

# Luke 16:1-13

## Money and our Investments

### 1. Introduction:

In Australia we love a good investment and we hate a poor one.

My worst investment was my ford falcon wagon. I spent \$3000 to buy this car and within 2 years I saved money by fixing the car myself whenever it broke down using youtube as a guide and it still cost me an additional 5grand before it was hit and run and I gave up on it.

What I thought would be 3000 dollars cost me 8000 when I was 17.

What a lemon of an investment!

But then there are great investments. I think most of us have witnessed someone being complimented on their dress sense only to hear the complimented person exclaim their delight in the fact that they purchased it for \$2 at a salvo's!

So whats the key to a good investment? Well this passage is in its essence, God's class on Investment, investing 101 with God.

And like all good investment teachers, and in consistency with the rest of the bible, this passage doesn't mention or value the quantity of your initial investments but rather focuses on the manner of your investing.

So whether you own lots or little this passage is for you.

This passage is challenging us to be shrewd, faithful and devoted in the way we invest. And there are two important things to note at the start.

1. The first thing is that in verse 1 we see that Jesus is speaking to His disciples with this parable.

Therefore these investment tips are meant for the ears of Christians. While the principles concerning the investments lay true whether you are a Christian or not.

If you aren't a Christian we do not want your money, instead we would rather you to first consider Jesus Christ, and we pray that you will discover the loving kindness and power of salvation that Jesus offers before you consider giving financially toward God's mission because it's in our joyous response to what Jesus has done that should cause Christians to invest wisely.

2. The second important thing to note is that this passage is the application of the famous lost trilogy parables in the previous chapter including the parable of the prodigal son.

I found it quite interesting that the first command Jesus utters since the start of the lost trilogy is at the end of this parable in verse 9. Therefore the 3 parables in chapter 15 aren't a set of 3 but are a set of four and this parable is a guide to the application of the first 3.

The lost trilogy has this central theme of God and the angels celebrating in light of lost sinners becoming found and saved by God which is spoken throughout the whole chapter but is best summarised in 15:7.

**Luke 15:7** I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

It's in this passage that Jesus then applies this knowledge to the Christians wallet.

Since God rejoices in repentant sinners, and since the only thing that we know will be in heaven are repentant sinners. The most shrewd, faithful and devoted investment we can be making right now is an investment into finding lost sinners.

In the famous words of Jim Elliott – “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

So let's look at the 3 ways this passage challenges us to invest what we can lose into something we can't lose.

## 2. Investing Shrewdly (1-9)

Earlier in the week I caught up with the man who trained me while I did MTS at Jannali Anglican and when we were asking about each others plans for the week I told him I was preaching on this and he said in disgust “classic ministers giving the student minister one of the hardest passages to preach from!”

While I disagree with him on the difficulty of the passage In one sense he's right. At first glance this passage looks like the master commends the manager for his sly, selfish thievery but I am convinced that this is not the case and that the answer to this is clearly seen in verse 8 and 9.

- a. After the manager has done all of this sly and selfish stealing the master commends him not for his stealing but follow along as I read verse 8.

“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted **shrewdly**.”

- i. And this is where the confusion is because at first glance we think he's commending all of the dishonest actions in verses 1-7 but contextually the commendation is better linked within its own sentence towards the managers shrewdness.

And in the rest of verse 8 and 9 we see the application:

For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

**Luke 16:9** I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

If even the worldly who may be like this stealing, deceitful manager are more shrewd with their investments than Christians, then we need to learn something from them.

We're not meant to walk away after reading this passage thinking that its okay to steal, we're meant to walk away challenged to act more shrewdly with our money and possessions.

But Shrewdness isn't a characteristic or even a word we hear of too often these days. I haven't once heard someone use the word in a sentence outside of this passage.

According to the dictionary shrewdness means "having or showing sharp powers of judgement; astuteness."

And from the context of this passage the sharp powers of judgment this manager shows is his ability to use the worldly wealth in front of him now in order to gain things he can't lose later when his job is taken from him.

He is applying the wisdom of Jim Elliott in a worldly manner.

He's giving up what he cannot keep (his masters money) in order to gain what he can't lose (being welcomed into the homes of others).

And so the master commends him for it.

But we should do more than that.

We should learn from it.

We are to be shrewd in light of eternity.

Since we know There's no baggage compartment in a hearse and that everything we have before us to invest with will not go with us after we die,

we should be investing what we have wisely into the only thing we know will be in heaven – People.

