SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Luke

Chapter Sixteen, Verses 1–31

You Cannot Serve God and Wealth — a shrewd manager, a crowd of scoffing lovers of money, and a rich man who finally looked up

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

A manager about to be fired cuts his master's debtors a deal, and Jesus tells His disciples to be that shrewd about eternity. The money-loving Pharisees scoff, and Jesus answers with a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus — on both sides of the grave, with a great chasm fixed between them. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Luke 16:1–31

manager · mammon · Law · Lazarus

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from a manager's accounting to a rich man's plea for his brothers

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"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." — Luke 16:10

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Luke 16:1–31

You Cannot Serve God and Wealth — Jesus teaches His disciples to use money for eternity — and shows the Pharisees where loving it ends

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 16 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 16:13

"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."

† Before the Passage

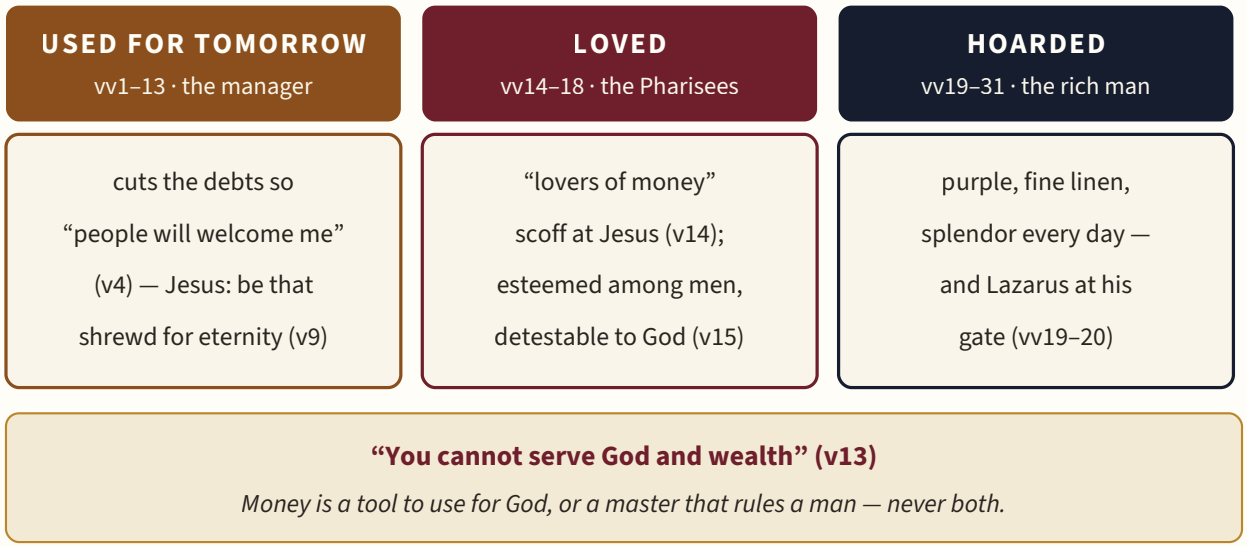
Luke 16 is spoken in the same setting as chapter 15. The tax collectors and sinners are still listening, and so are the Pharisees (16:14). Jesus has just told of a younger son who "squandered his estate" (15:13); now He tells of a manager "reported to him as squandering his possessions" (16:1) — the same Greek verb, *diaskorpizō*. Chapter 15 was about lost people; chapter 16 is about money, and what a man's use of it shows about his heart.

The first parable is spoken "to the disciples" (v. 1). A wealthy landowner's manager (*oikonomos*) ran the estate, made loans, and kept the accounts. Debts were often paid in produce — oil and wheat — and written on a bill in the debtor's own hand. Guzik: "Some consider this to be one of Jesus' most difficult parables," because the hero of the story is a dishonest man. Sproul's caution helps from the start: the master "did not praise the steward for his dishonesty."

