

# 7.11.21 am

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Date: 07 November 2021

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. To those who are in the building and I'm conscious from the empty seats that there are quite a number who are still online.
- And so a warm welcome to those who are in their own homes and who are worshipping in their own homes also. It's good to see a few visitors with us today and you're especially welcome.
- And we pray that you and we will know God's blessing on us as we seek to worship him. The evening service will be at 6 this evening and it will be taken by the Faith Mission.
- It's Donnie McLeod that's on the intimation there on the screen. But I think actually it's Lewis that's going to be preaching this evening and Donnie will lead the fellowship afterwards.
- So be encouraged to come to the evening service at 6 and then the fellowship after that at half past 7. In the course of the week you can see that there are various things happening as usual.
- [ 1 : 0 3 ]     I'm not going to take time to go through the details of the Ladies' Fellowship, Little Fishers, Road to Recovery. Same time, same place. Be encouraged to come those who are interested in these different meetings.
- The prayer meeting is on on Wednesday at half past 7 and I think we'll leave that online for another week. Partly that's out of caution in terms of COVID.
- To be honest it's partly in terms of just trying to figure out how to work out this in between model. In the church building it's great to come together to pray and when we've been online there has been a blessing come together to pray.
- When half of us are in and half of us are out I'm conscious that those who are at home can hear me speaking and praying but you can't really hear anybody else in the building who prays and that is a bit of a challenge.
- So we're trying to figure out how best to manage this and so we'll leave the prayer meeting online this week Wednesday at half past 7. A warm welcome to all. If you need the codes for that come and speak to me or speak to one of the elders and they can provide that with you.
- [ 2 : 1 4 ]     The youth work you see on Friday at the usual time and on Saturday, this coming Saturday the 13th of November at 10.40am there'll be a service in the Church of Scotland the annual Armistice Day service and then there's the procession to the War Memorial.
- So those who are attending that service are asked to be seated by 10.30pm so if you could note that please. And then on next Sunday the service in the morning will be at 10.50am.

Again as usual we'll meet 10 minutes early here so we can observe the two minute silence at 11. Two more things. You can note the details regarding the fundraising lunch and that's been on the screen and I assume you'll have noted the details concerning that and I was given one more information a date for your diary this is kind of COVID permitting Friday 26th of November a Thanksgiving meal in the Church and there'll be a sign-up sheet for food next Sunday and Mackenzie from America will guide us in authentic Thanksgiving American recipes.

so you can put that on your diary 26th of November all being well COVID dependent. So these I think are all the intimations we'll begin this time of worship by singing to God's praise and we sing from Mission Praise 671 the words there are on the screen 671 in Mission Praise there is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains who stand to sing to God's praise in just a moment.

PIIVE Amen. Who's all their guilty state?

[ 4 : 53 ] Who's all their guilty state? And sinners once beneath our blood, Who's all their guilty state?

The dying faith rejoiced to see That fountain in His day.

And there may I as my last seed Wash all my sins away. Wash all my sins away.

Wash all my sins away. And there may I as my last seed Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying love, Your precious blood Shall never lose its power. Till all the ransomed church of God Be saved to sin no more.

[ 6 : 13 ] Be saved to sin no more. Be saved to sin no more. Till all the ransomed church of God Be saved to sin no more.

Ereset by faith I sowest dream Your folly would survive. Redeeming love must be my thing And shall be till I die And shall be till I die And shall be till I die And shall be till I die And shall be till I die And will not know what sweeter song I'll sing Your power to sing When this poor is being stumbling down, lies silent in the grave.

Lies silent in the grave, lies silent in the grave. When this poor is being stumbling down, lies silent in the grave.

Let's now unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that we are able and that we have the desire that we have been drawn by your Spirit to come into this place, into the house of God.

We thank you, Lord, that we come in the name of Jesus, our Savior, and we come knowing and holding on to that promise that we so often take hold of, that where two or three meet together, in the name of Jesus, you are with us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[ 8 : 57 ] And we thank you, Lord, for that promise, and we thank you for that sense of your presence that comes amongst us as we gather together in Jesus' name.

And we pray that we would know that today in this building. We ask, Lord, that in the stillness of the hour we would know that you are God and that you are with us. And we pray for those who are at home this morning who are coming together, just two or three, and just one in some homes.

We pray that they, too, would know the presence of God amongst them. And for the churches around us. Wherever the Bible is opened, wherever Christ crucified is preached, whatever denomination we ask, Lord, that you would be amongst them, Lord, as we pray that you would be amongst us.

And we thank you, Lord, for all that we are able to sing about in that first hymn. In some ways, as we read the words and as we sing the words, it's such a strange and difficult and awful thing to think about.

There is a fountain filled with blood. A picture that points us back to the cross of Christ. His blood shed.

[ 10 : 30 ] To pay the price of our sin. And we see that fountain. We see that blood. And it grieves us, Lord, as we think about what our sin did to Jesus.

But we thank you that this is our hope. We thank you that as we trust in Christ, as we come to that cross. As we plunge, in that sense, into the fountain of blood.

We thank you that our guilty stains, our sin, is cleansed from us. And, Lord, we pray for that cleansing.

At the beginning of this service, at the beginning of a new week, we confess, Lord, that we are sinners. And we can think back over conversations.

And we can think back over things we have done. Things that we have left undone. We can think about days when we have been so busy that we haven't taken time to be in your presence.

[ 11 : 36 ] And we recognize that all that, Lord, is sin. We sin in our thoughts. We sin in our words. We sin in the things that we do and the things that we leave undone.

And as we think upon these things, we tell you of them, Lord, in the quietness of our own hearts. And we ask that you would cleanse us in the blood of Christ.

Wash us, we pray. And make us clean. And enable us, as those who are cleansed, if we are trusting in you, to live lives that show out the thanksgiving and the joy of your salvation of us.

Help us, in the time that we have in this world, to be ambassadors for Christ. Not to be focused on self. Not to be out for our own comfort and our own gain.

But enable us, we pray, to remember we are ambassadors for Christ. And we are called to glorify Jesus. And to seek to bless those around us in the name of Jesus.

[ 12 : 47 ] Help us to live that way. May self, selfish self, be crucified day by day. And may Christ be lifted up in us, we pray.

We pray that for ourselves as individuals. We pray that for ourselves as a congregation. That we would never be distracted by so many different things that we may be doing.

Help us to remember that everything that we do is to lift up the name of Jesus. And may everything we do be done from that desire to worship you, Lord.

And to glorify you. We thank you for the hope of the gospel. We thank you that we see in that hymn a dying thief.

Who in his last moments cried out to Jesus, remember me. And was given the assurance of paradise. We thank you that there is life, full life, eternal life.

[ 13 : 46 ] Beyond the grave. The saviour died and rose again. And we thank you that because he rose, we too shall rise to everlasting resurrection life when we are in Christ.

We pray, Lord, for those who are struggling this morning. We pray for those who are sick. Some known to us, others not known to us.

Some struggling with this virus that has had such an effect on our lives over this last year. As we think of them, we pray that you would reach them, Lord. That your healing touch would be felt by them in their body.

And we pray for those who are coming towards the end of life. We think of Mary Sheena, especially. And we ask, Lord, that she would know your presence.

That she would know your peace. We thank you that the Holy Spirit ministers to us. Throughout our lives. When we are in a conscious state.

[ 14 : 53 ] And able to communicate. And when we are in a state of subconsciousness. When we are not able to speak to anyone else. We thank you that in the power of the Holy Spirit you are at work.

And we pray that Mary Sheena and the family would know the blessing of that at this time. As they have done in past days. We pray for those who are grieving.

We think of Nanny. And we ask, Lord, that you would sustain her over this week. And on Friday, especially as there will be the funeral of Effie, our sister.

We pray that she would know your comfort and your strength. And Lord, we pray for those who are looking forward to the prospect of new life. We think of Donna and John and Cameron.

As Donna approaches her due date. We ask, Lord, that you would protect her. That you would strengthen her. We commit her to you. And ask that in this week and the weeks ahead.

[ 15 : 51 ] That she would know your presence. And your hand upon her. And we pray that for all of the family. We thank you that in the womb. You are the God who knows us.

Before anyone else knows us. You are the one who knows us. We ask, Lord, that you would continue with us now. In this service. We pray for those who are anxious.

We see stories on the news constantly about our world. And your world. And how we see a decay in it.

In that environmental sense. We sense panic from so many. And we know, Lord, that we must care for your creation. Help us, Lord, not to be those who are panicking, though.

Help us to remember that you are the sovereign God. And you brought all things into being. With your word. And when the time comes for this world to pass away.

[ 16 : 49 ] It will be at your command and will. So help us, Lord, to care. For all that you have entrusted us with. But to trust you. And to look to you constantly.

We pray now that you would continue with us, Lord. Lead us and guide us by your spirit. Enable us to be in worship on the Lord's day. And we ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward, please? Go get Finley Here comes Finley There he goes, he's flying over here You want to come with? It's okay It's okay We all have days like that Finley Now I've got something to show you today And nobody's going to listen because everybody's looking over there There's something to show you today Does anybody know what this is?

Gordon, I don't know if you need to zoom in on that Can people see that in the camera? I know there are some boys and girls at home Can you see that? They might be saying words right now They might be saying words, yeah Do you want to, you put your hand up It's a case, yeah So it is a case So that's the first right answer Shawnee It's an earpod case It's an earpod case Yeah, that's exactly what it is It's just a cheap one It's not like the fancy expensive one But it's an earpod case And you can plug it in your ears And it speaks to the phone And you can listen to songs And you can make phone calls And it's quite a handy thing And I was using them this week When I was out walking Shawus And when I was looking at them I was thinking about the design Of these little earplugs Or whatever they're called And how they all work

And how do they work? Tell me Christy Yeah, you put them in your ears And you play music That's right When you think about the design of them They're quite It's quite a clever design, isn't it?

[ 19 : 33 ] Because it's got a case And what's the case for? Do you think? Miriam Charging it, yes That's one of the things the case is for It charges up the earpods Katrina Well, they're very small Things So the case, hopefully It'll help us Help me not to lose them Because it's It's easier to take hold of this Than those tiny little pods Yeah?

Anything else? So if you drop them They're going to Destroy That's right If you drop them Which I have done a few times already Because of the case And the case bumps But You know It should protect them So it's a clever design, isn't it?

These things And as I was looking at this I was thinking about God's design for us God designed us And he designed us In a special way Do you remember the disciples of Jesus?

Do you know the first thing That Jesus called his disciples to do? What do you think it was? Well, tell you Lois? Tell others about him That he did tell The disciples to tell others about him But there's something That they had to do Before they could tell any others About him What do you think it was?

What's the first thing Jesus called his disciples To do or to be? John Roddy? They had to be trusting him Yeah? Even more simple than that They had to be Lois?

[ 21 : 17 ] His friend Yeah, that's kind of the answer Shawnee? Loving him Yeah Jesus called his disciples I think it's in Mark chapter 3 Verse 14 And it says He called them to be with him To be close to him And I mean these Little air pod things They They're designed to be Right inside This wee Case This wee charging station And When they're right inside And you see the wee light In them And that shows that They're being charged up And for us Jesus calls us to To trust him Yeah?

And to love him And to be with him It says in John 15 He calls us to remain In him He wants us to be his friends And as we are Close to Jesus He charges us up To do the things That he He wants us to do If I took these air pods out And I left them on the table For the next three or four days Would they work?

No Because they lose their charge Don't they? And when you and I Decide we're not going to Read our Bibles very much And we're not going to Pray very much And we're not going to Bother coming out to church Today We drift away from Jesus We can't really do anything If I If I try and do things This sometimes happens to me I'll have a bad day And I'll think Oh what's gone wrong?

This has gone wrong And that's gone wrong And I feel like I can't do anything And then My mind will go back To John chapter 15 Where Jesus says You remain in me Close to me And I'll be close to you And then you can work But if I've been so busy I've hardly been in the Bible And hardly been praying I can't do anything Because that's what We're designed to be Close to Jesus And the other thing About this case As John has said Is When these airpods are in They're protected So they're kind of safe And when We Are With Jesus When we're trusting in the Lord He says in In John chapter 10 I'll hold you In the palm of my hand And you know That's the safest place In the world to be When When God is holding us Tell me this When God is holding us

Who can hurt us? No one And nothing Not even death Not even death Can hurt us When God is holding us In the palm Of his hand Because Remember what Jesus said In Psalm 23 He'll carry us through Death's dark veil To be with him Forever So When you're using your Better More expensive Airpods than I have Then Think about the design of them And think about What God designed you For He designed you To trust him And when we're trusting him He makes us strong Charges us up And he makes us safe Because he holds us In the palm Of his hand So let's Let's Let's pray about that Lord God We thank you

[ 25 : 01 ] For how much you love us And we thank you For how safe we are And how strong you make us When we're trusting in you We know that When we Are not trusting in you When we're not in the Bible When we're not praying When we're drifting Away from you We We know that we are so weak We can't do anything And you've told us that Lord And we Pray that you'd forgive us For the times that we've had to learn That lesson the hard way We thank you that when we're Close to you You make us Strong You give us the power To do the things That you want us to do And we thank you That when we're trusting in you Lord You make us safe And in this world Although we do have struggles And although there are things That happen That make us sad And make us sore We thank you that When we're trusting in you We're safe forever There's nothing in this world There's nothing in life Not even death Can harm the person Who is trusting in Jesus

We thank you Lord That that comforts us Even as we think about Daniel John And his granny As she comes towards The end of life Thank you That when we're in Christ And we're trusting in Jesus As Mary Sheena is We thank you that There's no one There's nothing That can do us any harm We fear no evil Because you are with us So Lord Comfort us we pray Strengthen us And help all the boys and girls The young ones And the older ones Here To be trusting in you And we ask all this In Jesus name And for his sake Amen We're going to sing now And it's Mission Praise 1008 And the words will be on the screen In just a minute And it's a version of Psalm 23 The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want And in the chorus I will trust in you alone Let's stand to sing

Amen Oh, my shepherd, I'm not one. He leads me high in pasture's green.

He leads me by the still, still water. His goodness restores my soul.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

[ 27 : 51 ] For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

He leads me in righteousness. And he alights my head with voice.

And I come with overflows with joy. I feast on his pure reliance.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

[ 28 : 47 ] And I will walk the darkest path. I will not fear the evil one.

For your love with me and your rod and staff. And the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust in you alone. And I will trust in you alone.

For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

Your goodness will lead me home.

[ 30 : 04 ] To the house now than there is in here. Which is a good issue to have. Let's be praying for them. Let's turn now in our Bibles to Luke chapter 16.

Luke chapter 16. And we will read from verse 1 to verse 18. This is God's word.

Jesus told his disciples there was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called them in and asked them. What is this I hear about you?

Give an account of your management because you cannot be manager any longer. The manager said to himself. What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job.

I am not strong enough to dig. And I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do. So that when I lose my job here. People will welcome me into their houses. So he called in each one of the master's debtors.

[ 31 : 17 ] He asked the first. How much do you owe my master? 800 gallons of olive oil. He replied. The manager told him. Take your bill. Sit down quickly. And make it 400.

Then he asked the second. And how much do you owe? A thousand bushels of wheat. He replied. He told him. Take your bill. Make it 800. 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. I tell you. Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves.

So that when it is gone. You will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. 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. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth. Who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property.

[ 32 : 19 ] Who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. 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 both God and money. The Pharisees who loved money heard all this. And were sneering at Jesus. He said to them. You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men.

But God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight. The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time the good news of the kingdom of God has been preached.

And everyone is forcing his way into it. It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear. Than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the law. Anyone who divorces his wife.

And marries another woman commits adultery. And the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. Amen. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

[ 33 : 19 ] And give us understanding. We are going to sing now to God's praise. And we will sing the last two stanzas of Psalm 46.

Psalm 46 verses 10 and 11 in Gaelic. And I will read the verses in English. Be still and know that I am God. Among the heathen I will be exalted. I on earth will be exalted high.

Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side. The God of Jacob our refuge forever will abide. We remain seated to sing. And we sing to God's praise in Gaelic for this praise.

The Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

[ 34 : 56 ] The Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The Lord of hosts is still upon our side. The Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The Lord of hosts is still upon our side. The Lord of hosts is since we are gefallen. If you could open your Bibles now please at Luke chapter 16 Let's pray as we go there Lord God we come to a parable a passage that's hard to understand and we pray for your help we pray for the wisdom of God to be given to us and we pray that you would make our hearts receptive that we would be still and expect that you will speak to us Lord in this hour so open our ears and our eyes and our hearts and help us to hear and we pray for the children as well we thank you for so many of them and we ask that in their early years that they would remember you as creator and that they would come to know Christ as Saviour we ask Lord that they would grow up to know and trust and walk with Jesus we thank you that some of them are great evangelists already they speak to their friends they encourage them to come to church they speak to them about Jesus and we ask Lord that you would continue to use them and protect them and enthuse them and help us to learn from them that we would have something of the courage that they so often show to us so bless them we pray and help them as we pray that you would help us now and we ask all this in Jesus name

Amen Luke chapter 16 and we're looking at the first 18 verses I think of this chapter and if you've done your homework and if you've read this in advance of coming here you're probably wondering what is this parable all about as I have been for much of the week you go to the commentators and most of the parables there's one main message in the parable and it's clear to see and it's clear to understand and there's agreement amongst the commentators but with this parable there is a lot of confusion it's generally said to be the most complicated the hardest to understand of all the parables that Jesus told I think it was J.C. Ryle who I glanced at this morning who said there are some knots in this parable that will not be untied until eternity so all that just to say to you that this is this is a hard parable to grasp and so we can pray for understanding and I'll outline for you the best that I can do with it but there are some things here which they kind of leave they're left hanging and we have to give more thought to it

[ 40 : 05 ] I'm going to begin by by by talking about something that I don't like very much and that's bees bees bees the buzzing bees they're very popular creatures these days and there's all kinds of campaigns to try and save the bees but I don't like them very much and I like some of the things they do I like the fact that they make honey I like honey you know with butter on my toast and weebrot and porridge sometimes I'm thankful for that that's a commendable work that the bees do and then they do the the whole thing of pollinating flowers which is absolutely essential for the environment and it's good for it's good for the whole world nobody else can do that the bees do that and that's a commendable work and I like that work that they do I like that stuff that they do but I don't like bees and I don't like the way they can sneak into your house there's a wee gap in the window

I don't like the low buzzing noise that they make it puts the fear into me and I don't like the the fact that they they want to share my ice cream cone with me whenever I'm trying to enjoy one in the summer and above all I don't like the fact that they can sting and lots of people say oh the bees are nice they'll never sting you they can sting and they do sting they have to be very angry to do it but they can do it and I don't like that but the point is there are some things about a creature or a person that you can like but just because you like one thing doesn't mean that you like everything there are some things that people can do or creatures can do that are commendable but that doesn't mean that everything they do is good and commendable and I think that's an important thing to grasp as we come to this this parable because we're introduced to this this character who is called in the NIV the shrewd manager there's some things that he does and they're commendable things and Jesus commends them him for them but his dishonesty his sharp practice not commendable so I think just from the outset let's get that clear



Jesus is not saying it's good to be dishonest he's not saying it's good to have sharp practice in business but he is commending this character on some of the things that he does so first of all we have the parable that Jesus told that's the first point we look at the parable that Jesus told and we see that in verses 1 through to verse 7 so let's just step through the parable Jesus told his disciples there was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions 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 so this man is given his notice I think by lunchtime last Monday three managers three football managers were fired I was reading about it on the news or on the app three managers before lunchtime last Monday fired they're gone you know one minute they're on a big wage they have an influential position they have responsibility they have power they have kudos the next minute they're clearing their desk and they're trying to figure out what to do next and that was this manager's predicament he's been fired not because he's losing football games but because he's been found out he hasn't been managing well he hasn't had the master's interests as his priority and so now having been found out we find him he's clearing his desk he's preparing to leave the office but before he goes well he still has access to the manager accounts he arranges a few meetings it may have been that he's trying to do this on his own initiative it may be that he's instructed by the owner settle these three or four accounts before you walk out the door and so that's the situation he arranges these meetings to settle these accounts the manager said to himself what shall I do now verse 3 my master is taking away my job

I'm not strong enough to dig and I'm ashamed to beg I know what I'll do he says so that when I lose my job here people will welcome me into their houses so he called in each one of his master's debtors he asked them he asked the first how much do you owe my master 800 gallons of olive oil he replied the manager told him take your bill sit down quickly make it 400 clears the account and then he asked the second verse 7 and how much do you owe a thousand bushels of wheat he replied he told him take your bill make it 800 so that's the story and this is a fly move by the manager he still has some authority to settle these accounts and so he cuts some deals we're giving two examples two illustrations one debtor owes 800 gallons of olive oil verse 6 they reckon that's about 20,000 pounds in our money it's about it was about a year's wages for a labourer so say 20,000 pounds in today's money and the manager says to this man with the debt regarding the olive oil half it you owe 20,000 give me 10,000 today it's cleared and we can imagine him as this debtor goes out the door saying don't tell anyone about this you know but don't forget what I've done for you don't forget that

