
If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, or if you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please enjoy!)

CROWD BREAKER Have you ever taken a "Sabbatical?" What does it mean? What would you do on Sabbatical?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Richie has raised from Luke 16. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

1 Jesus also said to His disciples, "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. **2** So he called him in to ask, 'What is this I hear about you? Turn in an account of your management, for you cannot be manager any longer.' **Look closely. Comment about the "characters" in this parable. Is the "rich man's wealth put into question at all? Do you think the manager/steward was rightly or wrongly accused? Why did he get fired? Was there a trial?**

3 The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking away my position? I am too weak to dig and too ashamed to beg. **4** I know what I will do, so that after my removal from management, people will welcome me into their homes.' **Does the**

steward fight the charges? Notice his self-assessment. Is he honest with himself? What is his top priority?

5 And he called in each one of his master's debtors. 'How much do you owe my master?' he asked the first.

6 'A hundred measures of olive oil,' [^{100 baths of oil}...roughly 870 gallons] he answered.

'Take your bill,' said the manager. 'Sit down quickly, and write fifty.'

7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?'

'A hundred measures of wheat,' [^{100 cors of wheat}...Roughly 1000 bushels or 30 tons] he replied.

'Take your bill and write eighty,' he told him. **What is the steward's job? Is he allowed to make deals, as steward, legally? What's his strategy? Why doesn't he forgive the debt outright? What would have happened? Why does 50% work for him?**

8 The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the sons of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the sons of light. 9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to make friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. **Talk about the wisdom of the rich master. Is he correct? Why is it that the children of the light fall behind the children of this age? What has the steward done that creates a welcome in eternity? What are the ultimate riches? Why are friends equated to riches? What of this world is the only thing of value you can actually take with you to heaven? Explain why this is so important. So, what tools has God given us to make friends with? How does that work? Do you have a testimony?**

10 Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will entrust you with true riches? **What are "true riches? What does this make you think?** 12 And if you have not been faithful with the belongings of another, who will give you belongings of your own? **What is the inevitable result of faithfulness? What does prosperity mean in real, heavenly terms?**

13 No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." **What does prosperity mean in real, heavenly terms? Whom do you serve when you truly prosper? Whom else? Finish this sentence and discuss: "I am truly serving myself only when I..."**

Pastor Richie says, "God is saying, 'Love me with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.'" **What does this mean? Whom do you end up loving in real time when you obey this commandment? In practical terms, explain.** "Think about everything you think about, everything you talk about, everything you do. God says, 'Is it Me? Or do you have another

master?" **Answer His question. When has God told you to share something, anything of material value with another? Can you talk about it? Were you able to? What were the results? Do we REALLY love God? What does it take to "deny yourself, take up your cross and follow..." ...Him?**

The Law and the Prophets

14The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all of this and were scoffing at Jesus. **What does it mean to be blind?** **15**So He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is prized among men is detestable before God. **Discuss this statement. What is prized among men? Why is that detestable before God? What is prized before God?**

16The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the gospel of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. **What has changed? What happens with those who "force their way into the Kingdom? How do they change? Who missed the change? What did they think of John?** **17**But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for a single stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

18Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. **Why is this verse here? In terms of loving, how does this verse fit? What has changed since Jesus came? What happens if the Law is taken lightly? [Please be very cautious. On divorce, see notes below.]**

The Rich Man and Lazarus

[\(John 5:39-47\)](#)

19Now there was a rich man dressed in purple and fine linen, who lived each day in joyous splendor. **20**And a beggar named Lazarus lay at his gate, covered with sores **21**and longing to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. **Who are the main characters in this parable? Does either deserve his condition, from what we know?**

22One day the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died and was buried. **23**In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham from afar, with Lazarus by his side. **[see notes on life after death below]** **What do the rich man's riches bring him in the end? What does Lazarus poverty bring him in the end?**

24So he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. For I am in agony in this fire.' **How hard is this to see? Remember Richie's dramatization? Even in torment, how has the rich man's attitude toward Lazarus changed since arriving in his place? Who does he believe is master, and who is the servant in his eyes?**

25But Abraham answered, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things. But now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. **26**And besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that even those who wish cannot cross from here to you, nor can anyone cross from there to us.' ***Who would ever want to cross the chasm and why would they? What happens to "Christian charity" when the end has come? How permanent is this end?***

27'Then I beg you, father,' he said, 'send Lazarus to my father's house, **28**for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also end up in this place of torment.'