Money is a constant theme in Luke. Mary sang that God "sent away the rich empty-handed" (1:53); Jesus said, "Blessed are you who are poor … But woe to you who are rich" (6:20, 24); He warned against "every form of greed" and told of the rich fool (12:15–21); and soon Zaccheus will give half his goods to the poor (19:8). Chapter 16 calls the Pharisees "lovers of money" (v. 14), and Jesus answers their sneer with the sharpest money story He ever told.

The chapter closes behind the curtain of death. Jesus speaks of Hades, of "Abraham's bosom," of a beggar carried by angels and a rich man in torment, and of "a great chasm fixed" between them (v. 26). Guzik notes that "in no other parable did Jesus actually name an individual." The last line points ahead to Easter: "they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead" (v. 31).

FIGURE · THREE MEN AND THEIR MONEY



Read left to right: the chapter shows money used for the future, money loved, and money hoarded — and verse 13 says which master each man served.

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 16:1–8

The Shrewd Manager

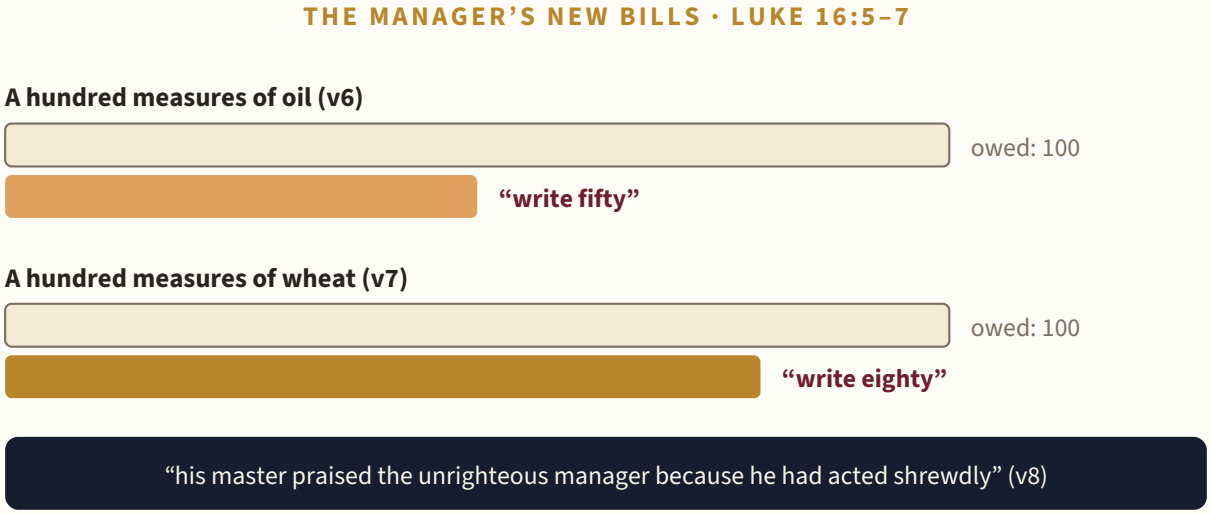
A manager facing an audit cuts his master's debtors a deal — and is praised for his shrewdness

[1] *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.* [2] *"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.'* [3] *"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.* [4] *'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.'* [5] *"And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'* [6] *"And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said*

to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ [7] *“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.’* [8] *“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.*

LUKE 16:1–8

FIGURE · THE MANAGER’S NEW BILLS



Compare the bars: the manager halves one debt and cuts another by a fifth, buying friends with his master’s accounts before he loses the job.

οἰκονόμος

OIKONOMOS · “MANAGER” · G3623

From *oikos*, house, and *nomos*, law or rule: the man who runs the house. He was not the owner; he managed another man’s goods. The NASB renders it “manager” here (vv. 1, 3, 8) and “steward” elsewhere; Paul uses it of the apostles as stewards of God’s mysteries (1 Corinthians 4:1). Sproul: “The steward did not own the assets he managed.” Neither do we. The related noun *oikonomia*, “management,” comes three times in verses 2–4.

