LUKE 16

You Cannot Serve God and Wealth

a shrewd manager, a crowd of scoffing lovers of money, and a rich man who finally looked up

> *"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 16:13

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in Luke

1. Luke 16 is spoken in the same setting as chapter 15.

2. The first parable is spoken “to the disciples” (v. 1).

3. Money is a constant theme in Luke.

THREE MEN AND THEIR MONEY · LUKE 16

USED FOR TOMORROW vv1–13 · the manager	LOVED vv14–18 · the Pharisees	HOARDED vv19–31 · the rich man
cuts the debts so “people will welcome me” (v4) — Jesus: be that shrewd for eternity (v9)	“lovers of money” scoff at Jesus (v14); esteemed among men, detestable to God (v15)	purple, fine linen, splendor every day — and Lazarus at his gate (vv19–20)

“You cannot serve God and wealth” (v13)

Money is a tool to use for God, or a master that rules a man — never both.

The Shrewd Manager

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

LUKE 16:2

"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.'

DAVID GUZIK

A hard parable; God uses familiar evil to make a point.

R.C. SPROUL

He did not own it; praised for foresight, not dishonesty.

C.H. SPURGEON

Give your account now — while you are still steward.

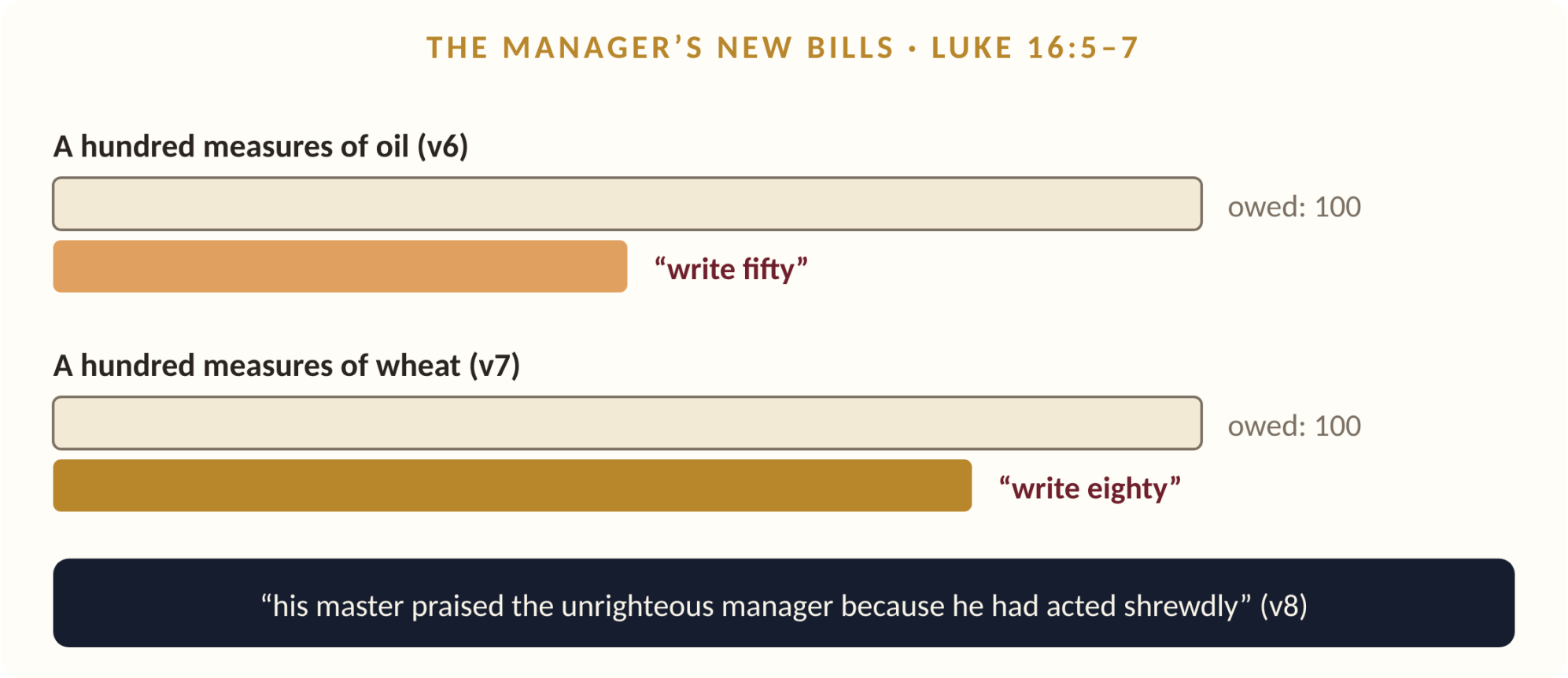
MATTHEW HENRY

Not because he did falsely, but wisely for himself.

οἰκονόμος
OIKONOMOS · "MANAGER"

From oikos, house, and nomos, law or rule: the man who runs the house.

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.

Faithful in a Very Little Thing

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

LUKE 16:9

"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.

DAVID GUZIK

Riches promise much, perform nothing; invest for the Lord now.

R.C. SPROUL

We do not own it; He does — and it cannot buy heaven.

MATTHEW HENRY

Death shuts up the shop; you must abjure the world.

μαμωνᾶς
MAMŌNAS · "WEALTH"

An Aramaic word for wealth or property carried straight into the Greek of the Gospels — "mammon" in the KJV.

Lovers of Money Scoff

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

LUKE 16:14

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.

DAVID GUZIK

God knowing the heart: comfort to some, curse to others.

R.C. SPROUL

Can you imagine sneering at Jesus? Never a casual affair.

MATTHEW HENRY

No disgrace to be laughed at — only to deserve it.