We should be giving up what we cannot keep (our time, money, property and skills) to gain what we cannot lose, (more friends to welcome us into eternal dwellings).

Isn't this image of friends welcoming us into eternal dwellings in verse 9 beautiful.

Wouldn't it be great to walk through the pearly gates to see those people we invested in celebrating and praising God for the way he entrusted us to steward what was used to get them to heaven.

You can hear them saying:

"Thank you for how you spent your money, time energy and skills!  
Because you invested in gospel proclamation, I'm here!

And if you look down, see that car you had, the grandkid has already written it off! I'm so glad you didn't invest in that one too much. And the house you had, it's been bought by some guy who doesn't know how to maintain it.

Thank you for investing in me."

He is no fool who gives up an hour of sleep each morning in order to invest in his and others eternity by studying the bible.

He is no fool who gives up his time, energy and skills in order to persuade others to trust in Jesus.

He is no fool who sacrifices his savings and his salary in order to invest in in gospel proclamation.

<PAUSE 5-1>

### **3. Investing Trustworthily (10-12)**

Moving quickly now through the next two points as they have already been taught upon by Stu and are available on the church website under the titles "money and our foundations" and "money and our heart".

Firstly investing truthfully in verses 10-12

**Luke 16:10** ¶ "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.

**Luke 16:11** So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?

**Luke 16:12** And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

In verse 12 we can see that this whole passage is based on the truthful assumption that everything we have is someone else's property. It has been given to us by God for faithful stewarding and so the question arises.

Will we be faithful with what He gives us to steward? Will we be faithful with little, will we be trustworthy with worldly wealth and will we be faithful with God's possessions?

A helpful way to apply this passage to ourselves practically is to answer these two questions:

1) *Firstly Ask yourself “If I were God would I trust me with something that really matters?”*

<PAUSE>

*God’s seen how you’ve handled everything he’s given you so far, and in light of that would he give you something that really matters?*

2) *And secondly – what might I need to change in order to display more trustworthiness as a steward of God’s possessions?*

<PAUSE>

Are you investing in something that God wouldn’t want you to invest in? or refusing to invest in something that God would want you to invest in?

<PAUSE>

God calls us to Invest shrewdly, to invest trustworthily and lastly invest devotedly.

#### **4. Investing Devotedly (13)**

And really this last challenge to how we invest is the root challenge. It’s the heart issue behind money and investing.

Let me read verse 13.

**Luke 16:13 ¶** “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.”

You cannot serve both God and money.

I think this is one of the reasons why God gives us so much wisdom concerning how we use money in the bible.

Not only because money is a **bad master** that will never leave us feeling satisfied or content.

But also because money is a **great servant** that can be used shrewdly and honestly in devotion to God.

On the one hand if we serve money we will be giving up what we cannot lose (an eternal dwelling with God in heaven) in order to gain what we cannot keep (earthly possessions).

On the other hand if we serve God we will be willing and keen to give up our worldly wealth and possessions in order to gain what we cannot lose, a welcoming into heaven.

You cannot serve both God and money.

And yet there is always someone who doesn't believe this, someone who thinks they can serve both. Just like the Pharisees in verse 14.

**Luke 16:14** ¶ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.

Don't give up your eternity for temporary pleasures and comforts that never satisfy. Rather devote yourself to God and invest in the only thing that will last, calling people to repent and trust in Jesus.

This can be hard to do, but it's worth it, as it was for Jesus, who gave up everything, including the comfort of heaven and his life that we who deserved only Wrath might have salvation.

He came down from heaven to be stripped of all wealth and possessions in order to give us heaven.

I'm not sure about you but the first person I want to thank in heaven will be Jesus for the way he invested shrewdly, trustworthily and devotedly in the salvation of all who believe.

<PAUSE>

## **5. Investment opportunities**

As I was reflecting on this passage I couldn't help but reflect on the great joy it has been and still is to be seeing the fruit of this churches previous shrewd, trustworthy and devoted investments in the youth ministry. As the student minister, here I was approached 2 years ago to consider joining you guys in planting a youth ministry we now call Altitude.

And I can say with absolute honesty and a smile on my face that it has been an absolute joy to see God growing this youth group in its maturity. And so in light of the challenge of this sermon concerning investments I want to take a little bit of your time to share with you the wonderful fruit of some of the previous godly investments within the church and to challenge you to continue investing in the ministries here at the church.

## **UPWARD GROWTH**

Each Friday I get the privelage to see what a lot of you guys don't get to see, I get to witness what a lot of you have invested in and don't get to witness and so lte me share with you an inside look into where your previous investments have gone.