φρονίμως

PHRONIMŌS · “SHREWDLY” · G5430

An adverb, found only here in the New Testament, from *phronimos*, “prudent, sensible” — the word Jesus uses for the “wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24) and the “faithful and sensible steward” (Luke 12:42). It means practical wisdom that sees what is coming and acts on it. The master is not praising the man’s honesty but his foresight. Verse 8 uses the same root again: the sons of this age are “more shrewd” (*phronimōteroi*) than the sons of light.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik admits the difficulty: "Some consider this to be one of Jesus' most difficult parables." Jesus is not approving fraud: "Yet God sometimes uses evil things that are familiar to us to illustrate a particular point." The point is the manager's shrewdness — he saw the end coming and used what was in his hands to secure his future. Guzik draws two lessons: "Christians should take seriously the idea that they will be called to account," and if believers pursued the Kingdom with the zeal worldly people bring to their own interests, "we would live in an entirely different world."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Parable of the Unjust Steward" (24 August 2014) lays out the facts: "The steward did not own the assets he managed." Caught wasting them and about to lose his post, he reduced the debtors' bills — Sproul suggests he removed hidden interest charges — to win friends who would house him. "The steward was not doing all of this out of the goodness of his heart." And the master's praise was limited: "He did not praise the steward for his dishonesty." The worldly man planned for his future; Sproul says of believers, "We are usually just the opposite of that in our actions as Christians."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon preached verse 2 at the end of a year as "The Last Sermon for the Year" (No. 2445, 26 December 1869). He makes the master's demand everyone's: "Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward." He urges a man to audit himself now — "Judge yourselves, that you be not judged!" — and not to flatter his heart: "My Soul, make out an honest account!" The warning cuts both ways: "You cannot be saved by your stewardship, any of you, but unfaithful stewardship will ruin you!" So, "Let us work while we can, before the night comes when no man can work!"

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is careful about what the master praised: "He does not commend him because he had done falsely to his master, but because he had done wisely for himself." On the manager's "ashamed to beg," Henry adds a word of mercy: "Those whom God, in his providence, has disabled to help themselves, should not be ashamed to ask relief of others." And he takes Jesus' point in verse 8 as a rebuke to believers: "The children of light are commonly outdone by the children of this world."

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 16:9–13

Faithful in a Very Little Thing

Wealth used for eternity, trust that grows, and the master no one can share

9 *"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.* 10 *"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.* 11 *"Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?* 12 *"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?
13 *"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."*

LUKE 16:9–13

"But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

MATTHEW 6:20–21

μαμωνᾶς

MAMŌNAS · "WEALTH" · G3126

An Aramaic word for wealth or property carried straight into the Greek of the Gospels — "mammon" in the KJV. Guzik passes on Pate's note that it comes from the Aramaic. It appears in the New Testament only on Jesus' lips: three times here (vv. 9, 11, 13) and in Matthew 6:24. In verse 13 Jesus speaks of it almost as a person — a rival master who wants a man's service. The NASB's "wealth of unrighteousness" (v. 9) is literally "the mammon of unrighteousness": money belongs to a world that is passing away.