ἐξεμυκτήριζον
EXEMYKTĒRIZON · "WERE SCOFFING"

From myktēr, the nose: to turn up the nose at someone, to sneer.

A Rich Man and a Beggar Named Lazarus

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

LUKE 16:20

"And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

DAVID GUZIK

A real case history; Hades is not yet the lake of fire.

R.C. SPROUL

Not a judgment against wealth; no bridge between heaven and hell.

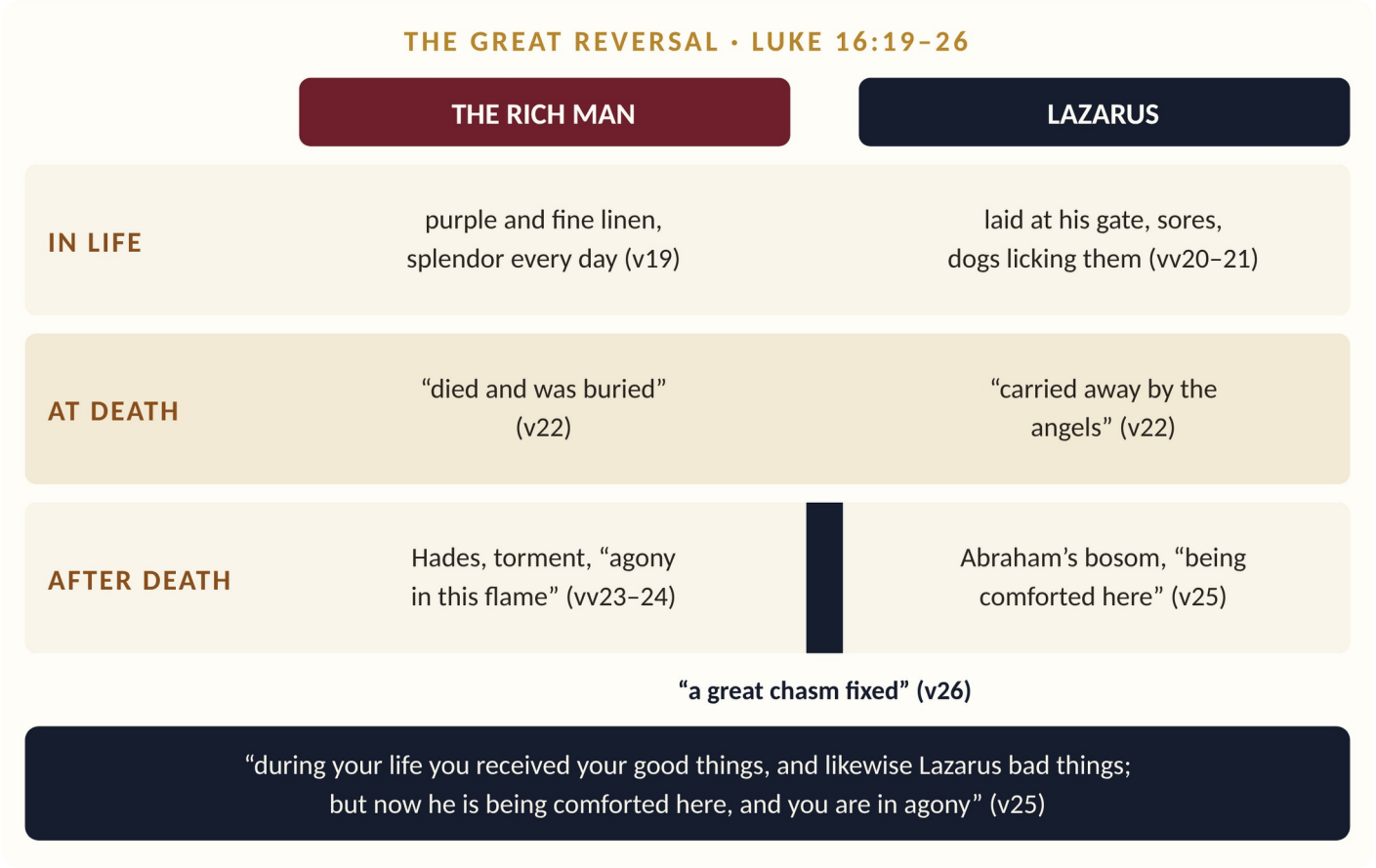
MATTHEW HENRY

He that denied a crumb is denied a drop.

ᾅδης
HADĒS · "HADES"

The Greek name for the realm of the dead, used in the Greek Old Testament for the Hebrew Sheol.

The great reversal



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.

Moses and the Prophets

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

LUKE 16:28

for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

DAVID GUZIK

Scripture is sufficient; signs do not make faith.

R.C. SPROUL

Christ has risen, and still they do not believe; after death it is too late.

MATTHEW HENRY

Fools prefer any method of conviction to God's own.

διαμαρτύρομαι

DIAMARTYROMAI · "WARN"

To testify solemnly, to bear witness thoroughly (dia, "through," with martyromai, "to testify").

What to carry from this chapter

1

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.

2

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.”

3

Everyone is a manager.

Sproul: “The steward did not own the assets he managed.”

4

Money is a little thing.

Verses 10–12 call wealth “a very little thing” and “that which is another’s.”

More to carry

5

Mammon wants to be a master.

Jesus does not say “you should not” but “you cannot” serve God and wealth (v13).

6

They turned up their noses.

Ekmyktērizō appears only here and at the cross (23:35).

7

God sees what men applaud.

“That which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God” (v15).

8

A beggar with a name.

The rich man is never named; the beggar is — Lazarus, from Eleazar (“God has helped”).

Talk it through

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?

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?

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

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

5. Who is lying at my “gate” — the person I step around every day without seeing?

CLOSING

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

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Luke study page.