**The parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13)**

 **Which is our mission as Christians?**

 Many times, what we read from the Bible is not just for the purpose of always knowing more information or discovering some secrets or the meaning of something, but it is to improve our life with God and our relationship with Him. So, what we read or what He gives us to understand is also for us to practice. And my desire is what I’m about to say now, to be able to practice it as well, even though I have to admit that I often lack, especially on this topic.

Let us see the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1-15

**1** He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. **2**So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’

**3**“Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. **4**I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’

**5**“So he called every one of his master’s debtors to *him,* and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ **6**And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ **7**Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ **8**So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

**9**“And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. **10**He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. **11**Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* **12**And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?

**13**“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

**14**Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. **15**And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

 So we see here this parable and the following recommendations of Jesus. We see that at the end, Jesus speaks about unjust riches, also called “unrighteous mammon.” This is how He refers to money and riches in general. In this case, it is not because those riches were acquired in an unrighteous way. Through this parable, He was trying to explain to people not to be selfish and not to love mammon (wealth) above God. And obviously, He told them to be faithful even in the least thing. And with this, He was referring to material goods like money and others. This is the least thing because money and material possessions are the least in the eyes of God, but nevertheless, we need to be faithful with them and use them for a good purpose instead of selfish reasons only. We are not going to speak only for money here, though, but for the concept with which these verses talk in general. We’ve got this picture so far.

 We also need to know that this parable goes beyond what we can apparently see in it. We see at the beginning that it speaks about a rich man that could represent God in this parable because He is rich and abounding in everything. And it also talks about His steward. The parable tells us that he was having some issues, and for this reason, he was found unfaithful. And seeing this, I’m asking myself if I am just and righteous in everything if I am faithful in everything and fulfilling everything God asks me. We are obviously speaking about a person who already partakes in the Kingdom of God. Somebody has been born again already and knows the will of His master. And speaking about “being unjust“, we are not referring to someone sinning deliberately, but to someone who is trying to accomplish everything required from him but still cannot. If we are really sincere with ourselves, we (at least I) discover that we don’t fulfill everything in the way we are supposed to. The desire of that person anyway is to please God. We can say that we are not necessarily talking about someone doing something wrong but someone that fails to accomplish all that is required of him. It is more about accomplishing or not something. We can see the position as well that person was having. A position of a steward. It means that he had responsibilities. In the same way, if we are Christians, we will have responsibilities in the kingdom of heaven given to us by God.

We can have a look at how the parable begins:

“He also said to His disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods.” (Luke 16:1)

That’s why he was called “the unjust steward“. It is even stated that he was wasting his master’s goods. He wasn’t stealing them or something like that but was wasting them. He didn’t make good use of them. Many times, I found myself in a similar situation too. I was zealous for God, I was seeking Him with all my strength but I still wasn’t completely satisfied because I knew I wasn’t pleasing my master in the right way. There was something missing in my life as a believer.

 So, we see this steward being unfaithful with his master’s goods but then finding a solution.

 “So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?‘ And he said ‘A hundred measures of oil‘ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty‘“

 In the same way, he did with the other one. We see that what he was doing was related to the other people. And we know that in this way, somehow, he sorted out his situation because he was praised by his master afterward. His master was pleased with him as, in a way, he helped the other people pay their debt. We assume that he helped them somehow because he told them to write less about what they owed, and by doing this, he pleased his master. He made it easier for them. Why did this act please his master? Because it was going to be easier for the debtors to pay their debt back. And everyone prefers obviously to be paid back instead of not receiving anything. In this way, they would also be on good terms with the master. He said to the one owing a hundred measures of oil: “Take your bill and sit down quickly and write fifty“. To the other one owing a hundred measures of wheat, he said to write eighty.

 We need to know that this is just a parable and a comparison with what happens in the spiritual world, meaning that it doesn’t often have a literal meaning. This is what happens with all the parables. We might be thinking: “What is God having to do with persons owing a hundred measures of oil or wheat, and what does this mean?” and we try to figure it out in this way, but this is the same as the people were probably asking: “What is God having to do with a seed and a soil in the parable of the sower?” (Matthew 13:1-9), but also that had a meaning that later on was explained by Jesus. By this, we see that when it comes to parables, we need to look for spiritual meaning, and it needs to be confirmed by other passages from the scripture. This can also lead us to the thought that probably not all of this parable has to do with literal riches or money, but the attitude behind them.

 So, going back to the parable of the unjust steward, it doesn’t say exactly which way, but the steward probably paid part of other people’s debt. In any way he did it, it pleased his master. Because in this way, those debtors would also find an easier way to pay back their debt to the master, and there was more possibility that they would do it. You know that when a person owes too much to someone, it is harder to pay it out, and in most cases, he doesn’t do it. But here, they received help already. At the same time, the master would have those people’s trust and confidence back, and some could even become His servants. The Bible states that we need to carry each one’s burdens.

 “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.“ (Galatians 6:2)

 We can see that, in a way, he carried their burdens. This is what someone does for **love**. We all have a debt to God as those people had to their master. The debt is because of our sins. Obviously, Christ paid for us, but there is also our walk to enter this promise, so it could be possible. And what the steward did for them was to help them believe it was possible. He helped them with a part of it. We can lead someone in part and help him in part, but he also needs to walk the rest of this path. He has to believe; he needs to answer the call. No one else can do it for him. And when he answers that call, when he accepts the love of Jesus, his debt is paid. **By Jesus, obviously. It is His work. He is doing it.** What we’ve got here is a parable and shows us just a part of the whole picture, it just focuses on what we can do through Him, but we know that He is the one who paid for all. We can see that the steward paid one part of the debt, and the rest was for them to sort out. Jesus helped him to do that. This is the meaning of it. Because none of us can pay anything by ourselves, none of us can properly help our neighbor by ourselves. Even if someone is leading others to Christ, he is doing it only because of Jesus because He gives him that power. And the same, the other part of the debt that those people had to pay, and they probably did, was again because Jesus paid for that. This is the meaning as well. Why? Because when someone leads others to know Jesus, it is because God guides him to do it. No one can lead another man to Jesus’ feet if not by His Spirit and power. And again, when those people are by Jesus’ feet and ask for forgiveness and redemption, it is because God works in them and grants them to receive that forgiveness, which means that Jesus is again the one who paid for it. All the glory be to Him!

 To one of those persons from the parable, the steward managed to help with fifty, to the other twenty, as he told him to write eighty instead of the hundred that he was owing. All of them owed a hundred. A complete and the same number for all of them used to show us something. A believer can lead another one and help him with twenty or fifty or more, but always in part, never in all his debt. It means that the complete solution doesn’t come from a man alone, even being a Christian. Obviously, it is important to be a believer led by the Spirit of God when leading someone to the main solution and help which is Christ. When talking about leading someone to Christ, I am not talking about leading someone in the sinner’s prayer, which could happen, **but leading someone by giving him a daily example of how to live for Christ and giving him the good news by preaching the gospel.**

Each person’s case is different. To some, we may be needed to impact a certain area of their life to a certain extent; to others, different one. I am not speaking about a humanistic kind of help, but a spiritual one, with the power of His Spirit. And we talk about a spiritual kind of love too. A love that we cannot have without experiencing His love first. The Bible says that love fulfills the law. “Owe no one anything except to love one another, **for he who loves another has fulfilled the law**.“ (Romans 13:8, emphasis added) and “Love does not harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.“ (Romans 13:10)

 We just need to show this kind of Biblical love and be led by it. This will determine the way we are going to be used. It can never happen to comprehend with our way of understanding and logic the kind of help someone needs. I am also using the word “used” here with a lot of fear and respect because we are nothing by ourselves, and we cannot do anything if we are not in the hands of the master. Yes, we can attempt to do things in our way and capability, but it will never result in something truly fruitful to God. By how the parable begins, we can see that the steward couldn’t accomplish what was demanded of him. He wasn’t able to accomplish everything required of him in the right way. He wasn’t bearing fruit. He wasn’t productive for his master. Sometimes I also saw myself in this way as a believer – not bearing fruit for God.

 We can see that God is most pleased with the kind of love pointing out to others. Love is not selfish. “does not behave rudely, **does not seek its own**, is not provoked, thinks no evil;” (1 Corinthians 13:5, emphasis added)

 At the same time, we see Jesus rebuking the Pharisees for loving money and being selfish.

 “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” (Luke 16:14,15)

 Obviously, it is not just money that we are talking about here. The love of something like money is just a manifestation of our selfishness. Jesus was telling those people to be faithful with these so-called unjust riches and share them. We can look at the spiritual side of this parable telling us not to be selfish and we can look at the material side of it, speaking literally of material wealth and money. The Pharisees were lovers of money and didn’t appreciate His teaching concerning this topic. He was even calling this mammon (wealth) “unrighteous” and “least” to diminish its importance, to let us know that this is something least that is not so important, that does not endure forever and it is not righteous to inherit the Kingdom, neither to buy it. He wasn’t calling it “unrighteous” because it was necessarily gained in an unrighteous way, as we are used to think when we hear this word.

“He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the **unrighteous mammon**, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?*“ (Luke 16:10, 11, emphasis added)

Do you remember the story of Simon, the magician who wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit? He was told that his money would perish with him and was exhorted to repent for his sin. Money cannot guarantee us entrance into the Kingdom, even if we use it for great charity work or spend it to help someone. Salvation is a gift donated to us by the faith in Jesus, and money cannot buy this, but it could be used to benefit the Kingdom because we live in a world where money is used. Money is not something important by itself and will perish like anything else on earth in this life. When we understand this concept, we will not hold on so much to wealth. People hold on too much to it because they don’t see and believe in what is eternal. Some will even neglect their loved ones to gain more money. People are obsessed with this because it means power to them. The scripture calls it also “the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10).

I think it is very difficult to escape its snare and stop giving it so much importance. The only way for this is a true conversion to the Lord. In this way, a person stops giving so much importance to material possessions and starts appreciating what is eternal. He understands that having treasures in heaven is more valuable than anything else because it endures forever. But how can someone understand this? Only by true and genuine faith. He needs to be convinced. I am not saying that one must renounce everything, but that he just realizes what is really important. The Bible tells us we can have and possess what is necessary for our livelihood (1 Timothy 6:6-8). Believers can even be wealthy. There is no wrong with that. Wrong is when we love those riches above God and His will. There are wealthy people who gain from their business; God blesses them, and, in this way, they help God’s kingdom grow.

Jesus was also explaining throughout this parable that if we have material riches to our disposition, we need to use them for the growth of the kingdom as well. In this way, we could use them to gain something eternal.

“And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much.” (Luke 16:9, 10)

We need to understand the main point here. It is not that God’s kingdom can be bought with money, but money could be used with understanding so that the kingdom’s will could be accomplished here on earth where these reaches are used to sell, buy and live. Instead of using them for selfish purposes like buying a more excellent car, we can invest them in something useful for the kingdom. I am just giving random examples and not judging anyone who wants to buy a good car for himself. Maybe we can have this after we attend what is really important. We also need His Spirit for guidance and wisdom when it comes to giving and investing in the kingdom as it is not a question of who will give more, but for what exactly he will give and if this is done with understanding and guidance for the right purpose. This parable speaks in both spiritual and material ways as it is a parable. It is a comparison and a representation of something. More than an exact point or object, this parable reveals us God’s heart and the way He sees things. The main point is not to be selfish. Both these ways are anyway tied to each other. If I help build the church, it is because the word of God will be preached there. If I buy a pair of shoes for someone, it will be because I care for him, but also because I would like to talk to him about God and evangelize him. For the same reason, I could buy a Bible for someone. Of course, we need to underline that what is fundamental is the spiritual side of this parable. We have to know, though, that if we follow this teaching, as any other teaching, spiritually, it will also reflect physically in our life. We will now continue to discuss the spiritual perspective of this parable without neglecting the material one.

After receiving His love on the cross, it is often a matter of choice for us to show it or not. We need to have that desire. Love is perfection, as the apostle Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13.

“Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. **But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away**.” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, emphasis added)

Love covers multitudes of sins. “And above all things have fervent love for one another, for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”“ 1 Peter 4:8

 All of us lack something. We cannot be perfect in everything. But having this love in our lives, combined with faith and directed to others, will cover our imperfections. Love is to be interested in another person’s life. To care for them, to be close to them. Sometimes it just gets to ask someone sincerely: “How are you doing?“.

 Many times, I tried to be more spiritual, to be able to reach others with the word, and sometimes I succeeded, but many times I failed in that and was deluded and frustrated. Then I discovered this love (that I already had received from God). It taught me how to be more interested in others. How to serve them. And you know what? It happened that I received more of His Spirit, and I could transmit more of His word to those people and testify to them.

 Many times, what we would like to do is just to meet someone and start proclaiming the word of God and convert him there on the spot. Of course, It can happen, but it is not the same for each person, and besides this, what God requires from us is something else. It is to show His love. And I think that when we show His love to others and desire it, God can reward us with moments like that – to give out His word, to meet someone, and by proclaiming the word, that person to convert by the power of God. It will be because what we will carry in us will be the love and the heart of God, which is the main ingredient.

 I remember when I had a great zeal to show others something about God, give out His word, and tell everyone that. I was trying, but I was often deluded because of the way they were responding. At the same time, I could barely have a good time and laugh with them or speak on any other topic because of the zeal I had to transmit the Bible. And nothing wrong with the desire I had; it was just that I didn’t want to humble myself. I didn’t want to be on someone else’s level; I mean to know that person more and understand him and see what he likes or not and listen to him. People sometimes will convert to God, not only because we hammer them with many words about God, but by our example and walk as well. It can happen, and it must, that we will share with them the word of God, but it should be in a natural way when an opportunity comes and when He gives us those words.

 And obviously, how can we just start explaining the truths of the gospel to someone without knowing him or having created a conversation or something? Here is where it comes in being “shrewd,” as Luke 16:8 tells us:

 “So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.”

 We are not speaking about being shrewd as the sons of this world and to deceive maliciously, but of being shrewd for the gospel, on how to share His word with others in the most effective way. The way His Spirit gives us. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

 **19**For though I am free from all *men,* I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; **20**and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; **21**to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; **22**to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men,* that I might by all means save some. **23**Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

 That’s why when approaching someone, we have to make the possible so that he cannot reject this message, and we need to get his intention in a way. Many times, it is to become friends with someone so that we can give them the gospel in time. I am not saying this in a way to get entangled with their sin.

 “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.“ (Luka 16:9)

 This obviously doesn’t apply to someone lying on his deathbed with no time left. In such situations, we need to get straight to the word most of the time because there is no time left. We need to have an understanding coming from the Spirit of God about this.

 Jesus Himself was called a friend of sinners. He humbled, being on their level. This is the great example He set. Just by coming here on the earth, He humbled Himself and how much more He did that by getting closer to sinners day by day in His life by showing them compassion and giving them the good news. And how much more we, who are just redeemed sinners (nothing more or nothing less if not by His Grace), have to do that. I have to say that many times in my life, I neglected all of this and didn’t always walk in it, but my desire is to follow this example of love that Jesus set before us.

 We can also see the situation with the Pharisees and the Scribes. They desired to be perfect, to accomplish the whole law. That’s why they also started adding many other insignificant laws to the main law that Moses gave.

 “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men – the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” (Mark 7:7,8)

 What happened was that they neglected the most important like mercy and justice. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faith**. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.“ (Matthew 23:23, emphasis added)

 Many times, as well in our lives, we want to be so righteous, to accomplish things, but not for the glory of God (even if it might look so). We abstain from things, we want to be pure, and when we see that we can’t, we get frustrated. All of this can take our sight of what God wants mainly from us – to reach others, to show His glory to others. He is so interested in our relationships with others. Don’t you see? Half of the Bible speaks about our relationship with Him, and the other half – the relationship with others. I’m saying this because sometimes we are so focused on being perfect and pure (I am not saying at all that this is wrong), but at the same time, we neglect the people around us, which is also very important. With this, I am obviously not saying that if we have some severe issue in our personal lives, we mustn’t deal with it, and we have to focus only on helping others. I am only saying that sometimes we prefer to have a kind of self-righteousness rather than helping someone and giving him hope through the good news. Our joy mustn’t be based only on the fact that we haven’t sinned in a while but because we see that we are accomplishing God’s will. Reaching someone else with God’s love and the gospel is the main focus of God. That is also why He is working in us and perfecting His image in us so that we can be more like Him and have the love to reach out to others. Being transformed into His image and living in righteousness is not to exalt ourselves by showing it to others, but first, because it pleases God and second, because, in this way, we set an example of what pleases Him and how a person should live for Him. That’s why we mustn’t neglect the desire to be pure in our own lives and to walk in the right way because, in this way, we can show an example to the people we are trying to reach out to, and this message can be powerful in us.

 I am not saying that we mustn’t get focused on being pure; I am just saying that we achieve it easier when we are in the presence of God and when His power is working through us, but how is it going to work better if not when He is pleased with us, and this is when we reach others. All these things are connected. Being pure, seeking God for holiness, and seeking Him for others. I’m obviously telling all of this to those who are born again. Those who have been sealed by His love. We cannot have and show **His** love without being born again and experiencing it first in our life. If someone is not born from God, he will show just a humanistic kind of love that, unfortunately, has its limits. But the love of God is what is exactly described in 1 Corinthians 13.

 Don’t you know your calling from God yet, if you already know Him? Well, one of the callings for sure is to reach others. And this often doesn’t happen just by going and bluntly sharing the word with them, but also by being interested in them. As Christians, we can also live a very selfish life. Even on the spiritual side. To be always worried about how I am with God, if I’m fine or have accomplished something. I am not saying this is wrong, but many times the secret to how really to please God (I am talking to those who are born again already) is to direct our sight toward others and to inquire if they are fine with Him, if they have a relationship with Him and to see if they are lost and need a Savior. This obviously means to give a hand to someone, not to push him further away from the truth or to criticize him for his faults. And then, automatically, our relationship with Him will be closer because He is pleased with this. This is what He came to do - to give His life for us. He died thinking in us. He was interested in us. We don’t see selfishness there. His justice could’ve been satisfied, even if He let us pay for our mistakes, but He chose not to. He died, giving us an opportunity.

 It comes to my mind a passage in Matthew 9:36 saying that Jesus had compassion for the multitudes because they were weary and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. He could see the need in them. The same that we need to see as believers.

The Pharisees were called lovers of money in Luke 16:14 because of their selfishness. And we already said we are not speaking just for money here, even if this part is also to be considered. The love of God goes much beyond that since someone can give His possessions away but still not have love, as it is said in 1 Corinthians 13:3.

 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

 “Bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.“ (Galatians 6:2)

 We see that in this way, we accomplish the law. Something that the steward in Luke 16 couldn’t do. He was found not faithful. Love accomplishes the law and covers a multitude of sins (ours as well).

 “Let Him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover multitude of sins.“ (James 5:20)

 God is interested in other people’s life. If we want to be one with Him, we will see as He sees. Then our joy will multiply. “It is more blessed to give than to receive.“ (Acts 20:35)

 And this is what the parable in Luke 16 is about. We need to give others our time and our interest. We can’t wait to receive blessing after blessing just by living daily and ordinary life without doing what is important in front of God.

 Paul described love as something perfect. He said in 1 Corinthians 13:11: “When I was a child, I spoke as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.“

 To live out love means to be mature in Him. And I am not speaking about that kind of love that allows someone to do whatever and agrees with everything. No! The real love we find in Jesus has a specific character; it rejoices with the truth but does not rejoice with iniquity. Love is a correction as well.

 If our life with God is based only on accomplishing and doing things, even having zeal, then we will surely fail in some of them. We will never be satisfied. He wants to show us a more perfect and excellent way.

**43**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ **44**But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, **45**that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. **46**For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? **47**And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others?* Do not even the tax collectors do so? **48**Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:43-48

 We can see the last verse in this passage exhorting us to be perfect, and the verses before that one speak about true love. Often showing interest in someone, caring about someone or showing love is considered the least. Like asking someone how he is doing or just talking to him, trying to see his need. Not all of the times we will be able to share the word of God with someone, but we can at least start by just listening to him by being interested in him, and God will open the door for the gospel in His time. The word of God says: “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.“ This verse is found in Luke 16:10 after the parable of the unjust servant. It also means being interested even in those persons who look least important. Jesus described them many times as those little ones. Usually, few people pay attention to someone who is a little one or of less importance. That’s why Jesus said in one of His parables: “And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did It to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.‘ (Matthew 25:40)

 As we go through tough times, we often ask ourselves how to endure and bear with all of this. Well, the answer is found in love. Love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.“ (1 Corinthians 13:7)

Many times, when we struggle with doubt or go through a trial, we can still show love. We can look for it, and we can approach someone with love. Love helps us to overcome all these trials and difficult moments. Many people, when going through tough moments, isolate themselves from others, and if they are Christians, then they focus on prayer and prayer and examining themselves. There is nothing wrong with this, and we can pray, and examine ourselves, which is something fundamental in times of trials, but sometimes we forget some of the advices the word gives us. It says: “**Give, and it will be given to you**: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38, emphasis added)

This passage is not only having practical principles but spiritual ones above all. We need to give spiritually so that we can receive something from God. Obviously, praying and reading the word must always accompany us, but God is pleased when we give to others. How do we give? By showing love and by proclaiming His word. The desire of God for us is to give out what we receive. Often, this is one of the reasons He gives His word and blesses us. That’s why we might be wondering sometimes why after praying for a long time, reading His word, and fasting (which is something we obviously need to do), we do not receive as much as we expected. It is because we might have neglected the part of giving in our lives.

“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.” (Matthew 24:45)

This is another passage talking about giving. It speaks about “feeding” others, and it is speaking in a spiritual manner.

“The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.” (Proverbs 11:25)

All these passages speaking about giving, about being generous could obviously be applied in the physical realm, but what the Bible generally places in the first place is the spiritual one as this is the most important. Our soul is the one who will be saved one day.

We can conclude that in order to receive, we also need to give. This is one of the ways, and it is what God is pleased in. We begin by feeding ourselves with the word and prayer. This is something essential because what can we give then if we haven’t received from Him? But when we give what we have received, He multiplies it in our hands and blesses us even more. He multiplies our strength. Same as when the disciples gave those few loaves of bread and fish to Jesus, with which He fed the five thousand people (Mark 6:30-44). They were few, but they multiplied. This happened after they placed them in the hands of Jesus to feed the people.

**There is a bond between love and faith, and hope. They go together and feed and strengthen each other, but the strongest one is love. It leads us to faith and hope many times. When we lack some of those two, we can always look for love. Obviously, the one that comes first in someone’s life is the faith through which he is saved. But we mustn’t forget that he has been saved because the love of God reached him first, and this helped him to have that faith.**

I said the things above for those who are already saved. In this case, the steward was already participating in God’s Kingdom, but like many Christians who are already saved, he was not showing that love and was not giving it value. Now I understand when someone says that to love is a choice. For those who have been saved already, many times, it is. For those who are not saved yet, it is impossible to have it. They still need to be reached by the love of God. The parable we see in Matthew 25:31-46, speaking about reaching out to “the least of these” as Jesus said, is for believers. And it talks about things being asked of the believers.

 And with all of this, my purpose is not to promote the human kind of love. Anyway, if we think deeply and examine it, that kind of love is always having some sort of interest, some awaiting for a reward, while the love of God is pure and not selfish because it carries His heart. And the reward comes from God.