πιστός

PISTOS · "FAITHFUL" · G4103

Trustworthy, reliable, believing — the same root as *pistis*, faith. It comes four times in verses 10–12. The argument runs from small to great: money is "a very little thing," the "true riches" are much (v. 11); money is "another's" — God's — and the true riches are "your own" (v. 12). Sproul: "Everything that you and I have comes from God." A man who cannot be trusted with God's money will not be trusted with God's kingdom.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads "unrighteous mammon" as money that promises much and delivers little, citing Clarke: "Riches promise MUCH, and perform NOTHING." So use it while you have it: "The important thing is to invest your resources for the Lord now." Faithfulness with small things, money included, shows whether a man can be trusted with spiritual things, and he quotes Meyer: "So God is testing men by giving them money, that He may know how far to trust them in the mart of the New Jerusalem." All riches are God's; we are managers. And, he notes, "The world is filled with financial planners and advisers" — few of them plan for eternity.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul says plainly, "The central matter Jesus addressed in this text was money." Making friends with unrighteous mammon means using worldly goods wisely for God, because "Everything that you and I have comes from God." "We do not own it; He does." He ties it to giving and tithing — and then shuts the door on any idea of buying heaven: "You can give all the money you have to the church, but it will not get you into heaven." "Only Christ in His poverty can get you into heaven." So the choice of verse 13 is final: "You cannot serve God and mammon."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads verse 9's "when it fails" as every man's end: "We must all thus fail shortly; death shuts up the shop, seals up the hand." Use the goods while the shop is open. Those who will not are poorer than they know: "God withholds his grace from covetous worldly people more than we are aware of." And verse 13 leaves no room to split the difference: "So divided are their interests that their services can never be compounded." "If therefore we be determined to serve God, we must disclaim and abjure the service of the world."

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 16:14–18

Lovers of Money Scoff

God knows the heart, the kingdom is pressed into, and not one stroke of the Law will fail

14 *Now the Pharisees, ⚠ who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and ⚠ were scoffing at Him.*
15 *And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but △ God knows your hearts; for ⚠ that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.*
16 *"The Law and ⇄ the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time △ the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.*
17 *"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for △ one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.*
18 *"Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another ⚠ commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband ⚠ commits adultery.*

LUKE 16:14–18

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."

MATTHEW 5:18

ἐξεμυκτήριζον

EXEMYKTĒRIZON · "WERE SCOFFING" · G1592

From *myktēr*, the nose: to turn up the nose at someone, to sneer. Guzik quotes Barclay: it "literally means that they turned up their noses at him." Only two New Testament uses, both in Luke — here, and at the cross: "even the rulers were sneering at Him" (23:35). Sproul traces the line: "The Pharisees heard that, and first they yawned, then they sneered, then they murdered." The imperfect tense says they kept at it.

βδέλυγμα

BDELYGMA · "DETESTABLE" · G946

Something that makes God recoil — the Old Testament word for idols and the "abomination of desolation" (Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27). Here it is not an idol in a temple but "that which is highly esteemed among men" (v. 15). The Pharisees' reputation and their love of money looked fine to people; to God it was idolatry. Sproul: "We live in a topsy-turvy world where princes walk in rags and beggars ride on horses."

βιάζεται
BIAZETAI · "FORCING HIS WAY" · G971

To use force, to press hard. Verse 16 is one of the hard sayings, and our teachers hear it differently. Sproul takes it as eager pressing — since John, people have been pressing into the kingdom with passion, for "The kingdom of God has never been a casual affair." Guzik notes that in Jesus' day there were revolutionaries who tried to bring in the kingdom by violence. Verse 17's "stroke" (*keraia*, G2762, KJV "tittle") is the tiny hook that tells one Hebrew letter from another.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the Pharisees' love of money explains their scorn, and he warns that you don't have to be rich to serve money — greed traps the poor too. Verse 15 cuts both ways: "For some people the idea God knows your hearts is comfort; for others it is a curse." He quotes Morgan: "When God is served, Mammon is used beneficently." Guzik holds that the Law still stands after John, and he reads verse 18 as God's ideal for marriage against the loose divorce of the day, while recognizing the exceptions Scripture gives elsewhere. Of verse 16 he notes, "In Jesus' day, there were hundreds of revolutionaries willing to use violence to bring in the kingdom of God."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Pressing into the Kingdom" (7 September 2014) begins with verse 14: "The Bible does not say that money is the root of all evil"; the love of it is. Then the sneer: "Can you imagine sneering at Jesus?" The Pharisees justified themselves before men, but God judges the heart, and what men prize He may abhor. John marked the turn of the ages, and since then "The kingdom of God has never been a casual affair." Verse 17 grounds a high view of Scripture. On verse 18, he shows how loose divorce emptied God's law, and he says frankly, "All our marriages are flawed."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry answers the Pharisees' sneer with comfort for anyone laughed at for obeying Christ: "It is no disgrace to a man to be laughed at, but to deserve to be laughed at." Jesus Himself was mocked, and His servants should expect the same: "Christ's apostles were mocked, and no wonder; the disciple is not greater than his Lord." On verse 17, the gospel does not cancel the Law but deepens it: "Nay, the precepts of it are explained and enforced by the gospel, and made to appear more spiritual."

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 16:19–26

A Rich Man and a Beggar Named Lazarus

Purple and sores, angels and burial, Abraham's bosom and Hades — and a chasm fixed

19 *"Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor*
every day. 20 *"And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,* 21 *and longing to be*
fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking
his sores. 22 *"Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich*
man also died and was buried. 23 *"In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far*
away and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 *"And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and*
send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in

> *this flame.’ 25 “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’*
>
> LUKE 16:19–26

> *“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”*
>
> REVELATION 20:13–14

FIGURE · THE GREAT REVERSAL

THE GREAT REVERSAL · LUKE 16:19–26

	THE RICH MAN	LAZARUS
IN LIFE	purple and fine linen, splendor every day (v19)	laid at his gate, sores, dogs licking them (vv20–21)
AT DEATH	“died and was buried” (v22)	“carried away by the angels” (v22)
AFTER DEATH	Hades, torment, “agony in this flame” (vv23–24)	Abraham’s bosom, “being comforted here” (v25)

“a great chasm fixed” (v26)

“during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony” (v25)

Read down each column: what the two men had in life is turned upside down after death, and the dark bar marks the chasm no one can cross.

ᾅδης

HADĒS · “HADES” · G86

The Greek name for the realm of the dead, used in the Greek Old Testament for the Hebrew *Sheol*. The KJV renders it “hell.” Guzik: “Hades is technically not hell, or what is also known as the Lake of Fire.” In Revelation 20:13–14 death and Hades give up their dead for judgment and are themselves “thrown into the lake of fire.” Here it is a place of conscious torment (*basanos*, G931, vv. 23, 28) for the rich man, before the final judgment.

κόλπος

KOLPOS · "BOSOM" · G2859

The bosom or lap — the place of closeness at a meal, where a guest reclined against his host. John uses it of the Son "who is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18). To be in "Abraham's bosom" (vv. 22, 23) is to have the place of honor at the patriarch's side in the feast of God's people. The beggar who longed for crumbs from a rich man's table now reclines at Abraham's.

χάσμα

CHASMA · "CHASM" · G5490

A gaping opening, a gulf — the source of our word "chasm," and found only here in the New Testament. It is "fixed" (*estēriktai*, perfect tense: set fast and staying so). No one crosses either way (v. 26). Sproul: "The chasm represents the fixed and permanent position of hell." Henry: "A stone is rolled to the door of the pit, which cannot be rolled back."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik argues that this is not presented as a parable: "Jesus did not present this story as a parable, and in no other parable did Jesus actually name an individual." "We have every reason to believe that Jesus gave us an actual case history." He notes that the name Lazarus is a Latinized form of Eleazar, and that Hades corresponds to the Old Testament Sheol — "Hades is technically not hell, or what is also known as the Lake of Fire." Neither man's bank account decided his end: wealth did not condemn the rich man, and poverty did not save Lazarus.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Rich Man & Lazarus" (21 September 2014) calls it one of Jesus' hardest teachings, and insists we take it seriously: "Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about heaven." The rich man ("Dives," in old tradition) is not condemned for money as such — "This was not a judgment against wealth" — but for lavish display while a man lay starving at his gate, where "Dogs were not household pets." After death, "Dives was conscious in hell," and his cry for mercy came too late. The chasm is final: "There is no bridge between heaven and hell."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry names the rich man's sin precisely: "The sin of this rich man was not so much his dress or his diet, but his providing only for himself." He fed his dogs and not his neighbor: "Those will have a great deal to answer for hereafter that feed their dogs, but neglect the poor." Death ends the difference — "Death favours not either the rich man for his riches or the poor man for his poverty" — and turns it over: "He that denied a crumb is denied a drop." "Nothing will bring more oil to the flames of hell than Son, remember." And the gulf is God's own: "The decree and counsel of God have fixed this gulf, which all the world cannot unfix."

