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## **A Cheap Cut-Rate Gospel**

**By David Wilkerson**

January 3, 1986 "And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." (Luke 16:1-2 NAS).

Jesus spoke of a certain rich man who heard a report that one of His stewards was squandering his possessions. So He called him to give account of himself. He said, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."

This parable is most important to the body of Christ right now. It is the tragic story of a servant of God who loses his power and anointing and ends up offering a cut-rate gospel. The rich man of this parable is Christ Himself, in who abides all the riches of glory. The steward being stripped of authority is any and all who have been entrusted with handling the Word of God, but who have been found guilty of squandering their Lord's resources.

This steward was guilty of squandering his Lord's possessions, an accusation that could be made against multitudes of present-day ministers, Christian workers and laymen. What waste we see in God's kingdom today!

1. God's chosen servants waste time, the most precious resource heaven ever entrusted to the care of mankind. God-anointed pastors, teachers and evangelists are as guilty as the pleasure-seeking multitudes in the pew. Stewards of the gospel should be redeeming the time and not squandering so much of it on hobbies, sports, recreation and television. Show me a man of God who sits before the TV idol, flitting away precious hours, vexing his soul and mind with the corruption of hell — and I'll show you an unjust steward whom God will soon bring into account and strip of all spiritual authority.

This steward had become one who doted on self. He took his Master's resources and showered them upon himself. You would think all the riches were his alone, the way he ran about wasting resources and indulging himself.

We see the sad spectacle in the church today of Christians running about squandering divine resources without the knowledge God is going to make them give an account of the waste.

2. Power, another of Christ's glorious resources, is also being squandered foolishly and selfishly. The power-brokers in God's house are those who squander their Master's power to validate themselves. They want to be known and respected as prophets, as men of the hour, looked up to as mighty warriors of faith, action and power. They love the applause of man, the hero-like adulation; they love to walk about and hear those self-approving words, "Look! There he is! There goes that mighty man of faith, action and power!" Paul denounced such adulation of ministers. We are to give honor to whom honor is due, and that is Christ alone.

Undiscerning believers make little gods of self-acclaimed prophets, healers and teachers of new revelations.

Squandered power is corrupting the ministry and the house of God. Shallow Christians are attracted to power like bees to honey. And it is a terrifying indictment against a backslidden church to hear Christians say, "My, doesn't he have such great power!" — instead of whispering in holy reverence,

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"My, isn't he full of Jesus! Isn't Christ so marvelously revealed in him! He makes Jesus so real!"

The true steward of the gospel doesn't seek power to display it before the eyes of curious crowds. Multitudes may behold God's mighty healing power, as when Jesus healed the sick. Yet you hear Him say over and over again, "Tell no man." God entrusts His greatest power to those who go into hospitals, to the streets, into private homes and in secret, away from all approving eyes and clapping hands, to pull down strongholds, bind demons, set captives free, heal the sick and be a true and unknown minister of Christ's healing power. The true gift of healing is not manifested in a showmanship atmosphere, but is manifested only when used by humble servants who are totally jealous for the glory of God alone — as Christ was.

A single unit of God's holy power not used or appropriated only to the glory of Christ is wasted. It is an unjust steward spending on himself what does not belong to him. Yet men still make great names for themselves by stealing the Lord's glory and power to magnify themselves.

3. Faith is another resource of Christ's that is being squandered by Christians today. All true faith comes from Christ! When you speak of the riches of God in Christ Jesus, you must include faith. We are saved by the faith of Christ. But that precious faith that should have been carefully invested is being wasted on trivia. The heroes of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews appropriated their faith to conquer kingdoms, shut the mouths of lions, quench the power of fire, put enemy armies to flight, perform acts of righteousness, receive back their dead and finally to endure torture, mockings, scourgings, chains and imprisonment.

Today, Christ's faith is too often squandered on self! Self-achievement, success, increase of goods, earthly riches and endless prosperity with perfect health and cloudless happiness! Self siphons faith to enrich itself.

Why is it that Christians can invest all kinds of faith in an attempt to become prosperous and happy, but cannot have faith for the saving of their house and their neighbors? Why so little faith spent on receiving the holiness of Christ? Why so little faith to evangelize a lost world?

One of these days very soon God is going to put our spiritual backs against the wall and make us all give account of the way we handled His precious faith. Did we waste it on trivia, as if faith exists only to make life easier for us? Will not our Lord, with piercing eyes, ask us why we did not use His riches wisely? What about the time coming so soon, when demonic legions are released upon this generation, and the rulers of darkness expand their sinister kingdoms, the fires of hell and temptations rage, the armies of Satan come marching toward us, and the mockers and torturers and the antichrists rise up to harass the children of God? Will God's people, God's stewards, be on the front lines making a mighty swath of faith for the glory of Christ, or will they be standing before the Judge to be stripped and cast aside for squandering? God help us.