29But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let your brothers listen to them.' ***How pertinent to today are Moses and the prophets? What is the cost of unbelief and casual living?***

30'No, Father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone is sent to them from the dead, they will repent.' ***Whom do you know that has risen from the dead? Did that help you? Whom do you know that this resurrection has not helped yet? Who can reach them? How?***

31Then Abraham said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'" ***Why are their hearts so hard? Do you need to know why? What do you think it will take to persuade them to repent? Look up Romans 2:4 ("Or do you disregard the riches of His kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance?") How will your loved ones see, without that same kindness, tolerance and patience extended to them in this life? What tools do you possess that might help them?***

Look how Jesus ends the Parable of the Lost Sheep in Matthew 18:14 **14*****In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish. How does this add weight to the Lord's prayer, when we say, "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"***

Richie says, "The solution is, 'Stop loving your own riches. Stop loving your possessions. And go.' Share my love with them. Use everything you've got to convince them that I love them too." Think of Richie's dad using his retirement to build a church that is still there. ***What do you think? Why is this testimony so encouraging? What kind of courage does it speak of?***

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's notes:

On divorce: Please be considerate! This was not the point of Richie's message. Consider using these notes if questions arise.

Look up Mark 10:3-5 ...³“What did Moses command you?” He replied. ⁴ **They answered, “Moses permitted a man to write his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away.”** ⁵But Jesus told them, “Moses wrote this commandment for you because of your hardness of heart. **Why is this called “grace?” Is there grace for the New Testament believer? What do you think? Were their hearts harder than ours? Are our hearts harder? Whose heart are you in charge of? How are you doing? Is there grace for you today?** ...⁶However, from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ⁷**For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,** ⁸and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” **How hard have our hearts become?**

...¹⁰When they were back inside the house, the disciples asked Jesus about this matter. ¹¹**So He told them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.** ¹²And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.” ...

Look up Matthew 19:10-12 and see the disciples response to this: ¹⁰**His disciples said to Him, “If this is the case between a man and his wife, it is better not to marry.”** **What does this say about the disciples’ attitude? How well did they understand Jesus’ point?** ¹¹“Not everyone can accept this word,” He replied, “but only those to whom it has been given.... **Look closely: Is this a comment about avoiding marriage? Or is this a comment about the seriousness of commitment?** ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born that way; others were made that way by men; and still others live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” ...

Hades and Abraham’s bosom: On life after death. Lazarus is taken to “Abraham’s bosom.” There is no explanation, and no biblical parallel. The Jewish understanding of death was that, upon death, the departed was “gathered to his fathers.” In 1 Samuel 28:15, We see Samuel “disturbed” by Saul and brought back by the witch at En Dor. There is no explanation. There is an old spiritual that went, “Rock-a-my soul in the bosom of Abraham...” that depicts this moment for Lazarus. Apparently, he is taken directly to the comfort of his fathers and is welcomed and rocked in Abraham’s arms. The rich man, not so. **Notice the contrast for each and the terrifying description of the rich man’s fate. Notice the immediate judgment of each. How was each “saved” according to this parable.**

Pastor Richie says, “I don’t know if this is hell...I know I do not want to end up here.” Discuss this. Why is this the best answer to questions that Jesus does not answer? What is the sobering warning for us today? Do we need to know anything about hell to know that we prefer Abraham’s warm welcome?