V
MOVEMENT

LUKE 16:27–31

Moses and the Prophets

A plea for five brothers — and the answer that Scripture is enough

27 *"And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—* 28 *for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'* 29 *"But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'* 30 *"But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'* 31 *"But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"*

LUKE 16:27–31

"But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus."

JOHN 12:10–11

διαμαρτύρομαι

DIAMARTYROMAI · "WARN" · G1263

To testify solemnly, to bear witness thoroughly (*dia*, "through," with *martyromai*, "to testify"). The KJV has "testify unto them" (v. 28). Luke uses it again in Acts for apostolic preaching — Peter "solemnly testified" (Acts 2:40) and Paul spoke of "solemnly testifying … repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). The rich man wants a witness sent from the dead; God has already sent His witnesses in Moses and the Prophets.

μετανοέω

METANOEŌ · "REPENT" · G3340

The rich man finally uses the word of Luke 15 — "they will repent!" (v. 30) — but he thinks the problem is a lack of evidence. Abraham says the problem is the heart: if they will not listen to Scripture, "they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead" (v. 31). The KJV's "though one rose from the dead" is literally fulfilled twice: Lazarus of Bethany was raised and the chief priests plotted to kill him (John 12:10), and Christ rose and many still would not believe.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik draws the chapter's final lesson from Abraham's answer: the rich man's real problem was not his money but that he did not heed Moses and the Prophets — and neither would his brothers. Scripture is sufficient, and signs alone will not produce faith in a heart that refuses God's Word. Guzik quotes Spurgeon on the man who always wants one more proof: "Infidelity would still cry for something more." A resurrection did come; the question is whether we will hear the Word that foretold it.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul follows the rich man's new concern: he begs that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers so they will not end where he is. Abraham's answer is that they already have Moses and the Prophets — Sproul hears in it the sufficiency of Scripture. When the rich man insists that a messenger from the dead would bring repentance, Abraham says no, and Sproul points to Easter: Christ has risen, and people still do not believe. The time to call for mercy is now: "If you cry for mercy and for Jesus after you are dead, it is too late."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry hears in the rich man's begging the reversal of a whole life: "Note, The day is coming when those that make light of divine mercy will beg hard for it." He begged for a drop and was refused; now he begs for his brothers. But his plan for them — a ghost at the door — is the oldest excuse there is: "Foolish men are apt to think any method of conviction better than that which God has chosen and appointed." God has spoken in His Word, and that is the means He has chosen to bring men to repentance.

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

Treasure in heaven, the faithful steward, and the One who rose from the dead

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

LUKE 12:20–21

"Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

LUKE 12:33–34

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

2 CORINTHIANS 8:9

"Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

JAMES 2:5

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:10

> *“Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”*
>
> DANIEL 12:2

> *“Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.”*
>
> LUKE 24:27

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

In his sermon on verses 1–13 Sproul shuts the door on buying heaven with money, and his words echo 2 Corinthians 8:9: “Only Christ in His poverty can get you into heaven.”

