

The Use of Money

The Parable of the Unjust Servant

I. Introduction

- a. *The Use of Money*, Sermon #50 by John Wesley,
 - i. Wesley lived from 1703 to 1791, an English cleric, theologian, and evangelist, a leader of a revival movement within the Church of England known as Methodism.
 - ii. This sermon was mentioned in passing by my friend Finny Kuruvilla as one that made a significant impact on how he thinks about money and being a good steward. Finny is a tremendous example in this area, and so I looked up this sermon, which was easily accessible off the internet. (www.whdl.org/use-money-sermon-50)
 - iii. The sermon is based on the *Parable of the Unjust Steward* in **Luke 16**, to help Christians understand the right use of money.
 - iv. The three points to Wesley's sermon are quite memorable. We will discuss these shortly.
 - v. The sermon was extremely challenging and inspiring. It also brought into clear focus for me many of the teachings in Scripture about money. I then wondered what the early Christians thought about the parable in Luke 16 and whether they mentioned it in their writings. They certainly did! Close to 30 references to this passage, and they were saying many of the same things contained in Wesley's mid-eighteenth century sermon.
 - vi. I encourage you to review the Scriptures and the teaching we will discuss today and decide for yourself what Jesus was seeking to communicate through this parable.
 - vii. **Warning:** *if you take this parable seriously, it will have a tremendous impact on your employment and your bank account!*

II. The Parable of the Unjust Steward

- a. Intro to **Luke 16**
 - i. The context of the parable: Jesus is speaking to his disciples with the Pharisees present.
 - ii. Jesus concludes the parable with a key principle about money:
 - 1. "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to one and

despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (vs. 13)

- iii. After they heard this parable, the Pharisees "derided Him." (to "deride" means "to express contempt for; ridicule") They rejected what Jesus said.
 1. Jesus' response? He doubles downs with a blistering response, revealing a second important principle about money:
 - a. "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."
 2. The way most people view, use, and value wealth is an abomination to God!
 - a. "abomination" = a thing that causes disgust or hatred
 - b. The Pharisees derided (expressed contempt for) Jesus' teaching on money. Likewise, God is disgusted by/hates their view of money!
 - c. (Jesus then goes further and tells the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus – just to further drive His point home!)
 3. It is very important that we understand God's view of money.
 - a. We don't want to be deceived as Christians. We want to see things as God sees them.
 - b. We need to be prepared when Jesus returns, to give a good account for how we used our money during our lifetimes.
 - c. The New Testament tells us that God is looking for leaders in His Church "not greedy for money" (**1 Timothy 3:3**), nor serving "for dishonest gain." (**1 Peter 5:2**) We need more Godly leaders that meet this Biblical requirement!
 - d. Let's dig into the parable to learn how God wants us to use our money.

b. Read **Luke 16:1-15**

c. Key details of the story

- i. There is “a certain rich man”
- ii. “who had a steward”
 1. steward: a person whose job is to manage another person’s property
- iii. The steward is accused of wasting his master’s goods. (appears to be true, the steward does not defend himself)
- iv. The master hears about it and removes the steward from his position (and salary!)
- v. The steward realizes he is in trouble: he can’t do manual labor and doesn’t want to beg.
- vi. “I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.”
 1. It appears he will be removed from his position at any time.
 2. He quickly develops a plan to ensure that he will be welcome (and provided for) by these people who owe his master money.
- vii. His plan:
 1. He will go to all who owe the master money and tell them to write down their debt.
 2. He then does this “quickly”, probably because he is about to be removed from this position of authority.
- viii. The steward is taking advantage of his master’s wealth for his own personal gain.
 1. In legal terms, this would be considered “unjust enrichment”, when someone is benefiting unjustly at another’s expense. This is similar to stealing/embezzlement!
- ix. How does the master respond?
 1. “So, the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”
 2. Here we find a surprise twist to the story! The master does not rebuke his steward for being unjust, but instead commends him for being shrewd.

3. This also appears to be a rebuke against “the sons of light” (who are not as wise as the unjust steward).
- d. Jesus then goes on to give a mini three-point sermon. Let’s review the points Jesus makes. I will address these in reverse order:
 - i. **Point #3:** “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”
 1. Clearly, the unjust steward was not faithful with what he was given. Instead, he wasted his master’s possessions. The consequence: he was removed from his stewardship.
 - a. This is similar to the Parable of the Talents in **Matthew 25**.
 - i. “Like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.” [they were stewards]
 - ii. Those who had been faithful with a little were given much more; the one who had not been faithful with a little, even what he had was taken away.
 - iii. I find this both scary and encouraging. Scary, if I bury/waste my talent. Encouraging if I am faithful with what God has entrusted me!
 2. “Therefore, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”
 - a. Jesus says how we handle our wealth (unrighteous mammon) dictates whether we will receive “true riches” of our own in the future.
 - b. **Question:** What are these true riches?
 - i. Unrighteous mammon (money) is clearly NOT the true riches.
 - ii. There are riches beyond this that are truer, and riches that the Master/God wants to give us! Think about that. (Not simply “joy”, “peace”, etc. in this life, instead, riches beyond this life.)