I've just saved you 10,000 pounds remember that as you go out the door then another debtor comes in and he owes 1,000 bushels of wheat and the commentators reckon that's about 60,000 pounds three years of a labourer's wage 60,000 pounds in our money it's a lot of money so he says I'm going to give you 20% discount if you settle up today and so he does that and we can imagine again this this stressed manager saying don't you forget what I've done for you don't you forget you owe me for this I've just saved you a lot of money remember that for the future so what's this dishonest manager doing well what he's doing is he's thinking about the future when he's in the office maybe for a few more hours or maybe a day or two more but he's not thinking about what he's going to do in the office to make us two or three days left there happy he's thinking about the future so he does some things he cuts some deals with people on that particular day that hopefully are going to make his life a bit easier in the future he has the foresight to try and make some friends who may give him a job or who may give him help when he's no longer on the big wage of a manager but when he's in need and then we see the master in verse 8 and we can picture the master and he's looking at the accounts manager's now gone he's looking at the accounts and he's seeing what he did he's seeing that he took one bill and he cut it in half he took another bill he took 20% off it and we can imagine this master at verse 8 he commends the dishonest manager because he's acted shrewdly and we can imagine the master kind of shaking his head with half a smile on his face saying this is typical of this character you know you couldn't help but be impressed by this manager's ingenuity he's a shrewd character and Jesus takes this picture and he says you can learn from people like that he's speaking to his disciples remember and he says to his disciples you can learn from people like that he's aware of what's going on in the world he says there are lessons in the world that you can learn from if you could take that kind of shrewd thinking says Jesus if you could take that kind of mindset where you're thinking about the future you're having foresight you're not just thinking about the here and now if you could take that kind of thinking and import it into God glorifying activity there could be eternal gain for the people of our state of this world says Jesus are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light so there's the statement and it's kind of sad but it's true it was true back then and it is true today you know we can see people in business you know as disciples of

[ 50 : 13 ] Christ today we can look around us in the world and we can see people in business and they have such drive they have such focus they have such ingenuity and kind of entrepreneurial thinking when they're trying to make money and bring glory to their own name now imagine if that kind of drive and focus and ingenuity was imported into the Christian life imagine if some of the drive that we see from the people in suits was taken into our life as disciples of Christ if we could take some of that ambition and that energy and bring it into working for riches that will never fade if we could take some of that kind of drive and bring it into our lives when we're seeking to not make a name for ourselves but lift up the name of

Jesus what an impact that would be that's the lesson for me and for you if you're a disciple we see this in sport as well you know men kicking a ball around a pitch something that I spend a lot of time watching I watched a documentary a few weeks ago on Alex Ferguson who managed Aberdeen and Manchester United and when you look at the way he lived his life and when you look at how committed he was to making sure his teams had success it's remarkable it was all consuming in his life and it strikes me in light with this parable if something of that kind of commitment marked the life of every Christian if we had some of the zeal that Alex Ferguson has for winning and took that into gospel work there could be huge gain for Jesus sake and even in terms of false religions

I mean think about people like the Jehovah's Witnesses you know in rain and shine they're knocking on doors they're visiting houses they're giving out tracts they're taking abuse to try to persuade people to believe in a religion that isn't true now if we who have the truth if we who are the people of the light had some of that courage and that audacity what a difference it would make in gospel enterprise so these are some of the lessons that I think we face as we look at this parable that Jesus told but Jesus then goes on from telling the parable to actually applying it and he applies it further in verse 9 through to verse 12 the principles that Jesus taught is the second point and there's two principles

I think the first thing Jesus teaches us is to invest in heaven and the second thing that Jesus teaches us as part of the principles that flow out of this parable is to have integrity on earth the first thing is investing in heaven Jesus says I tell you use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves so that when it's gone you'll be welcomed into eternal dwellings now what's Jesus saying here is he saying that we can use worldly wealth to buy our way into heaven well of course he's not now looking around in the congregation here I don't think there's anyone here who would think about that for a second we can't buy our way into heaven we can't make a donation to certain ministries and secure our place in heaven there's only one way to heaven that's through Christ there's only one way to have our sins forgiven and to have heaven's gates unlocked and that's through the blood of

