**The Shrewd Manager**

**The Word**

Read together Luke 16:1-15

**The Big Idea**

Jesus invites us to be shrewd in our management of God’s resources to make a strategic impact in people’s lives that can affect them for all eternity.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager is a confusing and easily misunderstood parable. What questions do you still have about this parable after Sunday’s message?

2. According to this parable, God is the owner of everything, and we are simply managers. Take a moment of silence together to let this truth sink in: imagine every dollar and material possession of yours having a Property of God sticker on it. What is one specific way you’d handle your material resources differently if you fully embraced this truth?

3. According to this parable, we have a very small window of time to use God’s resources in a way that can impact people for eternity. How should we think about adopting this eternal perspective verses enjoying the material resources we have in the here and now?

4. According to this parable, we should be shrewd and opportunistic in using God’s resources to make a kingdom impact. Have you ever seen someone be strategic with their material resources to make a kingdom impact in a way that was memorable to you? Are there any specific ideas you have for doing this yourself?

**Sermon Outline**

I. The Parable

A. A wealthy landowner: a man of influence who is well known in the area

B. His manager

1. He squanders his master’s resources

2. He’s called to give an account and is confronted with his imminent dismissal

3. He’s dishonest (v. 8), he’s weak (v. 3), and he’s proud (v. 3)

4. He takes advantage of his position and ingratiates himself to his master’s debtors so they’ll feel obligated to put him up in their homes once he’s fired.

C. The surprise: Jesus says, “I want you to be like this guy!”

1. The owner actually commends the manager for being shrewd and seizing an opportunity when it presented itself

2. The owner himself probably got rich by being shrewd and seizing strategic opportunities. So even though this is done at his expense, he can appreciate the gumption and savvy move made by the manager

II. Three Principles of Biblical Stewardship Jesus Raises

A. We are not owners, God is the owner, and we are managers of God’s possessions

1. See Ps 24:1, Ps 50:8-11, 1 Cor 4:7, and see v. 12

2. It’s hard to come to terms with the fact that God owns everything, and usually we learn this lesson the hard way when things we thought were ours are unexpectedly taken from us.

3. But it’s so freeing to live not holding tightly to our resources as if they were ours to guard but rather using them in ways that please the owner

B. We have a narrow window of opportunity before there is a reckoning, and we should use God’s resources to impact people for eternity.

1. The manager had a 24-48 hr window before a reckoning where he would have to give an account, but within that window, he could use the master’s resources to make friends who would support him for the long run.

2. Likewise we have a small window (our lives) before a reckoning where we give an account to God, but within that window, we can use God’s resources to make eternal friends who will welcome us into their “eternal dwellings” (v. 9)

3. The idea here is that when we get to heaven there could be people who are so happy to see us because of the ways we invested God’s resources to care for them and point them towards God’s eternal kingdom.

4. The manager could have spent his last 48 hours on the estate just soaking it in one last time (good food, wine, etc.), but instead he thought about the long-term and acted accordingly

C. We are called to be shrewd

1. To see the opportunities to use resources in this life to impact people for eternity, and to make the most of them.

2. In v. 8 Jesus actually bemoans the fact that worldly people are often more shrewd and strategic than kingdom people

a. Worldly people think about how to get rich, and they strategize, and then make the most of opportunities

b. If only God’s people thought that strategically and shrewdly about how to impact people for eternity! If only God’s people woke up each day scheming/thinking about how to influence people for the kingdom.

3. What if we took that savvy entrepreneurial mindset we bring to our work and brought that to the kingdom? Giving should be exciting, creative, interesting.