

STEWARDSHIP THAT LASTS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2025

In his sermon titled "Stewardship That Lasts," Pastor Braxton tackled the challenging parable of the shrewd manager from **Luke 16:1-13**. He began by expressing his excitement about sharing insights derived from Jesus's teaching, acknowledging that this particular parable often confuses readers.

Pastor Braxton set the scene by reminding the congregation of Jesus's broader ministry, emphasizing His role as a teacher and healer who engaged both crowds and individuals. He pointed out that, following Jesus's previous parables about redemption and joy in finding the lost, this parable shifts focus to stewardship and how we manage what God has entrusted to us.

The core of the message revolved around the actions of a dishonest manager who, facing dismissal, cleverly reduced the debts owed to his employer to secure future friendships. Pastor Braxton highlighted the manager's shrewdness, suggesting that even a flawed character can exemplify wisdom in resource management. This leads to the critical takeaway: believers must be as intentional about eternal matters as the world is about temporal ones.

He reminded us that stewardship encompasses more than just financial resources; it includes time, relationships, and talents. He encouraged us to view their lives through the lens of stewardship, emphasizing that everything we possess is a gift from God meant to serve others and glorify Him.

Pastor Braxton concluded by stating that we cannot serve both God and money. He urged us to make Christ the focal point of their devotion and lives.

GOSPEL READING: LUKE 16:1-13

"Jesus told this story to his disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. So the employer called him in and said,

'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.'

"The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.'

"So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?'

The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.'

So the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.'

"And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man.

'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,' was the reply.

'Here,' the manager said, 'take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.'

"The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light.

Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.

"If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?"

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money."

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

1. Reflect on a time when you felt unworthy of God's grace. How did that experience shape your understanding of stewardship?
2. How do you differentiate between serving God and serving material possessions in your daily life?
3. In what ways can we cultivate shrewdness in our spiritual practices, similar to the manager in the parable?
4. What would it mean for you to be a 'child of light' in a world that often prioritizes material gain?
5. Can you recall a moment when your stewardship positively impacted someone else's life? Can you talk about it? How did that make you feel?
6. How does the concept of stewardship challenge your understanding of success and fulfillment in life?
7. What steps can you take to be more intentional in your stewardship of time, talents, and relationships?

PROMPTS FOR ACTION & RESPONSE

1. This week, identify one area of your life where you can practice better stewardship — be it financial, time management, or relationships. Make a plan to implement this change and share it with a friend for accountability.