

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Luke 16:9-12**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Luke chapter 16, verses 9 to 12.

Yesterday we read about Jesus telling His disciples a story concerning an unjust steward who wasted his master's goods and arbitrarily altered the accounts. Then, in verse 8, the master commended this unjust steward for acting shrewdly, and this led to a conclusion—that the sons of this world, in this present generation, are more shrewd than the sons of light. Jesus spoke these words to His disciples to encourage them to be shrewd and wise in matters of serving.

**Verse 9: “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.”**

After finishing the story, Jesus went on to give the final conclusion. He said to these disciples, “make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon.” Jesus seemed to assign a position to wealth, calling it “unrighteous mammon.” What exactly does this mean? Is the existence of wealth unrighteous? Is its nature unrighteous? Why?

If we trace it to the root, it should go back to Genesis chapter 4. After Cain killed Abel, he was driven out from the presence of God. In verses 4:17-22, some of Cain's notable descendants are listed, especially three of them—Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain. Jabal became the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock, that is, the origin of today's entire industry; Jubal was the father of all those who play the harp and flute, also the origin of all kinds of human entertainment today; Tubal-Cain was the forger of all kinds of bronze and iron implements, the origin of our military today.

In other words, these three people became the beginning of human culture and civilization. This was on the line of Cain, not on the line of life, not what God had originally ordained. Afterward, human civilization continued to develop and became today's systematized society, and the standard of measurement for the entire systematized society is wealth. Therefore, wealth in its essence and in its existence is unrighteous, so Jesus called it unrighteous mammon.

Yet wealth is morally neutral, just as all weapons are morally neutral. If you use it to protect others' rights, it is good; if you use it to harm people, it is bad. So wealth is morally neutral; it is originally just a tool. It is a very good tool, but the worst master. Since it is a tool, it needs to be used properly. Then what is the use of wealth? Jesus said, "make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon." Wealth should become a tool in our hands to help people and make friends, because when wealth fails, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

Jesus brought out another point here, which is that in terms of time, wealth is a good tool, but it is only useful in this present age. When the time comes, one day it will become useless. When does wealth become useless? We know very clearly that one day when we die, no matter how much money you have, you cannot take it with you; wealth will be of no use to you. Of course, in the future in eternity, in the time of the New Jerusalem, wealth will also be useless. Therefore, Jesus said to these disciples, while it is still today, while you are still alive, while wealth is still useful, use this wealth as a good tool to make friends, to preach the gospel, and to bring people to salvation. Then one day, when this wealth becomes useless, because you have used this wealth to do some things of eternal value and have made some friends with eternal life through this wealth, one day in the everlasting home they will come to welcome you.

**Verse 10: "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."**

What is a small matter and what is a big matter? Things in time are small matters; things in eternity are big matters. Wealth is in time, therefore it is a small matter;

our life belonging to God is in eternity, therefore it is a big matter. What Jesus said here is very special: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much,” which is different from our usual way of thinking. Many times we feel that a person who does not bother with trifles and is broad-minded can even be praised for his openness and generosity. But Jesus did not say that. If you are faithful in small matters, you will be faithful in big matters; if you are unjust in small matters, you will be unjust in big matters as well.

**Verse 11: “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”**

Jesus clearly pointed out here that what He called the small matter is this unrighteous mammon. How we use wealth, our attitude toward using wealth, and the way we use wealth—we ourselves know very clearly. In this matter, are you faithful? Just as Jesus said earlier, wealth is a tool; it is temporal and short-lived. If you are not faithful in handling this short-lived and temporal wealth, who will commit to your trust the true riches? In the original text there is no word “riches”; it is “who will commit to your trust the true?” What is the true? Eternal life is the true. If you cannot faithfully handle temporary wealth, God will not entrust eternal life to you.

When we serve in the church, in principle God has entrusted to us the matters of eternal life. We help the saints in the church receive grace and be saved, learn together, and grow together in eternal life. Yet Jesus said to these disciples, if you cannot use wealth appropriately, if you cannot use this unrighteous mammon to make friends, if you are not faithful in these things, He cannot entrust to you the matters concerning eternal life.

**Verse 12: “And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”**

The words Jesus spoke here actually completely overturn our concepts. We own cars, we own houses, we own many material things, and we think they are all our things. But Jesus said these are another man's things. You think you own wealth, you think you own houses and cars, but one day when you are gone, these will no longer be yours. Therefore, concerning what we Chinese call "things outside the body," we must have the correct concept. We only use them; we do not own them. These are what Jesus called "another man's" things.

A deeper meaning is that your own sovereignty has already been transferred to the Lord through Jesus' death and resurrection. Today you are managing on behalf of the Lord all kinds of material things that God has entrusted to you. If you are not faithful in these things, who will give you what is your own? What is your own? It is what you can take into eternity, things that have eternal value.

Of course, our spiritual life today will still exist in the future eternity; this has eternal value. Today in time, we let our life grow and let our disposition be gradually sanctified. These sanctified characters all have eternal value. Through serving, the gifts we receive from God are stirred up and perfected; these gifts are also eternal. Through the growth of our life and the sanctification of our disposition, some things belonging to God and able to manifest God's glory are produced in us. What God manifests through you is also eternal.

That is why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:41, "There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory." In eternity in the future, the degree of glory of each of us will be different. And all these matters concerning eternity are determined by how we handle the unrighteous mammon that God has entrusted to us to manage in this present age.

In the life of this present age, under God's sovereign authority, God lets us manage some things. God wants to see whether we are faithful in these small matters and whether we have the wisdom to use these small matters in this present age that we can still use to exchange for our eternal value and eternal life. This is also the

personal exhortation from God's own mouth to every one of us who is willing to serve God.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Your word is truly clear, transparent, and understandable. Thank You for valuing us and entrusting us with many different things. Truly help us to realize that if we are not faithful in unrighteous mammon, we will not be able to be faithful in the matters of spiritual life either. Let us learn, in handling every matter You have entrusted to us, to consider eternal life as the standard and to decide how to handle the things of this present age according to eternal value. Grant us spiritual wisdom so that in this short time we may learn to use all kinds of resources You have given us to help ourselves and to help the saints around us obtain that which is eternal, valuable, and one day worthy of Your commendation. Bless my life today so that I can fix my eyes on eternal things. Thank You. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ!