

## **PEFC, Mar 22, 2020 Service**

### **Opening Songs (online videos)**

- [This is My Father's World](#), Fernando Ortega
- [Never Once](#), Matt Redman

### **Announcements**

- See bulletin <https://parkdalechurch.ca/sunday/bulletin/>
- **Ongoing tasks**
  - o Sunday preparation, office work
  - o Cleaning the upstairs; Building & yard maintenance
- **Small groups**

### **Prayer**

- Sharing Scriptures from our weekly reading
- **Reading:** [Psalm 91](#)
- Requests – see email prayer chain

### **Offering**

- By cheque or online: <https://parkdalechurch.ca/give/>

### **Kids' Minute**

- Bible Project Video – *How to Read the Bible: [Parables](#)*

### **Scripture: [Luke 16:1-13](#)**

#### **Message: *An Ideal Investment***

- Audio, PowerPoint, Discussion Guide  
<https://parkdalechurch.ca/messages/>

### **Closing Song**

- [Cornerstone](#), Hillsongs

### **Benediction: [Psalm 62](#); [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#)**

## **Scripture: Luke 16:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup> 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.’

<sup>3</sup> “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— <sup>4</sup> I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

<sup>5</sup> “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ <sup>6</sup> “‘Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ <sup>7</sup> “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.’

<sup>8</sup> “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. <sup>9</sup> I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

<sup>10</sup> “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. <sup>11</sup> So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

<sup>13</sup> “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

## **Gospel of Luke: Parables with a New Perspective**

### **Mar 22, 2020: An Ideal Investment (Luke 16:1-13)**

- Scripture: **Luke 16:1-13**
- Pray

#### **Instability**

In the **past week**, we've collectively seen our way of life crumble before us – many of our daily activities have screeched to a halt

- **Spring break** was going to happen anyways – so kids staying home from school was expected
- But travel plans have been **anceled**, large gatherings are banned, and restaurants have closed their seating areas
- **“Social distancing”** has become the new norm – a precautionary step to prevent the spread of the **Coronavirus**
- Yet, in ironic **contrast**, grocery stores are packed with people, rushing to purchase and hoard essential supplies like toilet paper and hand-wipes
- At times, it feels like **chaos** – *what is happening to our world?*

With some free evenings, Emily and I have actually managed to watch **“Gone with the Wind”** for the first time ever

- It may be the **most famous** movie of all time, but it's also four hours long, so, as tired young parents, we had to spread it over four nights
- But as I watched it, I couldn't help but notice some **similarities** to today
- As the characters lived through the instability and tragedy of the American Civil War, they kept talking about how their **“way of life”** was coming to an end

- As the northern soldiers marched into the southern states, many people were **losing** their businesses, their homes, and even their lives
- And this conquest introduced a **“new normal”**
  - o No longer could the southern states act independently – they would now be subject to the “union”
  - o And no longer could rich landowners live in luxury, while slaves worked for their profit – all would be given freedom under the law
- In response, many spoke as if they were **victims** – but, looking back on those times, I couldn't help but think that some of those changes were necessary
- The civil war was a terrible tragedy that no one should ever ask for, but it can be through times like these that we can learn **valuable lessons**
  - o When we lose things, we're reminded about what lasts, and what doesn't
  - o When we're in need, we're reminded about what matters most
  - o And when we feel threatened, we realize where we have truly put our hope

#### **Discussion:**

- *During the recent effects of the coronavirus outbreak, have you **lost** anything dear to you?  
What has **changed** for you as a result?*
- *What do you **think and feel** about what is happening, and where this is all going?*

### Preparing for the Future (Luke 16:1-9)

A few weeks ago, we read a parable from **Luke 11** where Jesus called us to engage in **audacious** prayer