The Great LessonThe great lesson in this parable goes beyond the tragedy of a church wasting Christ's riches on self interests; it goes to the corrupt thinking of Christian stewards who have been stripped of divine authority. Stewards of the gospel who waste time, faith, power and other divine resources will eventually lose their spiritual authority in Christ and will be released to engage in their own plans and schemes. They will lose their anointing and scramble about, inventing a gospel to perpetuate their own interests.

"And the steward said to himself, What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from

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me?" (Luke 16:3).

Stewards who squander their Master's wealth and lose their anointing eventually become totally given over to self-preservation.

The primary concern then is not, "What can I do for my Lord?" but, "What can I do for me?" This includes laymen as well as ministers.

I asked the Holy Spirit why this steward did not simply repent and throw himself upon the mercy of his Master. Why did he go right out and start planning and scheming to protect himself and his future? The answer, I believe, is that he had gone too far and placed himself beyond redemption. Self-interest had hardened him — he was given over to a divided heart. If you think self-centered preachers and laymen are never beyond saving, you don't know your Bible. Such were Ananias and Sapphira; such were Alexander and Hymenaeus whom Paul turned over to Satan that others might fear; such were those in Romans 1, who fell from faith to the depths of a reprobate mind.

I tell you, with a grieving heart, that there are right now in this nation laymen, ministers and ministries that have been given up by God. These are those who have been deceived by lying spirits, having been warned time and again by the Holy Spirit and by prophets of God to repent and humble themselves. They became engrossed with self: they started to fornicate with wood and stones, becoming builders of temples and memorials to self-achievement; and they rejected a life of brokenness and humility. They forsook the prayer closet for their interests and the works of their own hands! They recklessly squandered God's money, God's faith, God's time and God's power.

From across this nation I hear from praying, sanctified people the same thing I hear from my heavenly Father. Those who are walking with God, living in the Spirit, instinctively sense that God has discovered and that He deplores all the abominations in the church, in the pulpit, in preachers and in some popular ministries.

Not all are corrupt, thank God! There is a growing remnant of repentant saints and ministries who have returned to righteousness and prayer. But the true body of Christ must pray for divine wisdom to discern those who have been stripped of spiritual authority and unction. Growing numbers of praying Christians now share the very grief of God against all the compromise and mixture with the world, and their hearts cry out that God will deal with it soon. I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt He is about to do just that! If God can bring Babylon down in one hour, He can certainly clean up the mess in His temple in a moment.

Most of the modern stewards who have been stripped by God of all spiritual usefulness are not as wise as the unjust steward — they don't know it's all over. They are not aware they have been stripped of their stewardship. But you can tell it is all over by the man-centered plans and schemes they introduce. The Lord's interests are no longer paramount; the only thing important to them now is their next project. They finish one man-centered project, only to launch another, more spectacular than the other.

My heart cries out, "Oh, my blessed Savior, when will God's people wake up and begin to discern that all this mad spending, building and worldly mindedness represents a squandering spree by Christians and ministries that have been stripped by the Holy Ghost and who are about to be called into account? When will God's people quit supporting such foolishness? When will the true body of Christ wake up and cry out against it and say, 'Enough!'"

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Are there no prophets of God left in the land? Are there no pastors left with enough Holy Ghost discernment and spiritual authority to wake up this people to the dangerous waste of our Lord's resources? Sad, but true, some of the best-known national ministries today are beyond hearing God's true Word. I am not their judge, but by their actions it is apparent some are beyond reproof, blinded by their own counselors, blinded by ambition, blinded by the gods of success and power.

Some of them will not even receive a prophet now — they are so high and mighty, so self-assured, so rich, so influential, so set in their ways, so committed to their own plans, dreams and schemes — they can't hear anymore.

Their eyes are closed; their ears are shut; and they don't know the glory has departed and Ichabod had been written over their doors! As certainly as the unjust steward was brought down, they too will fall. God is going to cut off their supply and do a thing so awesome, it will make the ears of all who hear it tingle.

I call on praying saints across this land to begin to fast and to pray for a purging within God's house and among all ministers and ministries. May it begin with me and the ministry entrusted to me. I need that purifying as much or more than all the others. Pray for the holy fire of His holiness to strike fear in all pulpits. Pray that God will save the ministries that can still be saved, that God will humble and break the stubborn wills of ego-centered men, that there will be repentance and a return to purity and honesty. Pray they will respond very soon. Join all other praying saints and take dominion and pull these abominations down. No more squandering of the Lord's resources! No more collusion with those without concern for the Lord's interests — but who use other people to further their own self-interests. No more trusting those who offer a cheap, cut-rate gospel!