- ii. **Point #2:** “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (**vs. 13**)
 - 1. We have one master. We are ruled by God or by money.
 - a. We love one, hate the other. Are loyal to one, disloyal to the other. Can’t love both. Can’t be loyal to both.
 - b. One of these two will win, one will lose. One of these masters will get our heart, attention, and devotion. The other will not.
 - 2. The parable: the unjust steward was wasting his Master’s possessions. On Himself? On others? Lazy? Not sure. But he was not serving the master. He was “hating” and being “disloyal to” the master. (As a result, he was removed.)
- iii. **Point #1:** “Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”
 - 1. This is the main point of the parable.
 - 2. This is a command (*use your money to make friends*) with a promise (*that you might be received into an everlasting home/receive an eternal blessing*)
 - 3. In the parable, the unjust steward is a bad example:
 - a. He wastes his master’s goods and is removed from his position.
 - 4. Yet, the unjust steward is also a good example:
 - a. He was shrewd/wise, uses his master’s riches to benefit himself when he would be removed from his position.
 - 5. Application to us made by Jesus: “**Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.**”
 - a. Jesus is making the use of money a salvation issue!
 - b. **Question:** What does Jesus mean when he says to make friends for ourselves by the use of our money?
 - i. This is the focus of Wesley’s sermon.

III. Wesley's 3-point sermon

a. Sermon introduction:

- i. "The love of money," we know, "is the root of all evil;" but not the thing itself. The fault does not lie in the money, but in them that use it. It may be used ill... But it may likewise be used well: It is full as applicable to the best, as to the worst uses.....
- ii. [Money] is an excellent gift of God, answering the noblest ends. In the hands of his children, it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked: It gives to the traveler and the stranger where to lay his head. By it we may supply the place of an husband to the widow, and of a father to the fatherless. We may be a defense for the oppressed, a means of health to the sick, of ease to them that are in pain; it may be as eyes to the blind, as feet to the lame; yea, a lifter up from the gates of death!
- iii. **It is therefore of the highest concern that all who fear God know how to employ this valuable talent; that they be instructed how it may answer these glorious ends, and in the highest degree. And, perhaps, all the instructions which are necessary for this may be reduced to three plain rules, by the exact observance whereof we may approve ourselves faithful stewards of "the mammon of unrighteousness."**

b. Wesley's "three rules" must all be taken together.

c. Rule 1: Gain all you can

- i. Christ's followers are diligent, not lazy. We don't waste the Master's goods, but make great use of them.
 1. "Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. **And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, know that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ.** But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality." (**Colossians 3:23-25**)
 2. The parable of the talents: "You wicked and lazy servant...." (**Matthew 25:26**)
 3. Wesley speaks to this in his sermon
 - a. "Gain all you can, by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe, how few do this; how men

run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. **It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon them, in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do everything you have to do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practice whatever you learn, that you may make the best of all that is in your hands.**"

4. Questions about your work:

- a. Are you working to your very best ability? (Or do you do the bare minimum to collect your paycheck?)
- b. Are you putting in the effort to develop the gifts and talents God has given to you in your work?
- c. Are you seeking out better ways to do things as an employee, learning from your mistakes, reading books, learning from others, etc.?

ii. To give to others, we must have money to give!

1. This is a point Wesley does not make in his sermon, but instead is made by Clement of Alexandria, a gifted Christian teacher around 200 A.D.
2. Clement is addressing those who were saying all Christians with wealth should sell their possessions, essentially impoverishing themselves. Yet, Clement points out, Jesus commands His followers to care for the poor. If Christians are impoverished, how will they be able to care for the poor?! Clement quotes from **Luke 16** in making his argument.
 - a. "And how much more beneficial the opposite case, for a man, through possessing a competency, both not himself to be in straits about money, and also to give assistance to those to whom it is requisite so to do! **For if no one had anything, what room would be left among men for giving?** And how can this dogma fail to be found plainly opposed to and conflicting with many other excellent teachings of the Lord? **"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into the everlasting habitations."** "Acquire treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust

destroys, nor thieves break through.”⁵ How could one give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and shelter the houseless, for not doing which He threatens with fire and the outer darkness, if each man first divested himself of all these things?

