

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 23 Jul 2023

Sermon Title : Faithful in the Smallest

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : Luke 16:10-13

INTRODUCTION

Today is stewardship Sunday. While we have been blessed with much material possessions that we can enjoy here on earth, it would be sad if we wish that Jesus' return could be delayed because we prefer enjoying the stuff He has given us to the joy of meeting Him, the 'Blesser' who gave us all that we possess.

Luke 16:1-9

Jesus talks about stewardship in Luke 16:10-13, besides many other passages. Here, before Jesus spoke about stewardship, Jesus told a story in Luke 16:1-7:

There was a rich man whose manager wasted or squandered away his possessions which he was supposed to steward or manage. When the rich man found out, he decided to 'remove' the manager from his position. The manager was worried as he knew he could not work in the field and was too ashamed to beg, so he came up with a brilliant plan:

He called two of the rich man's debtors and looked at what they owed. He then reduced the amount they each owed the rich man - the one who owed 100 measures/3000 litres of olive oil, he reduced to 50 measures/1500 litres. The one who owed 100 measures of wheat, equivalent to 3000 denarius or days of wages, he reduced to 80 measures. The manager thought that by doing this, he would gain the favour of these two persons, and so, when he loses his job, they would look after him. When his master, the rich man, learnt of what the manager had done, the rich man commended the manager for his shrewdness.

Lessons learnt:

- Jesus is not saying that cheating and being dishonest is good or smart. He is saying that the manager who is of the world is shrewd and smarter than the children of the light (His disciples) because he knows how to use earthly wealth to ensure that he would be taken care of in the future. His disciples should also use earthly wealth in this smart way. (v.8)
- His disciples should use worldly wealth to make friends so that the friends can guarantee the disciples an eternal dwelling/home. (v.9)

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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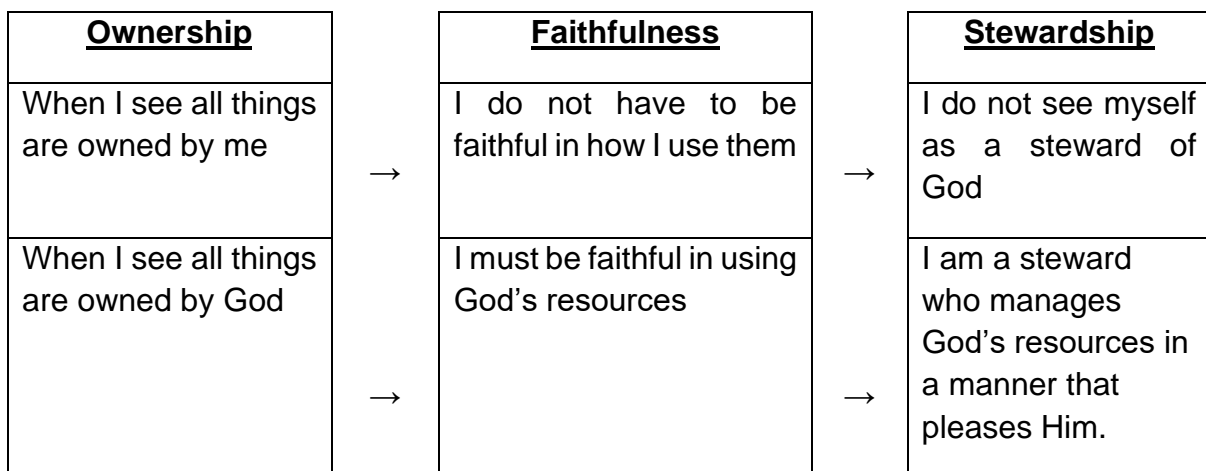
- Since only God is the only “Friend” who can give us an eternal dwelling, Jesus is therefore saying that His disciples are to use worldly wealth to please God’s heart, do things His way and according to His will so they can have an eternal dwelling when worldly wealth passes away. This does not mean that we can buy our way to heaven because it is only through faith in Jesus that we can gain an eternal dwelling in heaven.

True stewardship is to manage our worldly resources in a manner that pleases God so that when everything on earth is over, we can gain an eternal dwelling.

Luke 16:10-13

There are three themes in these verses:

- 1) Stewardship - managing something. We are all called to be manager or steward of God’s resources.
 - 2) Faithfulness - stewardship involves faithfulness as we can be a faithful or unfaithful steward.
 - 3) Ownership - faithfulness comes from understanding and being aware of ownership.
- The moment we are fully aware that whatever we have is not owned by us but owned by God, we will be very aware that we have to be faithful in managing or stewarding these things.
 - If we do not think all we have belong to God or that only some things but not everything we have belong to God, the idea of stewardship drifts away and we will not consider faithfulness because if everything belongs to us, there is no need to be faithful to someone in our use of what we have.



We need to be fully aware that whatever we have is not owned by us but owned by God, so we will want to be faithful in managing or stewarding these things that belong to God.

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Luke 16:10 - How to be a wise steward?

This principle of 'faithful in a very little is also faithful in much' is applied in many situations in the world such as schools, companies and organisations. Before we are trusted with a major project in a company, we are given smaller projects to see if we can handle them. Only when we have proven that we can be trusted in these will bigger projects be given to us. Conversely, if we are dishonest in small things, then we will not be trusted for bigger things. Here, Jesus is emphasizing on faithfulness in stewardship of different resources given by God. If we are using our gifts, talents, time and other resources we have been given wisely, God will give us more.

Luke 16:11 – Litmus Test of faithful stewardship

This is the litmus test of whether we are faithful or not – “If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?” Jesus is drilling down to how faithful or unfaithful we are in handling worldly/unrighteous wealth or money? If we cannot handle worldly wealth, He will not entrust to us true riches or more. Jesus is not saying money is unrighteous but He wants to contrast this wealth which will be gone one day, to what is true and eternal riches.

Luke 16:12 – A generous God

God is a generous God, a God who has given us even His Son, and He wants to give us more. If we cannot be faithful in managing this worldly/unrighteous wealth which is not owned by us, He cannot give us what is to be our own. But because God is so generous, the moment He sees us being faithful in our stewardship of all that belong to Him, He will give us what is our own.

Luke 16:13 – No man can serve 2 masters

We cannot serve two masters - God and money. There is no middle ground. Either we love God and hate money or we hate God and love money. No Christians will say we love money and hate God. We will say we love God, but the way we manage our money scream another message. The way we use money may actually be saying we love money.

The Pharisees sneered at Jesus in verse 14 after hearing Him. May we not be like the Pharisees but be the one who asks God who, where and how He wants us to steward the resources to bless others.

CONCLUSION

Let us not be like a choked-up hose - the more I am blessed with, my bank account gets bigger and it all stays with me. It does not flow to places God wants it to flow to. Neither should we be a leaking hose, with many holes where streams of blessings never get to anywhere it is supposed to go because it all leaks out by our squandering. These will not please God. Instead, let us steward/manage God's resources the way God wants us to by asking God how and where He wants these resources to go, what purposes He wants them to be used for and how we can please Him with our

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stewardship. When we do that, we are truly saying, “We love you, God, we want to be your good and faithful stewards.”

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God’s truth.

1a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk?

1b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Since hearing the sermon, how faithful have you been in your stewardship of the money and other resources God has entrusted to you?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. Read Luke 16:10-13 slowly and reflectively.
 - a. What areas or things in your life do you find hard to see that they belong to God? (These could be your house, money, time, career or even your spouse or children)
 - (i) Why is it difficult for you to see them as belonging to God?
 - (ii) What does this tell you about your view of God?
 - b. Now that you know these things in 3a. are owned by God, how would you be managing them differently?

- 4a. We either love God or love money. How would someone who loves God manage his/her money?
- 4b. How do you measure up to the person you have described in 4a. above?

5. In the conclusion, there are three types of hose, reflecting on how you have been managing your life and the resources you have, which type of hose are you?
 - a. What are some steps you can take to grow into a good and faithful steward who pleases God?
 - b. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 5a above, for the following week(s) until your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies, Prayers and Action

Purpose: Give glory to God, seek Him and embody His Word.

6. Share your testimony on how God has given you more after you have proven to be faithful in stewarding the little you were given in the beginning. (may be money, possessions, gifts, talents, time, loved ones etc)

7. Take time to pray for each other on the changes to be made or steps to be taken for questions 3 and 5.

With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared to God and pray for your group and our church to be truly aware that all that we have and all that we are belong to God so that we will want to be faithful in our stewardship of what belongs to Him.

Optional items:

Suggested worship songs:

1. First and the Last – Hillsong https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUPuCW_tiwA
2. Nobody Loves Me Like You – Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KicvBB2L68>
3. Jesus I Come – Awaken Generation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMS6xfvquL4>

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