**The Hard and Misunderstood Sayings of Jesus (IV) + Weekly Devotion + 4.24.2024**

***“Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you in to the eternal dwelling” (Luke 16:9).***

This saying of Jesus is confusing to say the least. In order to understand it, we need to consider the parable that comes before it – the parable of the “dishonest manager” (Luke 16:1-8).

Just before Luke 16:9, Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who had a manager. But the rich man finds out that the manager has been wasting his money. The manager, on the verge of losing his job, uses his last bit of influence to make friends with the rich man’s debtors by reducing their debts.

The manager’s goal in making friends is that, when he’s out of a job, he’ll have buddies to help him out. He’ll have someone to take him in when he has nowhere else to go. Not a bad idea, actually – which is why the rich man in the parable praises the dishonest manager!

It’s worth noting that Jesus isn’t praising the dishonest manager in the parable or holding him up as a model for Christian living. Instead, Jesus is teaching about the proper use of possessions. The manager was commended for using his resources to gain friends; now Jesus teaches His disciples about using their resources for the sake of His kingdom. He wants us to use our resources not only so that we make friends here and now, but eternally. Christ wants us to use our money, possessions, and resources for Him and His kingdom.

It isn’t the dishonesty of the manager that Jesus wants us to emulate. Rather, it’s his use of resources to make friends.

The “unrighteous wealth” Jesus speaks of is our ‘stuff’ this side of heaven. That being said, money and possessions aren’t inherently evil by any means; Jesus is simply contrasting this ‘stuff’ with the “true riches” He gives us (Luke 16:11). Eventually, the “unrighteous wealth” of this world will fail us; it’ll fail us when we die. Our ‘stuff’ can’t save us from death – only Christ can do that. We use the resources God gives us wisely and we use them for the sake of His kingdom, so long as we’re able.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You teach us to use the money and possessions we’ve been given to serve You and others in Your kingdom. Guard us against the love of money and from a near-sightedness which focuses on this life only. Give us wisdom to use our resources wisely and fix our eyes on the true riches You give us in our eternal dwelling. Amen.