i. ANF 2, p. 594 (Clement of Alexandria, *Who is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*)

iii. After stating we should “gain all we can”, Wesley places limits on how we gain/earn our money:

1. We don’t gain money at the expense of our life or health.
 - a. Working in unhealthy conditions.
 - b. Working too long of hours, being deprived of “proper seasons for food and sleep, in such proportions as our nature requires.”
 - c. Some professions may not be “absolutely unhealthy, but only to persons of a weak constitution. Such are those which require many hours to be spent in writing; especially if a person writes sitting and leaning upon his stomach, or remaining in an uneasy posture.” [Sounds like we should all get stand-up desks!]
 - d. “And if we are already engaged in such an employ, we should exchange it as soon as possible for some which, if it lesson our gain, will, however not lesson our health.”
2. We don’t gain money at the expense of our mind and soul.
 - a. Professions that are illegal
 - b. Professions that are sinful, require lying, cheating, “or conformity to some custom which [is] not consistent with a good conscience.... These... are to be sacredly avoided... for to gain money we must not lose our souls....”
 - c. **Question:** Is there anything you are required to do in your work that violates your conscience?
3. Gain all we can without hurting our neighbor, in body and soul.
 - a. We don’t overcharge people for services or goods (excessive profit)

- b. We don't advance our own business at the expense of our neighbor's business (our competitor), including enticing away their employees or selling our goods below market price (to drive our competitor out of business).
 - c. We don't sell goods that hurt our neighbor's body, are unhealthy for them.
 - d. We don't sell goods that lead our neighbors into sin (strong liquor, theater, "other places of public, fashionable diversion"). Wesley provides strong language for those who lead others into sin!
 - i. "They [referring to those who lead others into sin through the products they sell] murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: The curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood is there: The foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art "clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day;" canst thou hope to deliver down thy fields of blood to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven. Therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, 'thy memorial shall perish with thee!'" (Wesley, *On the Use of Money*)
4. I'll add one more limit on how we earn our money, not touched on by Wesley: *Gain all you can, without working so much that you have no time or energy to serve the Lord.*
- a. "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then he said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest

to send out laborers into His harvest.” (**Matthew 9:36-38**)

- b. God needs laborers and He needs them now!
- c. How can we honor God if we are working so many hours to earn money that we have no time, energy, creativity, etc. left to give toward advancing the Kingdom?
- d. Great examples for me: Ken Lowey, David Bercot and Chuck Pike. Men who, through hard work, sacrifice, and creativity, arranged their professional lives to serve God in tremendous ways.

5. Summary: We are to earn as much money as we can by being hardworking employees/business owners/etc., but within God’s constraints/laws and while advancing His Kingdom.

d. Rule 2: Save all you can

- i. Once you have earned/gained all you can, save all you can.
- ii. “Do not throw the precious talent into the sea: Leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.”
- iii. Wesley calls the Christians to live simple lives, like Jesus. He goes after several things:
 - 1. “enlarging the pleasure of tasting.”
 - a. A “regular and reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant [type of eating that does not cause problems to the stomach] and “yet it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off all this expense! Despise delicacy and variety, and be content with what plain nature requires.”
 - 2. “superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments.”
 - 3. “Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses; in superfluous or expensive furniture; in costly pictures, painting... books; in elegant rather than useful gardens. Let your neighbors, who know nothing better do this... ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’”

4. "Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men."
 - a. "So long as thou art 'clothed in purple and fine linen, and [eat] sumptuously' every day,' no doubt many will applaud thy elegance of taste, thy generosity and hospitality. But do not buy their applause so dear. Rather be content with the honour that cometh from God."
- iv. "Daily experience shows, the more [our senses] are indulged, they increase the more."
- v. Our children
 1. "And why do you throw your money upon your children, any more than upon yourself, in delicate food, in gay or costly apparel, in superfluities of any kind. Why should you purchase for them more pride or lust, more vanity, or foolish and hurtful desires...."
 2. Educating our children (these are my observations, not Wesley's)
 - a. Homeschooling – loss of income but great value and riches in training our children.
 - b. College – go to the best possible school you can without being shackled to the heavy burden and weight of debt for years to come.
- vi. When in doubt if you really need to purchase something, just ask yourself these four things, and you will likely "receive clear light as to the way... you should go" [example: purchasing a pair of walking shoes or a home]:
 1. In spending this money, am I acting as an owner or as a steward of the Lord's goods?
 2. Am I spending this money in obedience to the Scriptures?
 3. Can I offer up this action, this expense, as a sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ?
 4. Have I reason to believe that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the dead?
 - a. "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." (**Matthew 16:27**)

