



## The Words of Jesus Series

# Parables of Preparation

Prodigal Son, Scheming Manager, Rich Man & Lazarus

**Context: Chapters Luke 15 & 16**

### Outline

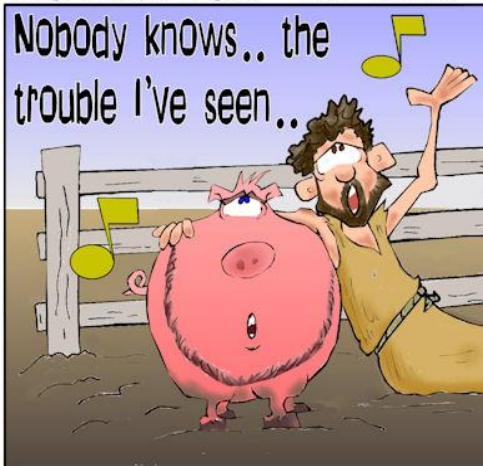
**Lesson 1 – The Prodigal Son** (Luke 15:11-32)

**Lesson 2 – The Scheming Manager** (Luke 16:1-17)

**Lesson 3 – Rich Man & Lazarus** (Luke 16:18-31)

Jesus tells three parables – The Prodigal Son, the Scheming Manager (a.k.a the Unrighteous Steward), and the Rich Man & Lazarus. The Rich Man & Lazarus is thought by many to be actual events rather than a parable.

### The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



The Prodigal Son realized his life hit bottom the day he found himself roommates with a very large hog named AbrahAM. **Luke 15:11-32**

### Suggested methodology for each lesson:

1. Fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the lesson's text aloud from the Bible. (... or a few verses at a time as you answer the questions.)
5. Answer and *briefly* discuss the "fill in the blank" questions. (Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer if it is based on Scripture.)
6. On the final "Think & Pray" question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This will give the Holy Spirit a time to speak.**
7. Discuss your "Think & Pray" answers. (Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer is just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.)
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called "For Further Thought"

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**Lesson 1 – The Prodigal son** (Luke 15:11-32)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

[1A] Luke 15:11-12 Which of the two sons asked for his inheritance? \_\_\_\_\_

[1B] Luke 15:13 What did the younger son do with his wealth? \_\_\_\_\_

[1C] Luke 15:14 What was the younger son's condition when a famine struck the place? \_\_\_\_\_

[1D] Luke 15:15 The younger son got a job doing what? \_\_\_\_\_

[1E] Luke 15:16 What would the younger son have done gladly? \_\_\_\_\_

[1F] Luke 15:17-19 What did the younger son decide to do? \_\_\_\_\_

[1G] Luke 15:20-21 When did his father recognize the younger son? \_\_\_\_\_

[1H] Luke 15:22-24 How did his father welcome the younger son? \_\_\_\_\_

[1I] Luke 15:25-26 How did the older son know about the celebration? \_\_\_\_\_

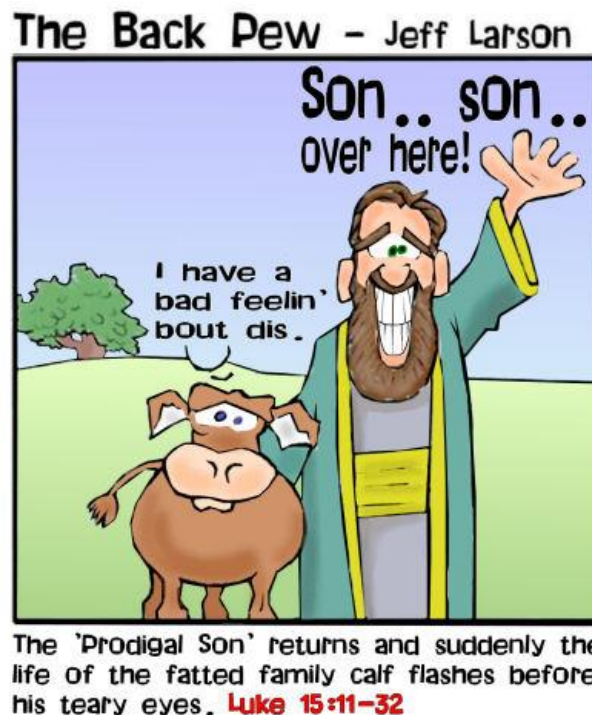
[1J] Luke 15:28 How did the older brother react? \_\_\_\_\_

