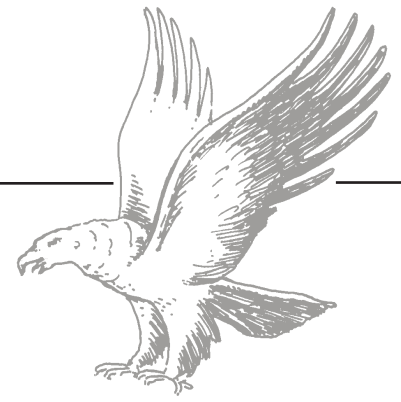


# Wings

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*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”  
Isaiah 40:31*



September 10, 2017

## Treasure in Heaven

Material possessions can be a threat to our faith, or a means of accomplishing great things for God. It all depends on how we view them.

*“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Lk. 12:20-21).*

*“Make friends for yourselves by unrighteousness mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home” (Lk. 16:9).*



These verses, separated by several chapters, mark the conclusions of two parables dealing with the same subject: material possessions. A close look at the two parables makes an interesting study.

The first parable (The Rich Fool) is an illustration of Jesus’ warning, “beware of covetousness.” To underscore the danger of wealth, Jesus described a rich man whose land was so productive that he struggled to manage all his abundance. His plan was to expand his warehouses so he could store his belongings “for many years.” The rich man’s language as he reviewed his plans (“I,” “me,” “my”) betray a heart of selfishness. He viewed his wealth solely

in terms of how it served his own interests. But all his plans came to naught with his untimely death, and the possessions in which he had placed all his hope became worthless to him.

From this parable it would be easy to conclude that the wise course of action is to avoid accumulating possessions altogether. If we took a vow of poverty, there would be no way for possessions to gain control of our heart.

But that conclusion would be premature. The second parable (The Unjust Steward) invites us to look at riches in a different—even unorthodox—light. The main character in this story is a steward who mismanaged his master’s investments, and was terminated with a very small window of time to wrap up his affairs. He used that brief opportunity to position himself favorably with his master’s creditors, using the master’s money. The master took a financial beating from these cut-rate deals, but as the steward headed for the exits, he was prepared for life after termination. Despite his losses, even the master was amazed at the steward’s shrewdness.

To the casual reader, it seems like Jesus is endorsing embezzlement here. But that misses the point. What Jesus is emphasizing is the *temporary access* we have to our possessions in this life, and the importance of *using them shrewdly* to secure a happy future in eternity.

Together, these two parables present a balanced view of wealth. The rich fool was a fool, not because he was rich, but because he used his riches only for himself. The unjust steward was shrewd, not because he defrauded his master, but because he recognized the wealth at his disposal as a tool that could be leveraged for his long-term welfare.

The lesson for us in this study is simple: It’s okay to accumulate wealth, but only if we use it in the light of eternity. We do that by being generous with our goods in the service of others. Paul, for example, urged the rich “to be ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come” (1 Tim. 5:17-19). From an earthly perspective, such open-ended charity seems wasteful. But from a heavenly perspective, it’s just smart.

– David King



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