

Victory of the Lamb – The One – Luke 16:1-13 – August 22,23, 2020

What is the best investment you can make? – Pastor Bill Limmer

In his book *It All Goes Back in the Box*, John Ortberg tells about playing the game of **Monopoly** when he was a kid with his grandmother. He said she always won. She understood the game was about acquiring. She would accumulate everything she could. Eventually she became the master of the board. Every time they played his grandmother would take his last dollar and John would leave the game defeated and depressed. And she always said the same thing to him, “One day you will learn to play the game.” One summer John played Monopoly almost every day with a neighbor friend. And that summer he learned to play the game. It was all about acquisition.

That fall he sat down to play Monopoly with his grandmother. He said, “I took everything she had. I destroyed her financially and psychology. I saw her give me her lost dollar and quit in utter defeat.” And then she had one more thing to teach him. She said, “Now it all goes back in the box.” All those houses and hotels, all those railroads and utility companies, all that property and all that wonderful money, it all goes back in the box. “I didn’t want it to go back in the box. But it all goes back in the box, houses and cars, titles, and clothes, bulging portfolios, even your body.” There is not much of an ROI going on here. You have to ask yourself when you have the ultimate purchase, the ultimate promotion, the ultimate home, financial security, climbed the ladder of success, and the thrill wears off and it will wear off, then what.

Could it be that there is something, someone who matters more? Could there be a better investment, like in the eternity of **The One**.

Today we are continuing our series on *The One*. The One is the lost person, the one who is far away from God. In week one we saw that above all else lost people matter to God. We asked God in prayer to make our hearts race for the lost, like his does. Last week we saw the progression of lost, found, party. Today we want to really consider our investments in the search for The One.

How can I invest in the eternity of The One?

Luke 16:1-13 **Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management because you cannot be manager any longer.’**

³ “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— ⁴ I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

⁵ “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ “‘Nine hundred gallons^[a] of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ ⁷ “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’” ‘A thousand bushels^[b] of wheat,’ he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’

⁸ “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹ I tell you,

use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

¹⁰ “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹ So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹² And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?”

¹³ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

This parable revolves around a man who is about to be fired for wasting his master’s property. He is not going to HR or to the union, he has already been there done that. He is a multiple time offender. He has not worked his improvement plan. It is obvious to him and everyone else that he doesn’t have a leg to stand on. He is done. He is going to have to come up with a new way of life.

So, his mind racing. He is in crisis mode. What am I going to do next? He thinks about what he could put on his resume. And he is running through the list in his mind, he thinks I am not strong enough for a construction job, he is too proud to take a minimum wage job. Initially the manager was incompetent. But faced with a person urgent crisis, he suddenly becomes **forward thinking and resourceful**. He comes up with a scheme to build a network of friends who can be there for him when he is down and out. And so this is what he does: he goes around to reach of his master’s creditors and revises their bill, he cooks the books, so that at the end of the day, the creditors end up being in debt to him. And will forward to helping him out.

Before we go on and make some applications, let’s acknowledge the elephant in the room. A lot of people inside and outside of the church think that the church just wants money or more specifically my money. And while it is true that Jesus talks more about money than about heaven. It is also true that Jesus never tells you or me or anyone how much to give. In fact, we only have one account of Jesus even holding money in his hand. And on that occasion, he is telling people to pay their taxes not to give to the church. Jesus brings up money so much because he knows it is one of the chief competitors, in not the chief competitor to God for our hearts. In this parable Jesus says, ¹³ “**No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.**” So, when Jesus talks about money, it’s really not about money but about our hearts because you see where you spend your money really tells what is most important in your heart.

Here is the heart of God. God is not only all-knowing but all interested. God not only likes you, he loves you. God doesn’t just care for you. He wants to spend an eternity for you. So, God invested in the soul of the One, in your soul! This is how he invested in you. **For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,** ¹⁹ **but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.** It was a stretch investment. He stretched his arms out on the cross and invested his life for you, for all. Heaven invested its very best so that you and all people could be in heaven. It was all in on the investment of The One. His investment was a personal sacrifice. A sacrifice is when a person gives something up that they have or could have for the sake of someone else Jesus gave his entire self for you for anything less than his whole self would not be enough. And the pay-off on the sacrificial investment of Jesus is the

message of grace and radical forgiveness that so liberates the world even to the degree that it outlasts the world. **"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many"** (Matthew 20:28 NIV). It was an investment of his heart.

God invites us to invest in the eternal lives of others. Matthew 28:18,19 **Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** Jesus is calling you to be an all-in participant in the greatest search and rescue mission in the history of the world.

And keep in mind that the Gospel is not about your TRYING to do good or TRYING to love people. It is about Jesus doing and loving people through you. And so with that in mind here is three ways Jesus can do good and love people through you.

One. **Be forward thinking and resourceful when it comes to your money (your heart) for the eternal lives of others.** (Luke 16:9 NIV). **"I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings"** Is Jesus telling us to buy friends? Not in the normal way those words are used. He does not mean to buy friends like the prodigal son. In that story the son used his inheritance to party hard, and when the money was gone, his fellow partiers left him to feed pigs. He had his eyes set on how much fun he could get out of this life and bought temporary friends. That's not what he means here. With our eyes set on eternity we're looking for friends for eternity. Being for The One is about the posture of your heart putting your money to work for the souls in your sphere of influence.

Maybe the first thing that comes to mind is using our earthly wealth to support mission work. As missionaries are sent out, as the Gospel is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit changes hearts. And that is one way but do understand that you are an everyday missionary right in your own sphere of influence.

Here is an example from one of our families at Victory. Remember the stimulus checks? What did you use it for? A couple of our members used not just a portion but all of it to help people in time of need. **How will you use the money God has given you to invest in The One?**

Financial investments money isn't the only way we can be forward thinking and resourceful. Two: **Be forward thinking and resourceful when it comes to your time.** As we provide for our families and others in need, we see our Savior's face in them. **"Whatever you do for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"** (Matthew 25:40 NIV). Use your time to demonstrate the love of Jesus. Theologian Eugene Peterson said, No life of faith can be lived privately. There must be an overflow into the lives of others. With our eyes on eternity we manage our time in ways so that others may share eternity with us. That's not necessarily changing what we do with our time but making the best use of our time. I know that some of you are coaches. Invest in those kids not just the skill and strategy of the sport but also in their souls. And one way to do that is with the heart of prayer. Knowing that in prayer God moves our hearts into action. **How will you use the money God has given you to invest in The One?**

Money and time aren't the only way to invest in the eternity of other, three: **be forward thinking and resourceful when it comes to using your words.** Four words is really all you need.

- God
- Us

- **sin**
- **Jesus.**

God made everything and everyone wonderful. He loves us. We had a great relationship with him and then we fell into sin that shattered everything. Jesus repaired the broken world including the broken you and me, by his perfect life, innocent death on the cross, and his powerful resurrection. Brady Shearer of Prochurch Tools says, Embracing the Great Commission means taking the good news to the people. And in the scope of human history, we have never seen anything, like social media in terms of attention and scale. Use your voice, your influence to share Jesus with The One. The people we want to reach are already on line. Let's use our voice in our sphere of influence to reach today's people with Christ's victory. Acts 1:8 **you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. How will you use words to invest in The One??**

You see there is something more than houses and cars, titles, and clothes, bulging portfolios, ultimate purchase and promotions, and that is the soul of The One. **The One.** (sermon slide) The greatest cause is the greatest search and rescue mission in the history of the world. By God's grace, let's invest in the eternity of The One.