[1K] Luke 15:29-30 What comparison did the older brother make? \_\_\_\_\_

[1L] Luke 15:31-32 What comparisons did the father make? \_\_\_\_\_

[1M] Identify the characters in the parable of the Prodigal Son and who they represent in reality. Which one is more like you? Why?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Lesson 1 – The Prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)**

- [1A] Luke 15:11-12 Which of the two sons asked for his inheritance? The younger  
 [1B] Luke 15:13 What did the younger son do with his wealth? Took a trip and wasted it all  
 [1C] Luke 15:14 What was the younger son's condition when a famine struck the place? Poverty  
 [1D] Luke 15:15 The younger son got a job doing what? Feeding pigs  
 [1E] Luke 15:16 What would the younger son have done gladly? Eat pig food  
 [1F] Luke 15:17-19 What did the younger son decide to do? Humbly ask his father for help  
 [1G] Luke 15:20-21 When did his father recognize the younger son? While he was still a long way off  
 [1H] Luke 15:22-24 How did his father welcome the younger son? He had a celebration  
 [1I] Luke 15:25-26 How did the older son know about the celebration? He heard it and asked a servant  
 [1J] Luke 15:28 How did the older brother react? He became angry and sulked outside  
 [1K] Luke 15:29-30 What comparison did the older brother make? Himself with his younger brother  
 [1L] Luke 15:31-32 What comparisons did the father make? Life with death, lost with found

[1M] The father is usually characterized as the Lord, but Jesus is not explicit. The younger son is a lost sinner. The older son the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes from Luke 15:2. I suppose that works OK, but I prefer a different characterization. I see the father as those Christians who are seeking the lost and welcoming them into the church. I see the younger son as the lost. I see the older son as the church members who think the church is the building and act like members of an exclusive social club who do not want to sacrifice any of their comfort or suffer any inconvenience for the sake of rescuing the lost. At one time or another I have played all three parts in this story. How about you?

**For Further Thought:**

- (1n) In Luke 15:17 what does the phrase "came to his senses" mean?
- (1o) Compare Luke 15:22 with Zechariah 3:4 and Revelation 6:11. Are they all talking about the same thing? Why or why not? (What happens if you add Genesis 41:42 to the comparison?)
- (1p) Compare what the father said in Luke 15:31-32 with Colossians 2:13. What is the same and what is different? (See also Ephesians 2:5)
- (1q) In Luke 15:29-30 was the older brother trying to get his father to see things from the perspective of Proverbs 29:3? Why do you think that?
- (1r) How do you feel when you are looking for a church home and visit a church for the first time? How do you want people to receive you?
- (1s) I remember when our first child was born one of the other men who was expecting a child with his wife was given a baby shower and I was not. It has been almost 40 years and yet, I still remember. It makes the older son's behavior in this parable more reasonable in my eyes, but it still doesn't make it right. What do you think? How do you feel when other people are given a celebration and you are not?

**Lesson 2 – The Scheming Manager** (Luke 16:1-17)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

- [2A] Luke 16:1-2 What report did the rich man hear about the manager? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2B] Luke 16:3-4 What was the manager ashamed to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2C] Luke 16:5 What did the manager ask the debtor? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2D] Luke 16:6 How much was the debt reduced? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2E] Luke 16:7 How much was the debt reduced? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2F] Luke 16:8 What did the master admire about the manager's actions? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2G] Luke 16:9 What kind of wealth did Jesus recommend be used for making friends? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2H] Luke 16:10 Does faithfulness or unrighteousness have anything to do with quantity? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2I] Luke 16:11-12 If you have shown yourself to be irresponsible to you think you will be given more responsibility? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2J] Luke 16:13 How many purposes can share the position of top priority in your life? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2K] Luke 16:15 How much influence does the approval of the crowd have on our Lord? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2L] Luke 16:16-17 When did the preaching of the gospel begin? \_\_\_\_\_
- [2M] How can this parable of the Scheming Manager (a.k.a Unrighteous Steward) be applied to our own lives? \_\_\_\_\_