Jesus it's not us it's not our resources it's not our means it's not our money we we can only get in through faith in Christ so let's be clear on that can't buy our way into heaven Jesus paid all but for those who have a place in heaven for those who believe for those who are Christians I think the message that's been taught here is that what we experience in heaven will be impacted by how we use our time and our talents and our money in this world two Fridays ago the kids clubs jam and connect were making up shoeboxes so they had all the stuff the toothpaste and the sweets and the gloves and the hats and all that stuff and they're ramming it all into these boxes with great joy and they're putting a wee note in with it as well and some of the children as they were putting all the good stuff into the boxes they put in wee notes pointing the folks who opened the boxes to

[ 56 : 10 ] Jesus so there's a wee message of the gospel and I think some of them did extra little messages pointing whoever's opening this box to Jesus and the cross now we'll we'll never in this world know I think where these boxes go in this world we'll probably never meet any of the people who receive these boxes but if one box comes from here paired by one of our little folks and it ends up in the hands of somebody far away who enjoys the sweets and wears the hat and comes to believe in Jesus through the shoebox I think in heaven there will be a friendship between the child who came to believe and the child who put the tract in the box I think there's a relationship there that will not be seen in this world but it will be seen in heaven there'll be a welcome in heaven

I think that's the message Jesus is teaching we gain friends for ourselves in heaven through the way that we live and use our money on earth we don't buy our way into heaven through how we use our money frugal disciples of Jesus may have massive houses and luxurious lives but our souls will be drier than those who've been more generous and I think there'll be less friends waiting in heaven to welcome the person who's indulged in personal luxury but if we get if we make our money work for Jesus sake he gets the glory and heaven will be full of friends we've not yet met one commentator

Gooding says if when accounts are rendered and it becomes known in heaven that it was your sacrificial giving that provided copies of the gospel of John which led a whole tribe out of paganism to faith in Christ will not the whole tribe show towards you an eternal gratitude which they will not show towards me who spent my spare cash on some luxury for my enjoyment so one of the principles that falls out of this parable is that we are taught to use what we are given to invest in heaven to make friendships that are eternal and then the second principle that Jesus teaches here is that we are to live with integrity on earth for Christians and Jesus says in verse 10 and 11 whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much so if you've not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth who will trust you with true riches and if you've not been trustworthy with someone else's property who will give you property of your own so what's

Jesus teaching here well I think he's teaching that how we use our money and how we how we deal with the little things of this world it says something about our character you know we may like sometimes to try and separate the secular from the spiritual I've had conversations with people in the past who in their workplace have behaved in a way that is not consistent with being a Christian and when I've challenged them on that they've said well you know that's work so if it's okay for work and Jesus teaches through this parable that's not okay for work because there is no line of separation between the secular and the spiritual the small things the things that we may consider to be small things in the workplace they say something about us spiritually

I read a story about a president the president of a theological seminary some big seminary in America and the students were coming for their first lecture in this theological seminary and the president was up to give his first speech so they're all waiting for the speech to be made wondering what will he say and you would expect him to say something very spiritual but he began his speech by saying gentlemen pay your bills pay your bills and the students wondered what on earth has that got to do with anything but he was making the point that the way you pay your bills the way you live your life the way you deal with all the the small things the mundane things of this world it says a lot about our

[ 61 : 51 ] Christian character Jesus teaches his disciples then and now what we say and how we live they must fit together we have integrity on earth I read a wee story I read a news report this week about Biden the president and the states and you know he's committed to reducing the carbon footprint by whatever the percentage is and he's very vocal and proud to be able to say that and then you see a 26 car convoy with V8 engines growling through the streets of Glasgow with the president in the middle of it and you kind of ask yourself the question how does this message that he preaches about carbon footprint being reduced and this 26 car convoy and a private jet how does it fit together and the answer is it doesn't really and it kind of discredits anything that's said and as

Christians if what we say and the way we deal with our money and the little things of this world don't connect if there's no integrity we can't expect anyone to listen so Jesus teaches that we're to invest in heaven with the resources that he's given us and we're to have integrity on earth these are two principles and the final thing very briefly is the pushback that Jesus tolerated and we see from the beginning of the parable that this is a lesson to the disciples but as usual by verse 13 the Pharisees are peering in the window they're stalking Jesus once more so what does Jesus do well he speaks to them he doesn't dismiss them he doesn't say I'm sick of you guys everywhere I go you're an irritation to me just get out of my sight no he's aware they're there and so he speaks to them and he speaks to them about the idols that were keeping them from God and there were two one was wealth and the other was women and Jesus goes he goes for them with us he says to the

