**Serving One Master**

Based on [Luke 16:1-13](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk16.1-13)

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Why do the good suffer and the bad prosper? Several answers. One is they don’t. The good don’t suffer. Only God is good (Luke 18:19), we...we are sinners. We all suffer because we deserve to suffer...because we are all bad. We are sinners by nature.

Also the bad do not prosper. Yes, all people benefit from God’s common grace and His indulgence of us, but virtue is it’s own reward, and sin always ends in ruin. Now, it is true that Jesus, who was without sin, suffered. But he became sin for us to make atonement. He is the only absolutely good man who suffered but he did suffer on account of sin. This problem of evil is only temporary, So in the end God will set all to rights, and the good will prosper and the bad will suffer...that’s the doctrine of heaven and hell.

But there is another reason why, in this temporary world, it seems that the bad prosper and the good suffer. Jesus says, “The sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with this generation than the sons of light.” It is because christians, who are good only by faith, are not as shrewd in dealing with the world as it is than are unbelievers, and Jesus teaches that we should be.

A man in charge of his master's accounts was charged with mismanagement of funds. He was fired. The man was a son of the world...he was too weak to work and too proud to beg because, like all worldly people, he worshipped money. This means he worshipped a life of ease and of self sufficiency. But, he was fired. So he came up with a plan to secure a new source of mammon. Before his master’s clients knew he was fired, he went and reduced their debts at the owner's expense. The manager was dishonest, but he is not commended for that. The owner, and Jesus who tells the story, commend the manager’s shrewdness.

The owner “gives the devil his due”. You’d think the master would be upset, but instead he appreciates the innovative, thinking outside of the box, third option the manager used to get his way. "Well played". Sure he was dishonest, but honesty was never what was most important. Avoiding work and begging was most important...to have that he needs to have friends.

Why do bad people prosper...not simply because they are dishonest. More to the point, Jesus says, it’s because they know what they want and, when a crisis occurs, they are better at sacrificing things for it. Honesty is the best policy under normal circumstances, but sometimes honesty will make the world hate you. If the praise of men is in your mind the greatest evil, you will find yourself sacrificing honesty and integrity in order to avoid it.

The dishonest manager was shrewd. He knew what he wanted and knew what he needed to do to get it. He wanted a life of ease and comfort, and in order to have that life, he did something dishonest. But the christian knows what he wants also. He wants to be forgiven, he wants to please God. He wants to spend an eternity in heaven, and he wants to be led by the Holy Spirit. But Jesus says that we are not as clever in pursuing these things.

St Paul in several of his epistles reminds us that, though we are new people, born again in christ, we still carry around our old sinful selves. We do put our hope in God, seek his forgiveness and want to please him, but we also have cares of this life, and it is easy to lose perspective. Much of what we are called to do in this life is wait on the lord, but the sinner wants to take control and get his own way. This comes naturally to the sons of this world, but the sons of light have to struggle against their sin, and let the lord handle things that are too great.

As a Christian, your goal is to take up your cross. Sometimes we must do the difficult thing, take on the thankless jobs that nobody appreciates but our Father who sees us in heaven. Being honest is precious in God’s sight, even if it means you will lose friends or your job. Being humble is precious in God’s sight, even if it means people will take the opportunity to walk over you. Being patient is precious in God’s sight, even if it means you have to accept suffering for a little while.

Why do the good suffer and the bad prosper? Because sin has entered into the world and things are crooked. But it won’t always be this way. For the worldly, they believe the world and their situation in it is something that they must fix. They value comfort and security in this life. But we know that the crookedness has already been fixed, not by us, but by Christ who redeemed us from the curse of sin, and prepared for us an eternal inheritance in heaven. We have a goal in heaven. We wait on the Lord and are faithful with the things and relationships he has given us here to tend to. We cannot serve two masters. We cannot love an easy life in the world and love our home in heaven. We cannot serve both God and money. Instead serve God with your money, serve God with your time here.