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_

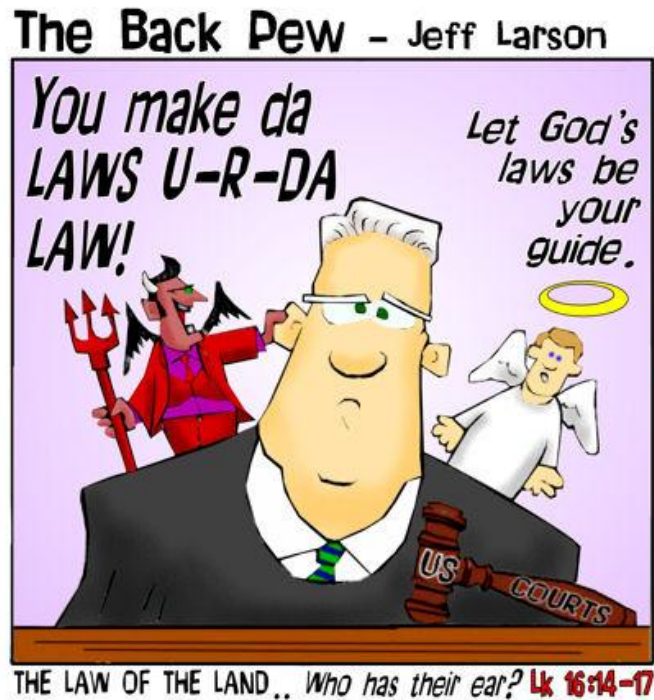
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**Lesson 2 – The Scheming Manager** (Luke 16:1-17)

[2A] Luke 16:1-2 What report did the rich man hear about the manager? Squandering rich man's wealth

[2B] Luke 16:3-4 What was the manager ashamed to do? Beg

[2C] Luke 16:5 What did the manager ask the debtor? "How much do you owe my master?"

[2D] Luke 16:6 How much was the debt reduced? By half

[2E] Luke 16:7 How much was the debt reduced? By one fifth

[2F] Luke 16:8 What did the master admire about the manager's actions? His shrewdness

[2G] Luke 16:9 What kind of wealth did Jesus recommend be used for making friends?

Unrighteous wealth

[2H] Luke 16:10 Does faithfulness or unrighteousness have anything to do with quantity? No

[2I] Luke 16:11-12 If you have shown yourself to be irresponsible to you think you will be given more responsibility? Of course not

[2J] Luke 16:13 How many purposes can share the position of top priority in your life?

One, and if it is not serving God, you are not doing it right

[2K] Luke 16:15 How much influence does the approval of the crowd have on our Lord? None

[2L] Luke 16:16-17 When did the preaching of the gospel begin? With John the Baptist

[2M] I once had a barely remembered conversation with someone, which unknown to me at the time, influenced them to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Years later I accidentally ran into the person and was thanked profusely for "leading me to salvation." You can imagine how much joy that gave me. When I get to heaven I have dozens of people, many who lived in the distant past, to whom I plan to express great gratitude for their positive influence in my life. If I can use up some of this stuff I have on earth, which is doomed for destruction anyway, to help some other people in their Christian walk, the profit for me will be eternal. Seems like a good investment to me.

**For Further Thought:**

(2n) If the manager was fired in in Luke 16:2, where did he get the authority to do what he did in Luke 16:5-7?

(2o) Thinking about Luke 16:5 and 7: Why didn't the manager already know how much they owed?

(2p) Thinking about Luke 16:6-7: Why were the different debts reduced by a different fraction?

(2q) In Luke 16:9 it says, "... they will receive you into the eternal dwellings." Who is "they"? Where do "they" get the authority to keep people out of "eternal dwellings"?

(2r) Thinking about Luke 16:11: If you give something to someone who just wastes it or misuses it, what are you going to give them on the next gift giving occasion? Why?

(2s) What does the term "unrighteous wealth" mean? What is "righteous wealth," if it even exists?

