

A Question of Stewardship (*“Who then is that faithful and wise steward?”*)

Luke 12:32-48 (text: v. 42) [Series: “Questions Jesus Asks”]

Here is a question about stewardship (Luke 12:42–*“Who then is that faithful and wise steward?”*). Good question—No one would want to be called unfaithful and unwise.

Stewardship is a scary word to many Christians. When they hear it they cringe and grab their wallet. That kind of reaction shows a complete misunderstanding of what biblical stewardship is really all about.

The dictionary says a steward is “a person entrusted with the management of the properties or affairs of another.”

For example—When you work for an employer, you are given certain responsibilities within his business. You don’t own the business. You manage certain areas of that business to turn a profit. As you effectively carry out your responsibilities you receive wages and benefits.

The same is true of God. God has a business—It is the business of the local church of which He is the “Head” CEO. We are stewards in His business. God has entrusted us with responsibilities to use our God-given talents to “turn a profit” in His business (Luke 17:10).

Unlike some earthly employers, God offers His workers the best incentives... the best pay scale... and the most enjoyable service this side of eternity. And His retirement package is out of this world.

➡ Stewardship more than a matter of money—Stewardship is a heart matter (Mt. 6:21).

- Giving our tithes and offerings is a by-product of a heart that loves Jesus more than material possessions and trusts God to provide.

DOCTRINALLY, the parable in our text is about the coming Kingdom Christ will set up on earth (vs. 31-32, 36-40).

The context of verse 40 is the second advent as indicated by the term *“Son of man.”* Christians are not waiting for the return of the *“Son of man.”* We are looking for the coming of the *“Son of God”* (1 Thess. 1:10).

➔ Peter asks a question (v. 41). Jesus answers with a question, “**Who then is that *faithful and wise steward?***” This has a double application (1) to Jewish servants in the Tribulation period awaiting the coming of Christ from a wedding, and (2) believers in any age.

- Verses 45-48 **do NOT** apply doctrinally to believers in this age. Every Christian is *eternally secure* in Christ. There is no way a Christian will be “*cut in sunder*” and appointed a “*portion with unbelievers*” (v. 46).
- The parable is *doctrinally* about stewardship leading up to Christ coming to establish His Kingdom on earth.

The principles of the stewardship in the parable applies to all ages:

➔ Luke 12 gives an example of good stewardship and bad stewardship.

GOOD stewardship is illustrated in verses 35-40.

- This servant was expecting his lord’s imminent return (v. 36).
- This servant was prepared (v. 37). [Great promise!]
- This servant did his master’s will (v. 43).
- This servant was made a ruler (vs. 43-44).

BAD stewardship is illustrated in verses 45-48.

- He did not believe the return of his lord was imminent (v. 45).
- This servant was unprepared (vs. 46-47).
- This servant did not do his master’s will (v. 47).
- This servant cut off (v. 46).

Jesus’ question involves WHO is Jesus going to make a “**ruler**” over His household¹ (v. 42). That is the issue of the parable. ANSWER (vs. 43-44): “*That servant*” who is wise and faithfully doing God’s will when the Lord comes (cf. Mt. 25:21—“*Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee RULER over many things.*”)

- The steward who will be made a “**ruler**” in Christ’s kingdom must be “**FAITHFUL and WISE.**”

¹ A “household” are those who dwell in a house under one head (wife, children, servants/slaves). Believers are called the “household of faith,” (Gal. 6:10) and the “household of God” (Eph. 2:19).

Paul said, *“Let a man so account of us, as of the the ministers of Christ, and STEWARDS of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found FAITHFUL”* (1 Cor. 4:1-2).

- However, the servant who doubts the imminent coming of his lord abuses the authority he has (v. 45). The adage, “When the cat’s away the mice will play,” applies. He will be caught unaware when his lord comes and be justly cut off (v. 46).

3 principles of faithful and wise stewardship for us today—**We must be...**

I. Faithful and wise with a disposition of READINESS.

- One major difference between the good and bad servants was their **READINESS**— “*WAIT*” (v. 36); “*WATCH*” (vs. 37, 39); and “*READY*” (v. 40 cf. Mk. 13:32-37).
- Note the word “*immediately*” (v. 36). It is as though the servant’s hand was on the latch of the door as the master started knocking.
 - A. A person who is waiting and watching for the return of his lord will be **WISE in his use of time** (Eph. 5:15-16—“*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*”)
 - B. A person who is waiting and watching for his lord’s return will be **FAITHFUL doing his lord’s will**. He will not be idle (Luke 19:13 —“*Occupy till I come.*”)
 - “*Let your loins be girded [working]... lights burning [witnessing]*” (v. 35). The second and third “*watch*” (v. 38) are the darkest hours of the night. Indicates the darkness of the Tribulation period just before the Lord comes.

“Who then is that faithful and wise steward?” ANSWER: That steward who, when his lord comes, shall find him *watching* and *working*!

We must be...

II. Faithful and wise in the discharge of RESPONSIBILITY.

- A. All are given responsibilities, some more than others. With responsibility comes authority to fulfil their responsibilities.

1. That is what stewardship is about. The owner of the household delegates authority to servants to do a job. The jobs are assigned according to the servant's talents or gifts.
 2. Servants who do well in wisely carrying out their jobs will be given more authority.
- B. Every Christian has the responsibility to use whatever resources God gives him for the betterment of God household. A Christian who misuses his authority, will not be given a rule in the Kingdom.
- For example: Money is a test. God gives you money to see if He can trust you to use it for His glory. What you have in the Kingdom will be based on how well you used what you have today (v. 48 cf. Luke 16:10-11).

We must be...

III. Faithful and wise concerning the day of RECKONING.

- A. A faithful and wise steward realizes a day is coming when he will give account of his stewardship (Luke 16:1-2 cf. Luke 12:47-48).
- B. For the Christian, that will be at the judgment Seat of Christ where rewards will be given in the form of "crowns" denoting authority (Cf. Luke 19:17).

SUMMATION: The main difference between these two servants:

- The wise servant is **preparing for the world that is coming**—His focus is on eternal things.
- The unwise servant is **living for the world that is going**—His focus is on temporal things.

Which one represents you? Are you a FAITHFUL and WISE steward of God's belongings?