

Exegetical Study on the Parable of the Unjust Steward

Chapter 4.7 – Verses 10–12: Principles of Stewardship

“The one who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful with unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you your own?” Having applied the parable to disciples in verse 9, Jesus now turns to general principles of stewardship. The focus shifts from the steward’s specific actions to broader truths about faithfulness, responsibility, and trust. These sayings could stand on their own, but Luke places them here to drive home the lesson: how one handles earthly possessions reveals readiness for eternal responsibility. The opening maxim—faithful in little, faithful in much—captures a universal principle of character. Integrity is not situational; it is consistent across contexts. Someone trustworthy with minor tasks can be trusted with greater ones. Conversely, dishonesty in small matters indicates unreliability in larger ones. For disciples, the “little” refers to material wealth and everyday responsibilities. Though money often seems significant, Jesus relativizes it: in the eternal perspective, wealth is trivial. Yet it is precisely in such “little” things that character is tested. Faithfulness in finances, generosity, and daily integrity becomes the training ground for the “much” of eternal life. Jesus draws a sharp contrast: if disciples cannot be faithful with unrighteous wealth (temporary, tainted money), how can they be trusted with true riches (eternal treasure, spiritual responsibility, participation in God’s kingdom)? The logic is striking. Earthly possessions are not rewards but tests. How one manages them reveals readiness—or unfitness—for greater things. This perspective overturns worldly values. Society measures success by wealth accumulated; Jesus measures it by faithfulness in stewardship. The ultimate riches are not money but eternal life, intimacy with God, and the responsibilities of ruling with Christ in the new creation. The final statement deepens the contrast. If disciples are unfaithful with what is another’s—namely, earthly possessions, which belong to God—how can they be entrusted with what is truly theirs—eternal inheritance? Everything in this life is borrowed; nothing is ultimately ours. Possessions, opportunities, even life itself are entrusted by God. Eternity, however, offers an inheritance that will never be taken away. This framework reframes ownership. What we call “ours” is only loaned. The test is not how much we amass but how faithfully we manage what has been placed in our care. These verses highlight the seriousness of daily stewardship. Money, often dismissed as a secular concern, is central to spiritual testing. Every purchase, act of generosity, or instance of selfishness reveals allegiance to God or Mammon. For disciples, the call is clear: treat possessions as training. Faithfulness in little things proves readiness for eternal responsibilities. To mishandle wealth is not just poor economics; it is a spiritual failure that disqualifies one from greater trust. Verses 10–12 distill the lesson of stewardship into timeless principles. Earthly wealth is “little” and temporary, yet it serves as a test of character. Faithfulness here prepares disciples for “true riches” and eternal inheritance. The challenge is stark: if we cannot be trusted with what is borrowed, why should God entrust us with what is truly ours forever?