudence and shrewdness, demonstrating a life of true discipleship, will be rewarded with eternal life and joy. <sup>1</sup>*

*– Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary*



# 1. The Dishonest Manager 16:1-13

- Again our key verse, **Luke 16:13** (ESV)

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.

## 2. The Law and the Kingdom 16:14-17

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- 16:14-15 The Pharisees loved money, so Jesus often used teaching about money to take stabs at them.
- They may have ridiculed Jesus, but he knew just how twisted their hearts really were.

## 2. The Law and the Kingdom 16:14-17

- 16:16 everyone forces his way into it.
- Maybe better, “everyone is forcefully urged into it.”
- Numerous translations (e.g. ESV, NLT, Expanded Bible and NET) all make note of that translation possibility.

## 2. The Law and the Kingdom 16:14-17

- 16:17 it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away ...
- The kingdom is here and the law is no longer going to be in force in the same way.
- That does not, however, mean that the ethics of the law are now invalid.
- In fact, God's standards may even be higher than the law expressed; for example, take the next verse.

### 3. Divorce and Remarriage 16:18

### 3. Divorce and Remarriage 16:18

- It's true that considering the whole Bible, not every divorce is sinful and remarriage is sinful.
- But many, if not most, are.
- And those that are not are still at some level normally caused by sin.
- Jesus **wants us to be uncomfortable** with divorce as with our hatred, lust, greed and much else!

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

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### Unique things about this parable:

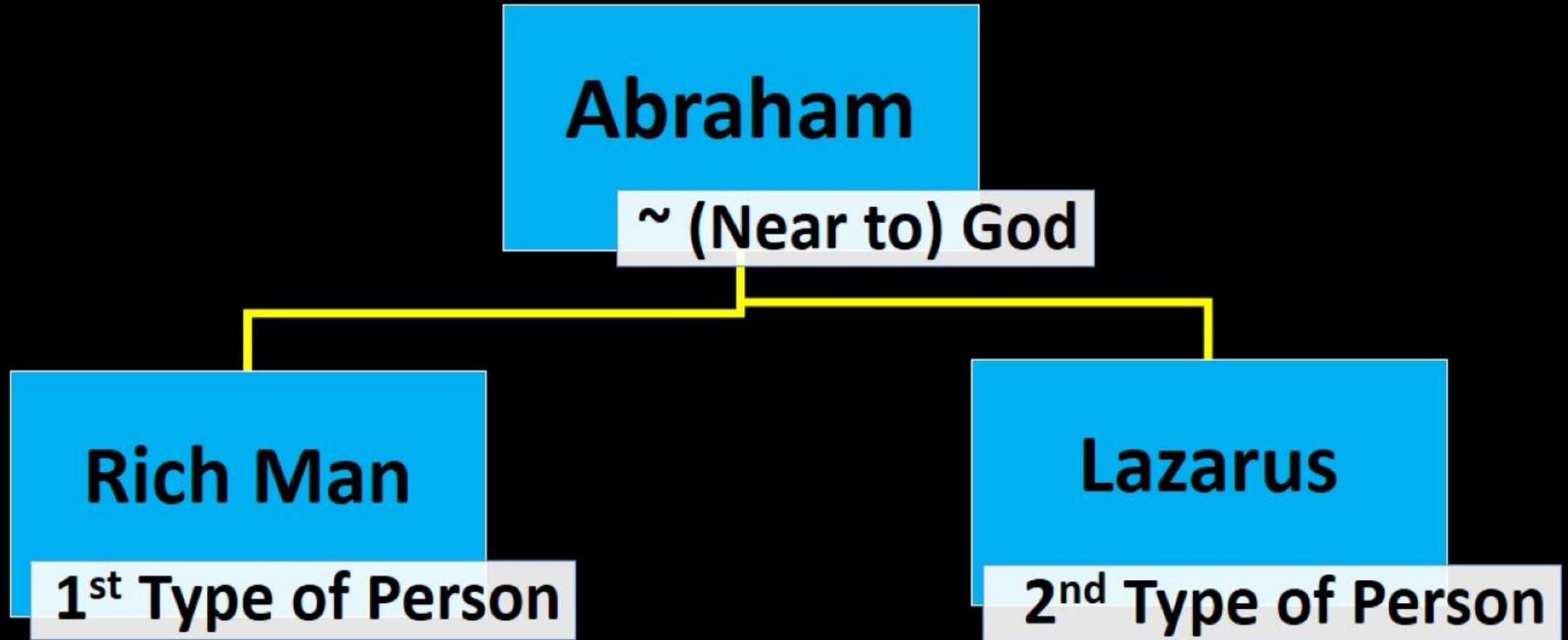
- It is the only one that carries over into the next world.
- It is the only one that gives names to characters.
- Its characters *do not* stand for people as part of a story that has a spiritual parallel – they are examples.
- Some people really are rich or poor, some will enter paradise and some will not - and that's the point.

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

Less unique things about this parable:

- It starts with a stock phrase, “There was a rich man who...,” which is much like “A certain man was...”
- This beginning actually sounds like many rabbinic parables.
- There was a similar Egyptian folktale, popular among Jews, and a modified Jewish form of that folktale.

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31



## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

The force of the parable rests on a few things:

- The soul survives death and we will be conscious of our eternal punishment or reward.
- The unrepentant remain unrepentant even after death – *“The doors of hell are lock on the inside.”*<sup>2</sup>
- The rich man doesn’t ask to get out, but to get Lazarus to come to where he is!
- The Scriptures are all that we need to lead us to faith.

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

- One Lesson Not to Learn:
- The story is not ultimately about wealth or poverty as some contemporary interpreters might say.
- After all, Abraham was rich – probably much wealthier than the man in the story!

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

- Lessons to Learn:
- From Abraham (and Moses and the Prophets) we learn that God has clearly revealed himself to us.
- From the rich man we learn that the unrepentant will experience lasting irrevocable punishment.
- From Lazarus we learn that suffering in this life can be a good thing because it can lead us to saving faith.

## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

*Now it seems to me that love of some kind is the only possible explanation of the extraordinary amount of suffering that there is in the world. I cannot conceive of any other explanation. I am convinced that there is no other ... if the world has ... been built of sorrow ...*

*– Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900),  
Irish Playwright, in De Profundis*



## 4. The Rich Man and Lazarus 16:19-31

*... it has been built by the hands of love, because in no other way could the soul of man, for whom the world was made, reach the full stature of its perfection. Pleasure for the beautiful body, but pain for the beautiful soul.*

*– Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900),  
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# Luke 16    What We Just Read

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# Luke 16    Key Points

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1. We must not let riches, pleasure and the good things of this life become an end in themselves.
2. Our focus must be on the eternal.
3. Eternity will be characterized by either eternal reward or eternal punishment.
4. Pain, poverty or suffering here can lead us to Christ if we let them do so. **That is why God allows them.**

## Luke 16    Key Points

*Ah! happy they whose hearts can break  
And peace of pardon win!  
How else may man make straight his plan  
And cleanse his soul from Sin?  
How else but through a broken heart  
May Lord Christ enter in?*

*– Oscar Wilde (1854 – 1900),  
in The Ballad of Reading Gaol*



# Luke 16    A Prayer

# Luke 16    A Prayer

- Dearest heavenly Father,
- You have so constructed this world that it has become, for us, a place to prepare for eternity.
- Help us to get our hearts in the right place and keep them there – focused on you and not on ourselves, our possessions or our worldly pleasures.
- Help us to use what material goods we have to serve you and prepare ourselves treasure in heaven.

# Luke 16    A Prayer

- Help us to see our trials as a gift from you, especially designed to train us and lead us to Jesus.
- Your servant James once wrote (**James 1:2-4**) that we should, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

# Luke 16    A Prayer

- That's what we want to be – “perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
- To the extent that we must endure trials, experience pain and undergo suffering, let it be for your glory and the honor of the name of Jesus Christ.
- Amen

# Luke 16    References

1. Blomberg, Craig L. *Interpreting the Parables* (p. 325). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.
2. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 127.