(2t) Explain Luke 16:17.

(2u) What does the phrase "forcing his way into it" mean? How can anyone force his way into the kingdom of God?

**Lesson 3 – Rich Man & Lazarus** (Luke 16:19-31)

Please read these scriptures and answer the associated questions:

[3A] Luke 16:19 How often did the rich man live in splendor? \_\_\_\_\_

[3B] Luke 16:20-21 What covered Lazarus? \_\_\_\_\_

[3C] Luke 16:22 Who carried Lazarus to Abraham's bosom? \_\_\_\_\_

[3D] Luke 16:23 Where was the rich man? \_\_\_\_\_

[3E] Luke 16:24 Why was the rich man in agony? \_\_\_\_\_

[3F] Luke 16:25 What did Abraham call the rich man? \_\_\_\_\_

[3G] Luke 16:26 What was between Abraham and Hades? \_\_\_\_\_

[3H] Luke 16:27 Where did the rich man want Lazarus sent? \_\_\_\_\_

[3I] Luke 16:28 What did the rich man want Lazarus to do? \_\_\_\_\_

[3J] Luke 16:29 What warning did Abraham say was sufficient? \_\_\_\_\_

[3K] Luke 16:30 What did the rich man want his brothers to do? \_\_\_\_\_

[3L] Luke 16:31 Those who do not listen to the Holy Scriptures will also not be persuaded by what? \_\_\_\_\_

[3M] Many people think the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is an actual event rather than a parable because the poor man is called Lazarus. Jesus does not use a given name for anyone in any other parable He tells. Do you think this story is a parable or an actual event? Why?

*Think & Pray* \_\_\_\_\_  
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**The Back Pew** – Jeff Larson



On Earth, the poor man Lazerus suffered and died lying ignored at the gates of the rich man. After death Lazerus was carried to the arms of Abraham. The rich man lived a little **SOUTH** of him. **Lk 16:19-31**

**Lesson 3 – Rich Man & Lazarus** (Luke 16:19-31)

[3A] Luke 16:19 How often did the rich man live in splendor? Every day

[3B] Luke 16:20-21 What covered Lazarus? Sores which the dogs licked

[3C] Luke 16:22 Who carried Lazarus to Abraham's bosom? Angels

[3D] Luke 16:23 Where was the rich man? In Hades

[3E] Luke 16:24 Why was the rich man in agony? Thirst and fire

[3F] Luke 16:25 What did Abraham call the rich man? Child

[3G] Luke 16:26 What was between Abraham and Hades? A great chasm

[3H] Luke 16:27 Where did the rich man want Lazarus sent? His father's house

[3I] Luke 16:28 What did the rich man want Lazarus to do? Warn his five brothers

[3J] Luke 16:29 What warning did Abraham say was sufficient? Moses and the Prophets

[3K] Luke 16:30 What did the rich man want his brothers to do? Repent

[3L] Luke 16:31 Those who do not listen to the Holy Scriptures will also not be persuaded by what?

The resurrection

[3M] I think it is parable, not actual events. How heavenly would it be for anyone to actually be able to see and converse with their relatives in Hell? How joyous would it have been for Abraham to be the one to let one of his descendants know that it was not only hopeless for him, but also for his brothers? How likely would it be that someone so self-centered that he ends up in Hell would care about his brothers? Either way the point is that now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:2

**For Further Thought:**

(3n) Thinking about Luke 16:28: What would the warning have said?

(3o) In Luke 16:22 is "Abraham's bosom" literal or is it a metaphor or idiom for something else? What?

(3p) Compare Luke 16:31 with John 5:46-47. Is it the same message? Why or why not?

(3q) Compare Luke 16:18 with Matthew 19:1-12. What did you learn?

(3r) Just speculating, how do you think God is going to comfort us in heaven regarding our lost loved ones? Will we forget they existed? Will we be told why it was impossible for them to be saved? Will we just see Him so clearly that we will be certain He has done the right thing? Or will it be something else?

(3s) What did you learn in this course that you would like to remember?

(3t) If someone asked you what this course was about, what would you tell them?

(3u) What scripture from this course would be best to memorize? Why?