God, give us some prophets and pastors and evangelists, pure, separated, broken, given over wholly to the glory of Jesus, who can thunder against sin and corruption and cause to tremble all the adulterous, divorcing, lukewarm laymen and ministers in the house of God! I believe God's people are crying for leaders who can set an example of holiness and lead them into a deeper walk with Christ. I think the congregation is hungering for God more than many in the pulpit. Young ministers tell me they can't find older men of God whom they can look up to as role models of holiness and purity. The people want to move on in God — they want fire in the pulpit and conviction in the pews. They want the Spirit of God to awaken their church and drive out the corruption. At least that's what I hear from those who write to me.

A Cheap, Cut-Rate Gospel of Compromise This squandering steward said, "I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their houses" (Luke 16:4).

He proceeded to call on all his Master's debtors and offer them cut rate deals. The debtor who owed his Master one hundred measures of oil was told he only had to pay fifty. He cut another good deal for a debtor who owed a hundred measures of wheat. He was told he need pay only eighty measures. He offered sweet, cut-rate deals to all debtors.

When the Holy Spirit departs from a man or a minister, and self is in control, all kinds of compromises are offered to debtors. That is why we are hearing such cheap, cut-rate gospel from so many pulpits today.

Now, we have come to the heart of the message of this parable. These stripped stewards go about making sweet deals to debtors who are looking for a cheap way to pay. Who wants to pay the full

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price of complete surrender when there is a standing offer to clear the ledger with a cut-rate salvation? Who wants to fill up the sufferings of Christ, when you can fill up on goodies? Why endure death, the Cross, shame and rejection when you can simply claim your rights and breeze right into paradise without pain or sacrifice? Get in line, saints — it's bargain-basement-gospel time!

Park yourself in front of your TV, flood your soul and mind with the filth from the pits of hell — go ahead, enjoy all the lurid movies, the R and X-rated theaters — run with the crowd, drink, smoke, go to nightclubs, tell dirty stories — divorce, cheat, fornicate — spend and buy and go in debt — don't pray, don't fast, don't weep, don't talk about burdens, holiness, and separation! Why? Because it's a day of cheap, cut-rate, painless, powerless, contaminated gospel! It's being offered every day of the week on radio and television and in crusades and churches all across the land.

"And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly...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" (Luke 16:8,9)

Get this straight. God is not praising the steward's evil scheming, nor is He commending his actions as such. He commends only the shrewd way the unjust steward damned himself. The Master complimented the manner in which he sealed his doom. In other words, "You thought it clever to offer these cut-rate deals. But when it all comes down — and it will — you and all who partook in your dishonest offers will be targets in Satan's dwelling place."

What God is saying to us is that there are no shortcuts, no half-priced consecrations, no easy, painless pathways to glory. We are going to pay full price; that means to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Him into fullness and resurrection life. On Judgment Day all the stripped and powerless stewards will stand before Christ's judgment seat, facing not only His flaming eyes but also all the poor, lost children of the kingdom they deceived with their partial gospel. What a howling will be heard! They will renounce their pillow prophets then, crying out, "Sham! Deceiver! Cruel Shepherd! Son of Ichabod! Inventor of lies! You smote us with blindness with your half-truths!"

All you can commend some men of God and certain ministers for today is their shrewdness and cleverness in providing for themselves and their followers a sale-priced walk with Jesus. And it is very clever, the way the Scriptures are twisted and contorted to make it all sound so right and approved by God. It's gone so far now that many can sin at will and not be convicted. They can say, with backslidden Israel, "We have been delivered to do these abominations" (Jeremiah 7:10). Doctrines of demons and doctrines of false security are offered to those who choose to live carnal, sensuous lives.

The unjust steward thought he had secured his future — but it was a false security. He was still the same conniving, cheating, sensuous man he had always been; and the friends he ran with were of his same nature — all of them blinded by false security. You can be sure he paid a high price for his folly. Who can doubt that the Master refused the cut-rate deals offered by the unjust steward? I believe the Master demanded full payment.

God says to this rich, Laodicean church age, so increased with goods and boasting they have need of nothing — you are in reality a people wretched, poor, miserable, blind and naked. And until all lukewarmness is forsaken, God will spew it and all it represents out of His mouth. That dread release is already happening.

God, give us faithful stewards! Give us saints, in pulpit and pew, who will return to the Lord with all

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their hearts, tear down the idols, and fall in contrition before Your presence. And God, bring back the gospel of righteousness, of separation from the world, of holy commandments of love — and raise up a host of overcomers who will trim their lamps and set out to meet the Bridegroom. God, bring us to the Cross, to death unto self, to the reckoning of ourselves dead to sin by faith, and resurrection into a realm of everlasting life in Christ.

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