- vii. And if you still have any doubt, examine yourself in prayer before the "Searcher of hearts" with a clear conscience (cleaned up the language for clarity):
1. "Lord, you see I am about to spend this amount of money on this [thing]. And You know, I am acting with a single eye as a steward of Your goods, expending this portion of Your goods in pursuit of the design You had in entrusting me with them. You know I do this in obedience to the Lord, as you commanded, and because You commanded it. Let this, I beseech You, be a holy sacrifice, acceptable through Jesus Christ! And give me a witness in myself that for this labor of love I shall be compensated when You reward every man according to his works."
 2. "Now if your conscience bear you witness in the Holy Ghost that this prayer is well-pleasing to God, then have you no reason to doubt but that expense is right and good, and such as will never make you ashamed."

e. Rule 3: Give all you can

- i. "But let not any man imagine that he has done anything, barely by going thus far, by 'gaining and saving all he can,' if he were to stop here. All this is nothing, if a man go not forward, if he does not point all this at a farther end. Nor, indeed, can a man properly be said to save anything, if he only lays it up. [Think about the rich man who tears down his barns to build bigger ones, simply to store his wealth.]
- ii. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. **And you may as well bury it in the earth, as in your chest, or in the Bank of England. Not to use, is effectually to throw it away. If, therefore, you would indeed "make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,"** add the Third rule to the two preceding. Having, First, gained all you can, and, Secondly saved all you can, Then "give all you can."
- iii. Wesley says this is all quite simple:
 1. All our money belongs to God.
 2. We are stewards to use God's wealth wisely.
 3. He has given plain and direct instructions as to how to use His money (and how not to).
 4. And for this "light, easy service", He has promised to reward us with an eternal weight of glory.

- iv. If we desire to be a wise and faithful steward, we should use our money in the following way:
 - 1. Whatever is needful to eat and wear, and whatever nature “moderately requires” to preserve our health and strength.
 - 2. Also, provide these things for your spouse, your children, your servants or any others in your household. **(1 Timothy 5:8)**
 - 3. If you have some left over, “do good to them that are of the household of faith.” **(Galatians 6:10)**
 - 4. If you still have some left, “as you have opportunity, do good unto all men.” **(Galatians 6:10)**
 - 5. By these things, we “render unto God the things that are God’s.” **(Mark 12:17)**
- v. Let us now turn to some early Christian writers for insights they provide in understanding this parable.

IV. Early Christian Insights into the Parable of the Unjust Servant

- a. We won’t give if we aren’t willing to lose. Learning patience in loss strengthens our giving muscles.
 - i. “Patience in losses is an exercise in bestowing and communicating. Who fears not to lose, finds it not irksome to give. Else how will one, when he has two coats, give the one of them to the naked, unless he be a man likewise to offer to one who takes away his coat his cloak as well? **How shall we fashion to us friends from mammon, if we love it so much as not to put up with its loss? We shall perish together with the lost mammon. Why do we find here, where it is our business to lose?** To exhibit impatience at all losses is the Gentiles’ business.... But us, according to the diversity by which we are distinguished from them, it becomes **to lay down** not our soul for money, but money for our soul, whether spontaneously in bestowing or patiently in losing.”
 - 1. (*On Patience*, Tertullian, ANF 3, p. 712)
- b. Let the poor feel you are wealthy; give food to Christ
 - i. “You say that you are wealthy and rich, and you think that you should use those things which God has willed you to possess. Use them, certainly, but for the things of salvation; use them, but for good purposes; use them, but for those things which God has commanded, and which the Lord has set forth. **Let the poor feel that you are wealthy; let the needy feel that you are rich. Lend your estate to God; give food to Christ.**