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text, admits the manager is hard, and takes the rich man and Lazarus as a real case; Sproul presses ownership, the authority of Scripture and the reality of hell; Spurgeon (on v2) calls every steward to give his account now; Henry turns each verse into a proverb. They differ on verse 16 — eager pressing (Sproul) or violent forcing (Guzik's note) — and agree that money is a test of the heart and that the chasm is fixed.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The shrewd manager	A hard parable; God uses familiar evil to make a point.	He did not own it; praised for foresight, not dishonesty.	Give your account now — while you are still steward.	Not because he did falsely, but wisely for himself.
II · Faithful with mammon	Riches promise much, perform nothing; invest for the Lord now.	We do not own it; He does — and it cannot buy heaven.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Death shuts up the shop; you must abjure the world.
III · The Pharisees and the Law	God knowing the heart: comfort to some, curse to others.	Can you imagine sneering at Jesus? Never a casual affair.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	No disgrace to be laughed at — only to deserve it.
IV · The rich man and Lazarus	A real case history; Hades is not yet the lake of fire.	Not a judgment against wealth; no bridge between heaven and hell.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	He that denied a crumb is denied a drop.
V · The five brothers	Scripture is sufficient; signs do not make faith.	Christ has risen, and still they do not believe; after death it is too late.	— (Spurgeon quoted by Guzik: "Infidelity would still cry for something more.")	Fools prefer any method of conviction to God's own.

LUKE 16:1–31 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Same verb, two wasters.** The younger son "squandered" his estate (15:13) and the manager was "squandering" his master's goods (16:1) — both *diaskorpizō*. One came home; the other got shrewd. Luke wants both stories heard together. THE GREEK
- **Praised for foresight, not fraud.** Henry: "He does not commend him because he had done falsely to his master, but because he had done wisely for himself." The lesson is to see the end coming and act now. HENRY
- **Everyone is a manager.** Sproul: "The steward did not own the assets he managed." "We do not own it; He does." Spurgeon: "Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward." SPROUL
- **Money is a little thing.** Verses 10–12 call wealth "a very little thing" and "that which is another's." The true riches are what God entrusts to the faithful. THE TEXT
- **Mammon wants to be a master.** Jesus does not say "you should not" but "you cannot" serve God and wealth (v13). Henry: "So divided are their interests that their services can never be compounded." THE TEXT
- **They turned up their noses.** *Ekmyktērizō* appears only here and at the cross (23:35). Sproul: "first they yawned, then they sneered, then they murdered." THE GREEK

- **God sees what men applaud.** "That which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God" (v15). Guzik: "For some people the idea God knows your hearts is comfort; for others it is a curse." GUZIK
- **A beggar with a name.** The rich man is never named; the beggar is — Lazarus, from Eleazar ("God has helped"). Guzik: "in no other parable did Jesus actually name an individual." GUZIK
- **A crumb and a drop.** Henry: "He that denied a crumb is denied a drop." The man who would not cross his own gateway could not cross the chasm (v26). HENRY
- **Scripture is enough.** "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead" (v31). Christ rose; the Word that foretold Him is still the means God uses. THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **The manager knew his job was ending and planned for it. If I knew my stewardship would end this year, what would I do differently with my money and time?**

Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward (Spurgeon).

16:1-4; 2 Cor 5:10

2 **Jesus says the sons of this age are more shrewd than the sons of light. Where do I put more planning into my career, hobby or habit than into eternity?**

We are usually just the opposite of that in our actions as Christians (Sproul).

16:8-9

3 **How faithful am I in "a very little thing" — small amounts of money, small promises, small jobs nobody sees?**

Faithful in little, faithful in much.

16:10-12

4 **Jesus said "you cannot" serve God and wealth. What signs in my spending, worry or envy show which master I am really serving?**

We do not own it; He does (Sproul).

16:13-15; Matt 6:24

5 **Who is lying at my "gate" — the person I step around every day without seeing?**

The sin of this rich man was ... his providing only for himself (Henry).

16:19-21; 1 John 3:17

6 **The rich man wanted a miracle for his brothers; Abraham said they had the Scriptures. Who in my family needs me to point him to God's Word while there is still time?**

If you cry for mercy ... after you are dead, it is too late (Sproul).

16:27-31; Luke 24:27

Luke 16 puts money in its place: a little thing, borrowed from God, to be used for eternity. A shrewd manager shows us how to plan ahead; the Pharisees show us what loving money does to the heart; and a rich man shows us how long eternity is. We have Moses and the Prophets — and a Savior who rose from the dead. Listen to them now.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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