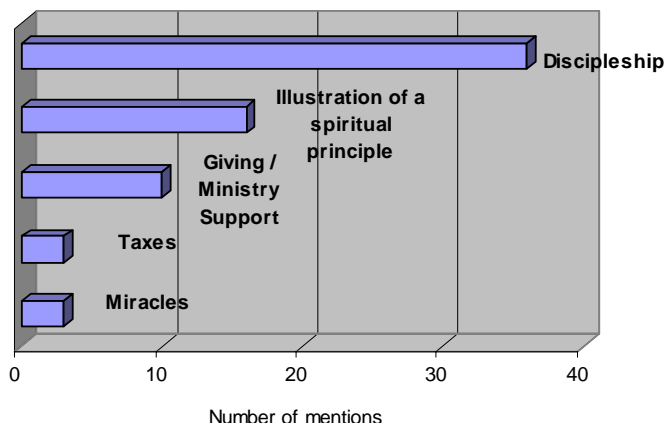


What did Jesus say about money? (The Parables)

Jesus' References to Money



In the previous series we learned from the Sermon on the Mount that true righteousness and happiness regarding money is to be so focused on the Lord, so absolutely trusting, that we do not worry about money even in our hearts, even for the most basic needs. Then we studied all mentions by Jesus of money in the context of discipleship. We saw clearly that money, the love of money and/or concerns about money, was a test used by Jesus to reveal the readiness of a heart to be a true disciple of His. You see, Jesus must have all of us or none of us at all, He doesn't tolerate a lukewarm position indefinitely. He doesn't require that we lose everything in the way of possessions and finances to follow Him, but He does require us to be willing to.

This study is going to focus on the next category of money mentions by Jesus – the parables of Jesus. A parable is a story which, although not usually factual, remains true to life and teaches a moral lesson or spiritual truth. Jesus frequently used parables in His teaching for two reasons: to reveal truth to believers and to hide truth from those who had rejected it and/or hardened their hearts against it. (Matthew 13:10-17)

We are going to look at all of Jesus' parables that **used money or some situation regarding money to illustrate a spiritual principle**. There are 40 unique parables of Jesus recorded in the gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke. Seventeen of them (43%) mention money.

Key points to keep in mind regarding the proper interpretation of parables¹:

- Determine the occasion of the parable – what prompted Jesus to tell it, why was it told?
- Look for the intended meaning of the parable.
- Don't impose any meaning beyond what is clearly stated or applied to the hearers by the speaker of the parable.
- Identify the central idea of the parable – every parable has one main point of emphasis.
- Interpret parables in the context of the culture of Bible times rather than our culture.
- Do not establish doctrine when parables are the primary or only source.

¹ IISB, Precept Ministries International, p. 2106-2107.

First, we are going to work our way through the parables in the gospel of Luke since Luke the historian records events in chronological order. For each parable, we are going to complete the chart identifying the occasion, the central truth being taught, and how this may apply to us in both our personal and business lives.

These first two parables in Luke were told during Jesus' second year of public ministry, a year of popularity.

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 7:30-50** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context
Main Point – Central Truth
Application, Insights About Money

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 8:1-21** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart. Also read the accounts in Matthew 13 and Mark 4.*

Occasion and Context

Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

The remaining parables in Luke were taught during his last year of public ministry, a year of opposition.

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 10:25-37** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 11:1-13** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 11:52-12:1-34** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

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*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 14:25-35** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

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Main Point – Central Truth

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Application, Insights About Money

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*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 15:1-32** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

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Luke 16:1-15

1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this [steward] was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

3 "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.

4 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.'

5 "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he [began] saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

8 "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of

Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

*Leader: Read aloud **Luke 16:1-15** from the left panel.*

We are going to take a different approach to this parable because of the central truth being taught.

What are your first impressions of this parable? What do you think of the steward?

Why did the master praise the unrighteous steward, the man he just fired?

Read again Jesus' explanation of the parable in verses 9-14. What is the main point of this parable – remember the rules for interpreting parables presented earlier. Was Jesus speaking this for

light.

9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

11 "If therefore you have not been faithful in the [use of] unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true [riches] to you?

12 "And if you have not been faithful in [the use of] that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?

13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

14 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him.

15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

the benefit of the disciples or the Pharisees who were also listening intently?

Take a couple of minutes and record your interpretation (what is the main truth the parable is teaching) and how this might apply to you today, and to the role of CFO.

How was money a **temptation** for the steward?

How was money a **test** for the steward?

How was money a **tool** for the steward?

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 19:11-28** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context
Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

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*Leader: Ask someone to read **Luke 20:1-19** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

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Main Point – Central Truth

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Application, Insights About Money

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Next we are going to pick up the non-redundant parables that use financial situations to illustrate spiritual truths in Matthew's account of the life of Jesus.

*Leader: Ask someone to read **Matthew 13:44-53** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart. Review all the Kingdom of Heaven parables in the chapter for context.*

Occasion and Context

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Main Point – Central Truth

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Application, Insights About Money

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*Leader: Ask someone to read **Matthew 19:16-20:16** aloud from their Bible and complete the chart.*

Occasion and Context

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Main Point – Central Truth

Application, Insights About Money

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES DISCOVERED

A parable is a story taken from life that is “cast alongside” a great spiritual truth. Jesus frequently used money and financial situations as the storyline in His parables, indicating that money and money matters have always been a significant part of everyday life.

Each parable had a major point to teach a spiritual truth. Here is a brief recap from our study of some of those truths.

Reference	Main Point and Spiritual truth
Luke 7:30-50	He who has been forgiven much loves the Lord much.
Luke 8:1-21	Heart of man determines the fruit of the Word.
Luke 10:25-37	Our neighbor is anyone the Lord puts in our path.
Luke 11:1-13	Be bold, persistent and insistent in our praying.
Luke 11:52-12:1-34	Be on your guard against greed, do not trust in material riches and do not worry about material needs.
Luke 14:25-35	There is a cost of discipleship – count it before following after the Lord.
Luke 15:1-32	The heart of God is great joy when a sinner repents.
Luke 16:1-15	We should be at least as shrewd with money pursuing God’s interests as the unrighteous are in pursuing their own interests. Use money wisely to further the Kingdom of God
Luke 19:11-28	Be faithful stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to us. There will be an accounting when He returns.
Luke 20:1-19	If you reject Jesus Christ, you reject God.
Matthew 13:44-53	The Kingdom of Heaven is the most valuable thing a man can possess. Man is the most valuable thing the King of Heaven wants to possess.
Matthew 19:16-20:16	Many who are first will be last, and the last first. God’s grace is not unjust.

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BUSINESS APPLICATION

Only a couple of the parables have a business application in context.

1. Do not be like the rich fool who focused his whole life on accumulating wealth for his retirement years, out of greed or worry, and miss storing up spiritual treasures for eternity. Evaluate whether this might be the case in your life.
2. Are we really prepared to give up everything – our finances, our businesses, our careers – to follow Christ if that is what He requires? Have we truly counted the cost of discipleship? Are we really disciples of Christ according to Christ's definition?
3. Are we shrewd in our financial dealings to serve our own interests or God's interests?
4. Are we faithful stewards of the financial resources that God has entrusted to our care for His purposes? How would we fare if the Lord were to return today and ask us to give an accounting?

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Prayer Requests

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