- The **parable** was about a man who woke his neighbor in the middle of the night to ask for bread to feed his guests
- Audacious is certainly the right word for such behavior
- And we might initially think of audacity as a **bad thing** – of rude behavior, being insensitive, and shameless
- But, in a time of great need, when someone is willing to do something uncomfortable out of necessity, then audacity is a **good thing** – we’d call it courage and boldness
- That’s how Jesus calls us to **pray** – to approach God in desperate need, with great confidence in Him – knowing that we have nowhere else to turn to, but there’s nowhere else we need to turn to
- **Audacity** – it may sound negative, but Jesus shows us how and when it can be needed

Similarly, here in **Luke 16**, Jesus uses a surprising word to tell us how to manage our earthly resources – **shrewdness**

- Now, before we try to figure out what that means for us, let’s be sure we know what **Jesus meant** – by seeing how it’s illustrated in this **parable**, found in **verses 1-8**:
- In **verses 1-2**, we are introduced to a rich man and his manager, whom he accuses of wasting his possessions
- *And how did he do that?*
- Apparently, this manager was a **sales manager** – he was entrusted with the responsibility of setting prices with customers who bought or sold agricultural products
- Knowing that he would be **losing his job** (so the accusations were true), we see in **verses 3-4** that the manager hatches a plan for what he will do next

- This was before unemployment insurance, and he couldn’t imagine himself doing labour work, so here’s what he did:
- In **verses 5-7**, he **uses his position** as sales manager, while he still has it, to reduce the debts of his master’s clients
- *And why?*
- In order to **make friends** with them, so that when he is removed from his master’s house, he will be welcomed into the homes of his former clients
- *Does this sound **shrewd**?* Yes it does.
- *Does this sound **dishonest**?* Also yes.
- *So, **why** is Jesus telling this story? Is he holding this shrewd manager up as a positive example for us?*
- In **verse 8**, we see the master **congratulate** his former manager for his shrewdness – apparently, it was within his rights to change the prices, and so he did it with an eye to the future
- And in response, **Jesus makes His point** in **verse 9**:  
*“use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.”*
- *What is Jesus saying here?*

Remember, in **parables**, just like in Bible stories, the characters are not perfect – they’re **not necessarily good examples** for us to follow

- But these parables, like Bible stories, can give us a new **perspective** on life; they can **teach** us about God, ourselves, and our calling in this world

### **Discussion:**

- *What was happening to the manager? What did he do? Do you think he made a good decision?*
- *What is Jesus **comparing** this situation to? What does it tell us about God, ourselves, and our lives?*
- *What does it mean to be a “shrewd manager” **today**?*

## **Being a Wise Manager (Luke 16:10-12)**

So, when we hear the term shrewd manager, *what comes to mind?*

- I think of my brother, who used to trade me smaller coins for larger ones, and dollar bills
- Like “audacity,” “**shrewdness**” can carry **negative** connotations
- But, when you look at the word in **Greek**, the adjective *fronimos* is usually translated as “**wise**”
- In the Gospels, it occurs **eight** other times – and is used to describe:
  - o **Matthew 7:24** – the wise man who built his house on the rock by obeying Jesus’s teaching
  - o **Matthew 10:16** – Jesus’s advice to evangelists to be as shrewd/wise as serpents, and innocent as doves
  - o **Matthew 24:45** and **Luke 12:42** – describing the “faithful and wise servant” who is found working when his Master returns
  - o **Matthew 25:2-9** – four times, describing people who brought plenty of oil for their lamps, as they waited late into the night for the bridegroom to arrive
- *Do these descriptions sound negative or positive?*
- *Would you use the word “wise” or “shrewd”?*
- In fact, in the King James Version, **all 14 instances** of this word are translated as “**wise**” – that’s what the word means!
- Perhaps later translators, observing what this manager did, felt uncomfortable to use a positive word like that on him
- But Jesus uses the **same word** to describe him as he does for wise builders, effective evangelists, and faithful servants!
- *So, what can we learn from this “wise manager”?*

From this story, and from life in general, I believe we can see two things clearly:

1. A wise manager can understand the **proper value** of things
  - o Think about a person who is in charge of employees – they need to put the right people in the right roles, with the right combinations of co-workers, so that their efforts are maximized most efficiently
  - o Or, think about a person who is in charge of sales – they need to know what things cost and what they’re worth on the market, so that they can maximize profit
2. As a result, a wise manager knows how to make **good deals**
  - o When they know what things are worth, they will know what to keep, and what to throw away; they will know what to trade, and what to acquire, and how to wisely invest in what matters most

And, from this, hopefully we can see the **connection** – that this parable is an illustration of our lives now, as we prepare for eternity

- Just like the manager, we are all entrusted with **resources** – positions of influence and possessions to spend
- But, we can’t keep them beyond this life – *So how can we **invest** them shrewdly or wisely, trading them for what lasts for eternity?*
- Verses 10-12 makes this connection clear

In **verses 10-12**, Jesus offers an application – about **money**

- If we can be trustworthy with the little **temporary** resources we have, then we can be trusted with **more** in **eternity**
- God has **given** us all that we have – time, talents, possessions and positions of influence – and He **hopes** that we **use** these as He would, to honor Him and advance peace, justice & love in this world, seeking for His kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven
- And, knowing what he promises for eternity, investing in His kingdom now sounds like a **good deal** – a shrewd move

**Discussion:**

- *What has God given you now, that will **not last** into eternity?*
- *What do you have that lasts **forever**?*
- *Are there opportunities to use temporary things to **invest** in what is eternal?*

**Where is Your Hope? (Luke 16:13)**

Now, it's possible that this parable and Jesus's instructions have made us feel **uncomfortable**

- I hope it's clear that I'm **not** making this up, or trying to pressure anyone to give or spend anything in a specific way
- That's between **you and God** – and I know He has good plans for you and me and everyone, with what He's given us
- **Jesus** actually speaks about money a lot – because it can be both dangerous and useful
- In **verse 13**, He actually warns that money can rival God's place in our life – to use Old Testament terms, it can threaten to become an **idol**
- If we look to money to find our sense of personal worth, or even **rely** on it for our sense of security, If we make money our main goal and **pursuit** in life, or simply find it really difficult to **share** with others, then it might be an idol to us
- In fact, if we value money, or anything, too much, then it becomes our **master** – taking the place of God in our life
- And when it becomes our master, we begin to **serve** it – making great sacrifices to gain it, spending extra time thinking about it and maintaining it, and prioritizing it even above other people

But, in the end, it **fails us** – money will be spent, investments will dry up, and possessions will wear out

- These **temporary** resources end up taking our attention, draining our energy, and then disappearing
- Even during this pandemic, we've seen **stocks** crash – my little RRSP is now worth less than what I've put in
- And I'm glad that I haven't put my **hope** in that – because, with or without retirement savings, I know that I can be rich in things that last, like meaningful relationships, godly character, and fruitful service that will bring eternal **reward**

*So, where is your **hope**?*

- In these unstable and uncertain times, much is at stake
- Some people will lose their **jobs** for a time – getting laid off, or having to shut down their businesses
  - o We need to have a source of identity and security that is beyond our job, and beyond this moment
- Many have lost contact with **friends** and others for a while
  - o So, we need a relationship that transcends space and time – Someone who is with us anywhere, anytime
- Our jobs, friendships, money, and resources are good things – **gifts** from God – but they are not God
  - o We are entrusted with them now so that we can use them, while we have them, for God's good purposes
  - o And we do this knowing the end of the story – that this is shrewd management – a good deal

**Discussion**

- *What do you **fear losing**, more than anything else?*
- *According to Jesus, what is it **really worth**, and what is it **for**?*
- *What would it look like to **hope** in God, above all else?*

**Prayer** – **Psalm 62:5-8**;

**Closing Song** – [Cornerstone](#), Hillsongs

**Benediction** – **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**