

TOUGH PARABLES

Wrestling With Jesus' Challenging Stories

Week 4: The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

Main Point: God is faithful to us, so let's be faithful to Him.

Main Scriptures: [Luke 16:1-14](#) & [Matthew 6:19-21](#)

THE WHAT

ME

Share about a funny moment about a time where someone you love played a prank on you and temporarily lost your trust. For example, when my sister she learned about child abuse at school and how she could call the police to report it. Well, for weeks after this she would threatened to call the police anytime my parents asked her to eat her broccoli, go to bed, or anything else she didn't want to do. My dad is a funny guy, so he came up with a brilliant idea. He finally one day said, "Fine, do you know the number for the police?" My sister scrunched up her face and said no. So he wrote down 116, flipped it upside so it looked like 911, then showed it to my mom (who he knew wouldn't join his prank and asked) "Mom, is this the number for the police?" My mom said yes. Then he flipped the card again and showed it to my sister. For about a year she thought the number for the police was 116. When she found out, she felt like she couldn't trust my dad for a while.

WE

Have you ever been there, where you wonder if you can trust someone? Maybe even someone close to you? I'd bet we all have! Thankfully, God is someone we can always trust. He is always faithful, loving and kind to us.

TRANSITION

But a big question I have for all of us today: can God trust you? We are going to study a parable today Jesus told where a boss wasn't able to trust his manager - and Jesus encourages us to learn from the manager mistakes and live our lives faithful to the God who is always faithful to us.

SO WHAT

GOD

This parable definitely can be confusing. But as we dig into it, we can see how the shrewd manager teaches us about faithfulness—to authority, to friends, and in the little things of life. As we read it, try to not get too focused on the details but step back and try to see the bigger picture.

Read [Luke 16:1-14](#) together.

1. We can learn from the manager's mistake and be faithful to authority.

No matter how young or old we are, we have authority figures in our lives—teachers, parents, bosses, police, and so on. There are times when we like the people in authority and agree with them. There are times we don't agree. But Jesus calls us to living faithfully—even with authorities, even when it's hard. Your actions might create an opportunity to share Jesus, or help you understand the pressures facing people in authority, or give you a stronger level of trust and respect.

2. We can learn from the manager's shrewdness to be faithful to our friends.

The manager wasn't 100% the worst guy ever, he was actually pretty clever and he knew something: we were created to need each other. A healthy friendship is a two-way street—both people give and take. Things become difficult and unhealthy when the friendship is one-sided. We should be friends who look out for our friends and help when they are in need.

3. Big faithfulness to God shows up in the smallest little ways.

Your parents may have told you that the best way to get more independence is to be responsible with the freedom you have now. Jesus shares a similar idea when talking about being faithful in the little things. Sometimes it's the things we do when we think no one is watching that really show us if our hearts are in good places. Jesus talked about this by comparing two treasures. Let's read about it: [Matthew 6:19-21](#).

Jesus gives a similar warning here as He does in the parable: watch what your heart desires most. If your heart desires to be faithful to God the MOST, then you WILL have to make sacrifices, but you can do so knowing it's worth it. If your heart is caught in a different place, then you will really struggle to make sacrifices and might end up making selfish choices.

GOSPEL MOMENT

To be honest, we've all done that. We each have two sides of us: our selfish/sinful side and our godly/spiritual side that battle each other out ALL THE TIME. Even after you accept Jesus into your heart, you will have this struggle. BUT if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you are no longer a slave to your sinful side. God's love and forgiveness is SO HUGE that, when we believe in Him, He covers the sins we make before we accept Jesus and even after. Jesus is just that amazing!

TRANSITION

Jesus loves you. Jesus is faithful to you, even knowing that you won't be 100% faithful to Him.

NOW WHAT?

YOU

Idk the last time you messed up and sinned. When you put what you wanted ahead of what you knew God wanted for you. I make these choices more often in life than I like, but we don't have to give up. Jesus wants us to grow to be more and more like Him.

WE

We can choose to turn our hearts back to Jesus every time we realize we've let an earthly treasure become more important to us than an earthly one. Every time we mess up, Jesus is there to give us a hand up, clean off our scrapped knee, and help get us walking on the right path again. The more and more we realize this and turn back to God, the more and more we will become faithful in the little things. And as we've learned in this parable: Big faithfulness to God shows up in the smallest little ways.

PRAY

God, thank you for being faithful to us. Thank you for being a God we can always count on to show us love, kindness, and forgiveness. Help us to be people who are faithful right back to you. When we go astray, turn our hearts back to you God. YOU are our biggest treasure! Nothing in our lives is more important than you. Please be with us and set our hearts on fire for you above all other things. Help us to be faithful in the little things. Amen.