The shrewd and wise investment of time, skills money, planning, and service you have previously put in has paid dividends for the kingdom.

What you have given up to plant this youth group would have faded away if spent on something worldly but what you have received because you gave it up will last forever.

Because of your godly investments of the past we have given the angels and God a cause to rejoice when kids have decided to put their trust in Jesus at youth group.

And conversions aren't the only thing we have seen. We've seen growth in a variety of forms.

We've seen youth growing up in their faith from having people to ask the big questions of life that have been road blocks for them in trusting Jesus. Questions like "If God is good why is there still so much sickness and pain and death in the world", and "What happens after we die?"

Youth have asked questions like these and found answers from the bible for the first time. Some have taken steps toward placing their faith in Jesus, some have decided to put their faith in Jesus and some have been maturing as God sanctifies them after they have put their trust in Jesus.

### **OUTWARD GROWTH:**

And God is not only growing the youth upward, he's also growing the youth outward.

At the start of the youth group last year we started with 8 regulars.

The last week of youth group last term we had 37 kids.

We started with 12 youths contact details on the role and now we have 54 kids on our role.

On top of this we have been in contact with around 80 parents of the youth as well.

Look at this graph for a second concerning the outward growth of youth group. This graph shows the average attendance of youth each week during that term at youth group starting with 8 in term 1 last year and ending with 30 last term this year. As you look at this please remember that every number is a person, a youth.

And each person is attending youth group in order to hear the bible taught and as Romans 1:16 tells us the good news is what saves. "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power for salvation first for the Jew then for the gentile."

Last term we had an average of 30 youth joining us in our gospel centred community and hearing the gospel itself week in and week out, asking real questions and hearing biblical answers.

And all of this was because people in this church decided to invest more money, time, energy and skills in order to hire a student minister and a ministry trainee, to provide dinners, encourage the leaders, train the leaders, link with more of the community.

What a wonderful and eternal investment you have invested in. Thank you for letting me join you and be a part of it.

### **Future investment opportunities**

And in case you're wondering whether you have missed the carriage on the investment opportunities train. Let me tell you about some of the potential future opportunities we can be investing in now concerning this ministry alone. There are a lot of good investment opportunities around outside and inside church and this is only one of them.

As you can see in each first term and in each fourth term we have grown our youth group in number. This number may be exponential in growth, starting with 2, then 10, then 20 etc. Or it could be linear, adding 8-10 each year.

Assuming its linear, in Term 4 2019 we will have youth from year 5 to year 12. And we will have approximately 80,

if we assume its exponential we could have 100 by Term 4 2019.

If this is the case, at that time we will need around 10 leaders in order to have a 1:10 ratio. In which some may come out of being trained up through the youth ministry itself as senior youth become junior youth leaders. I assume some may still be student ministers and/or ministry trainees who will require funding but the rest will have to be found elsewhere, and most likely from among us here.

Secondly by that point it would be helpful to divide the youth group up into a Junior and a Senior youth group, allowing the senior youth to help lead the junior youth at a different time so that they don't need to go to another church for their own youth group.

As far as gospel investment opportunities go this is looking remarkably promising! Even if things go a little pear shape and it's not quite exponential or even linear, we are still looking at a lot of youth hearing the gospel regularly in Christian community.

More money, time, skills and energy can and will be needed to be poured into these ministries but down the line it can create a natural feeder into the church as youth join church as young adults and so on.

### **Conclusion:**

I have been amazed by the shrewd and trustworthy investments of the past here at church at the peak, and I am excited to see where today's and future investments might lead to more rejoicing in heaven as sinners repent.

If you have been challenged by this passage and are looking for somewhere to invest in.

This church and its youth group are not the only opportunity around that's worth investing in. There's plenty more, the persecuted church through open doors, CMS missionaries taking the gospel overseas, Anglicare, Barnabus fund, Compassion and the list could go on. And while Church@ThePeak may not be the only good opportunity it sure is one that's worth investing in.

May this passage encourage you to be shrewd, trustworthy and devoted with what God has given you to invest with so that the heavens may rejoice as you gain a great welcome into heavenly dwellings which you cannot lose later.

Let me pray

there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents

Thank you father for your heart which loves and seeks to save sinners through Jesus.  
Thank you for those who had invested wisely in order to contribute to us hearing the gospel and we thank you for the gift of being able to contribute in your greater work.  
Please Lord make us shrewd, honest and undivided.  
In Jesus name, Amen.