- ii. Move Him by the prayers of many to grant you to carry out the glory of virginity, and to succeed in coming to the Lord's rewards. There entrust your treasures, where no thief digs through, where no insidious plunderer breaks in. Prepare for yourself possessions; but let them rather be heavenly ones, where neither rust wears out, nor hail bruises, nor sun burns, nor rain spoils your fruits constant and perennial, and free from all contact of worldly injury.
- iii. For in this very matter you are sinning against God, if you think that riches were given you by Him for this purpose, to enjoy them thoroughly, without a view to salvation. For God gave man also a voice; and yet love-songs and indecent things are not on that account to be sung. And God willed iron to be for the culture of the earth, but not on that account must murders be committed.... Otherwise a large estate is temptation, unless the wealth minister to good uses; so that every man, in proportion to his wealth, ought by his [inheritance] rather to redeem his transgressions than to increase them.
 - 1. -ANF 5, p. 433 (Cyprian, On the Dress of Virgins)
- c. Using our money to build an army for our own spiritual protection and benefit!
 - i. "But contrary to what is the case with the rest of men, collect for thyself an unarmed, an unwarlike, a bloodless, a passionless, a stainless host, pious old men, orphans dear to God, widows armed with meekness, men adorned with love. Obtain with thy money such guards, for body and for soul, for whose sake a sinking ship is made buoyant, when steered by the prayers of the saints alone; and disease at its height is subdued, put to flight by the laying on of hands; and the attack of robbers is disarmed, spoiled by pious prayers; and the might of demons is crushed, put to shame in its operations by strenuous commands.
 - ii. All these warriors and guards are trusty. No one is idle, no one is useless. One can obtain your pardon from God, another comfort you when sick, another weep and groan in sympathy for you to the Lord of all, another teach some of the things useful for salvation...."
 - 1. Clement of Alexandria, *Who Is the Rich Man that Shall Be Saved?* (ANF 2, p. 601)

V. Conclusion

- a. God is the rich man in the parable. Everything we have is His; we are simply stewards of His possessions.
- b. We are not to waste God's goods (like the unjust steward). Instead, we are to imitate the unjust steward's shrewdness/wisdom, by using our money to

care for others, and in so doing, earning an eternal reward from our Heavenly Father.

- c. God rewards those who use their wealth for the things that are important to Him. Much is at stake here.
- d. This is an area we need to pray for much wisdom and seek input from the Scriptures and spiritual brothers and sisters as we work out the specifics of these teachings in our own lives.
- e. Wesley's Conclusion:
 - i. "You see then what it is to "make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and by what means you may procure, "that when ye fail they may receive you into the everlasting habitations." You see the nature and extent of truly Christian prudence so far as it relates to the use of that great talent, money.
 - ii. Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour, in soul or body, by applying hereto with unintermitted diligence, and with all the understanding which God has given you; -- save all you can, by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire; to gratify either the desire of flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; waste nothing, living or dying, on sin or folly, whether for yourself or your children; -- and then, give all you can, or, in other words, give all you have to God.
 - iii. Do not stint yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. "Render unto God," not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less; by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all mankind, in such a manner, that you may give a good account of your stewardship when ye can be no longer stewards; in such a manner as the oracles of God direct, both by general and particular precepts; in such a manner, that whatever ye do may be "a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God," and that every act may be rewarded in that day when the Lord cometh with all his saints."

VI. Epilogue

- a. After reviewing the notes and the recording of this sermon, I was struck by a point that my friend Adam made during the lesson. I had asked a rhetorical question: Could anyone think of another parable (in addition to the one in **Luke 16**) that addressed someone wasting God's possessions? Adam answered the question with a very insightful answer: the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which is found in **Luke 15**. The more I thought about it, the more it seemed to me that Jesus deliberately told three back-to-back

parables that include important teaching regarding our use of money. These parables are:

- i. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15**)
 - ii. The Parable of the Unjust (and Shrewd) Steward (**Luke 16**)
 - iii. The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (**Luke 16**)
- b. Consider the following from the Parable of the Prodigal Son:
- i. The younger “prodigal” son rejects (and leaves) the father, desiring money (his inheritance) instead.
 - ii. The son wastes his father’s possessions.
 1. “And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together [referring to his portion of his father’s estate], journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living....”
 - iii. After wasting all the wealth his father had entrusted to him, the son comes to his senses and turns back to the father.
 - iv. The father is quick to forgive his son.
 1. The father was not concerned about the wasted possessions (unlike the older son), but instead rejoiced in the return of the son, who “was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”
 2. Note, the father’s concern was for his son who had left him, not the lost possessions.
 3. This is wonderful news for us as we come to our senses, recognizing ways we have wasted our Father’s possessions. We can repent, turn back to the Father, find forgiveness and mercy.
 - v. The father reminds his older son (who struggled with his father’s response to his younger brother), “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.”
 1. God's desire is for a relationship with His children.
 2. All we have is His, and He is extremely generous in sharing what He has with us for our provision.
 3. May we be good stewards (and sons and daughters) in how we use the wealth of our loving Father!