Pharisees verse 13 regarding wealth no servant can serve two masters either he'll hate the one and love the other or will be devoted to the one and despise the other you cannot serve both God and money the Pharisees they've got all this kind of show of outward holiness as they walk around with their strolls and as they they show their vast theological knowledge but Jesus could see their hearts were sick Jesus could see they loved money much more than they loved God and so Jesus calls them out in it and he says there's an idol in your life you can't know God because of your love for this thing this wealth that you crave so Jesus speaks to them about wealth in verse 13 and the second thing the final thing Jesus speaks to them about is women and the crux of it is in verse 18 Jesus builds to this he says anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery and that was going on all the time with the

Pharisees they were experts in God's law so they thought they could quote it they could apply it to anyone else but they could find all kind of loopholes to justify themselves and so Jesus in verses 15 to 18 I can't go into it time's gone Jesus he challenges them about how they twist the law of God to make it suit themselves especially when it came to women in marriage see the Pharisees they considered it okay to keep a wife for as long as she to use their term pleased you but if one day you woke up and she no longer pleased you you just got a certificate divorce get the signature off she goes women in that culture to these people were they were objects not people and they had made this legal they dressed it up in holy language to make it sound acceptable but Jesus makes it very clear to them that no matter what their man made laws said

God had a view in this and his view was that marriage was for life and every woman every man every boy every girl is precious to God and so when Jesus sees the Pharisees behaving in this way pleasing themselves when it came to money pleasing themselves when it came to women he calls them out on it it was idolatry Jesus shines a light into their dark hearts and their dark lives to show them their idols so what did they do in response well it says in verse 14 they sneered at Jesus literally in the Greek it means they turned their noses up at him they turned their noses up at him as a person the

[ 68 : 00 ] God man they turned their noses up at him at his teaching and as Jesus tells them about their idols they were never going to be willing to put them down as Jesus challenges them on their sin they were not willing to repent of it and so they push back against Jesus and as we finish I just wonder in application what are we doing today when it comes to Jesus as he meets with us as he challenges us as he speaks to us it's a difficult parable to understand and in the measure of understanding that we have it's even more difficult to face as it applies to our lives so what are we doing with it and we all have idols

Calvin talks about the heart being like a factory of idols we're always producing idols it can still be wealth it can still be women it can be work it can be just about anything anything that we put above Jesus anything that we prioritize over Jesus is an idol because there is only one God he will challenge us over the things that we hold on to more tightly than we hold him and at that point which perhaps some of us are at in this moment we have a decision to make we can either push back against

God and cuddle our idols all the way down the road to hell or we can let go of our idols and take hold of Jesus and walk with him through life all the way on the road to heaven let's pray Lord God we thank you that you love us enough to comfort us when we are sore and to challenge us when we are out of sync with you we thank you that you never intend to challenge us in a way that will be cruel but we thank you that you love us enough to tell us when we are apart from you when we are on a dangerous track that leads us to destruction and help us Lord we pray if there are those here today who are holding on to things that are keeping them out of heaven enable each one to see what we need to drop to take hold of

Christ and if Lord as disciples we are ineffective in our lives because of a lack of zeal because of our worldliness because of idolatry that we we've picked back up idols that once we dropped we pray that you would show us that and give to us the strength to be able to say what we'll sing in a moment the dearest idol I have known whatever the idol be help me to tear it from thy throne and worship only thee help us Lord we pray to walk close with you and we ask this in Jesus name Amen we'll sing to conclude mission praise 494 494 in mission praise the words are on the screen oh for a closer walk with God a calm dead oh for a closer walk with God

A calm and deadly flame A light to shine upon the road That leads me to the light Where is the presentness I knew When I touched on the Lord Where is that soul refreshing view Of Jesus and His Word?

[ 73 : 55 ] For these words I once enjoyed A sweet and angry still But they have left a naked boy The one God never built Eternal holy God returns Sweet messenger of rest I hid the sins that made me warm And told me from my rest

O dearest side, O I am Lord What dare that I do be And me to take it from thy throne And worship on me Spush down my Lord He goes with God Come answer in thy name So pure in light Shall mark the road That leads me to the light

And I may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God the Father And the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit Be with us all now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen