

scaring the hell out of  
rich folk

I'm worried.  
about our planet (415.26)  
about our country and democracy  
about our churches  
about our denominations  
our profession as preachers

And I think I know one root cause  
beneath all these concerns.

It's the problem Jesus addressed in Luke  
15-16.

Luke 15: Religious elites complain:  
You're eating with *sinners!*

Lost sheep  
Lost coin  
Lost son.

but Jesus wasn't finished.  
he had 2 more parables to tell.

Luke 16 -  
Unjust/Dishonest Manager/Steward

(wrong title)

The Steward Who Switched Sides

One of the simplest, clearest parables ...  
if you know 3 things about 1st century  
economics.

ROME:

invade and occupy

extract and exploit

tax the poor and

reward the rich

RICH:

South, Judea, Jerusalem

Real estate investors/developers

Buy distressed farms in Galilee  
up North

Make tenant farmers

Collect tribute - sell to Romans, get richer

MANAGERS/STEWARDS:

middle class, middlemen

collect tribute from poor

trickle down wealth from

Romans to rich to them

16 Then Jesus said to the disciples,  
“**THERE WAS A RICH MAN** who  
had a manager, and charges were  
brought to him that this man was  
squandering his property. 2 So he  
summoned him and said to him,  
‘What is this that I hear about you?  
Give me an accounting of your  
management, because you cannot  
be my manager any longer.’



3 Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.'

5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' 7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'

8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. 9 And I tell you, **make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth** so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

10 “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 13 No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either **hate** the one and **love** the other, or **be devoted** to the one and **despise** the other. You CANNOT serve God and wealth.”

14 The Pharisees, **who were lovers of money**, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. 15 So he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an **abomination** in the sight of God....

Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son  
Rich man and shrewd  
manager

Jesus is still not finished.

19 **“THERE WAS A RICH MAN** who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named **Lazarus**, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.

He called out, '**Father** Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham said, '**Child**, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'



27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg  
you to send him to my father's  
house— 28 for I have five  
**brothers**—that he may warn  
them, so that they will not also  
come into this place of  
torment.'

29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"



Jesus was wicked smart.  
He saw the real problem of  
the religious elites:

**they loved money.**

because  
**they loved money,**  
they couldn't see ...

they could not recognize the other as  
their brother, sister, friend, neighbor.

why am i preaching this  
sermon to you, preachers?

because ...  
this work is hard.  
it helps to know why.

the american church in nearly  
all its forms  
has thrived for 400 years  
because it made a deal:  
it told people,  
“you CAN love both God and  
money.”



because american christians loved money so  
much -

they stole the lands and lives of millions of native  
people

they enslaved, raped, sold, tortured, and  
exploited millions of people of african descent

they created an apartheid system of jim crow,  
treated immigrants shamefully.

they exploited a beautiful land and threaten to  
destroy it more and more.

our love for money blinds us so  
we cannot see:

the other is our brother/sister/  
friend/neighbor.

the earth is the Lord's, every  
sparrow has value, not ours to  
exploit & plunder.

i have money. i earn money.  
but when i see what the love  
of money does ...

i hate money.

i despise money.

i want to use it for people, not  
use people for it.

the love of money is at the root of all  
kinds of evil.

who will challenge the people of our  
churches to see the danger of the love  
of money?

who will break the old american deal  
with money ... and who will make a new  
deal with God: to put money in its  
place.

i know rich, middle class, and  
poor people who do not love  
money, but use money to love  
people.

i know rich, middle class, and  
poor people who love money  
and use people to get more  
money.

money is dangerous.  
like crack.  
like heroin.  
it seduces.  
it makes you high.  
it gets you hooked  
so you need more.  
and you'll do anything  
and hurt anyone  
to get it.

there are good and honest  
ways to make money.

but if you love money, you will  
hate God and do much harm.

and even someone rising from  
the dead will not convince you  
to repent.



let us preach  
the truth about  
money.

let us help our  
money-blinded people  
see what has  
true value.

warning:  
we will not break the  
strangle-hold of  
money-love on our  
american christians  
with one sermon, so ...

let us summon  
every ounce

of courage, craft, subtlety,  
artistry, sensitivity, boldness,  
cleverness, creativity, and  
furious persistence to help  
people see that ...

money is unworthy of our love.  
but people are. all people. no  
exceptions.  
and the earth - every  
mountain, river, wetland,  
forest, breeze, tree, and  
sparrow

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of three lost things and two rich men.  
Amen.



