Many times what we read from the Bible is not just for the purpose always to know more or just to discover 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 it. And my desire is that what I’m about to say now to be able to practice it as well, even though I have to admit that many times I lack, especially on this topic.

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

“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. 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.‘

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

“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 o him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.‘ 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.‘ 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.

“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. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?

“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 can not serve God and mammon.”

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.“

So we see here this parable and the following recommendations of Jesus. We see that at the end Jesus speaks about the unjust riches. This is how He refers to money and riches in general. Through this parable He was trying to explain to people not to be selfish and not to love mammon (riches) 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 least in the eyes of God, but nevertheless we need to be faithful with them and use them for a good purpose, instead for selfish reasons only. But we are not going to speak only for money here though, but for the concept with which these verses speak in general. We’ve got this picture so far.

We need to know as well that this parable goes beyond what we can apparently see in it. We see in the beginning of it that it speaks about a rich man that could represent God in this parable, because He is rich and abounding in everything. And obviously it speaks about the unjust or unfaithful servant as well. He was having some issues. And seeing this I’m asking myself if I am just and righteous in everything, if I am faithful in everything, if I am fulfilling everything asked from me by God. Obviously here we are speaking about a person that already partakes in the Kingdom of God. Somebody who is been already born again and knows the will of His master. And speaking about “being unjust“ we are not referring for someone sinning deliberately, but for a person who is trying to accomplish everything required from him, but still can not. 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 necessary talking about someone doing something wrong, but someone that fails to accomplish all that is asked from him. (It is more about accomplishing or not something) We can see as well the position that person was having. A position of a steward. It means that he was having responsibilities. In the same way, if we are Christians, we will have responsibilities in the kingdom of heaven, given to us by God.

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‘“ and in the same way he did with the other one. We see that what he was doing was related with the other people. And we know that in this way somehow he sorted out his situation because he was praised by his master afterwards. His master was pleased with him. In a way he helped the other people to pay their debt. He made it easier for them. 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.

It doesn’t say in which way exactly, but he probably paid some of it. In any way he did it, it pleased his master. Because in this way the servants were also going to find easier way to pay back the debt they were having with the master and there was more possibility that they were going to do it. You know that when a person owes too much to someone, it is more difficult to pay it out and in the most of the cases he doesn’t do it. But here they received a help already. In the same time the master was going to have his servants back and have also their trust back. In the Bible is written 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**. All of us are having debt with God, same as those people were having with their master. The debt is because of our sin. Same as those persons. Obviously Christ paid for us, but there is also our walk to enter into this promise, to have it possible. And what the steward did for them was to help them to believe that it was possible. He helped them with a part of it. We can lead someone in part, we can help him in part, but he also needs to walk the rest of it. 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 do trough His help, 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 it out. Jesus helped him to do that. This is the meaning of it. Because none of us can pay anything by himself. Even if someone is leading the 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 because Jesus again paid for that. This is the meaning as well. Why? Because when someone leads the others to the cross, it is because God is guiding 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. Meaning that Jesus is again the one who paid for it. All the glory be to Him!

For one of those persons from the parable the steward managed to help with fifty, for 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 number, used just to show us something. Someone can lead another one and help him with twenty or fifty or more, but always in part. For each person is different. I am not speaking about humanistic kind of help, but a spiritual one, with the power of His Spirit. And we speak about this kind of love too. The love that we can not have without experiencing His love first. The Bible says that the 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 and “Love does not harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.“ Romans 13:10

And the steward couldn’t accomplish it. He couldn’t do everything required from him. That’s why he was called “the unjust steward.“ Many times I found myself in a similar situation too. We can see that God is mostly pleased with this kind of love. Love always points out to the others. It s not selfish. “Does not seek its own…“ 1 Corinthians 13

In 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 form of manifestation of our selfishness. Jesus was telling them to be faithful with these so called unjust riches and share them. The main point was not to be selfish. After receiving His love on the cross, many times for us is a question of choice to show it or not. We need to have that desire. Love is the perfection, as apostle Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 13. 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 in something. We can not be perfect in everything. But having this love in our life combined with faith and directed to the others will cover our imperfections. Love is to be interested in other person’s life. To care for them, to be close to them. Sometimes it just gets to ask someone sincerely: “How are you?“.

 Many times I tried to be more spiritual, to be able to reach others with the word and sometimes I succeeded, but many times at my failure in that, I was deluded and frustrated as well. Then I discovered this love (that I already had received from God). It taught me how to be more interested in the 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. It can obviously happen, but not for every person is the same and beside 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 the others and when we desire it, God can reward us with moments like that – to give out His word, to meet someone and give him a word, and by the power of God, that person to be converted. 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 to the others something about God, to give out His word, to tell everyone that. I was trying, but many times I was deluded, because of the way they were responding. In the same time I could barely laugh with them or speak on any other topic with them, because of the zeal I had to transmit the Bible to them. 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, how to share His word with the others in a most effective way. The way His Spirit gives us. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 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; to those who are without the law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 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. 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 can not reject this message and we need to get his intention in a way. Many times is to become friends with someone, so that in time we can give them the gospel. 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 for someone laying on his dead bed with no time left. In situation as this we need to get straight to the word most of the times, 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 us being just redeemed sinners (nothing more or nothing less if not by His Grace) have to do that. I have to say that many times after in my life I neglected all of this and I didn’t always have it, but my desire is to follow this example of love that Jesus set before us.

We can see as well the situation with the Pharisees and the Scribes. Their desire was to be perfect, to accomplish the whole law. That’s why as well they 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 the mercy and the 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

Many times as well in our life we want to be so righteous, to accomplish things, but not for the glory of God (even if it might look so). We abstain ourselves from things, we want to be pure, and when we see that we can’t, then 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 the others. Don’t you see? Half of the Bible speaks about our relationship with Him and the other half – the relation with the others. I’m saying this because sometimes we are so focused to be pure (I am not saying this is wrong), but we neglect the people around us. We want to have a kind of self-righteousness, rather than helping someone and giving him the good news. But reaching someone else with God’s love and the gospel is the main focus of God. Not neglecting obviously to be pure in our own life and to walk in the right way, because how then can we show an example to the people we are trying to reach out and how can this message be powerful in us? I am not saying that we mustn’t get focused on being pure, I am just saying that we achieve easier that when we are in the presence of God and when His power is working through us, but how is going to work better if not when He is pleased with us and this is when we reach others. All of these things are connected. Being pure, seeking God for holiness and seeking Him for the others. I’m obviously telling all of this to those who are born again. Those who have been sealed by His love. We can not have and show **His** love without being born again and experiencing it first in our life. If someone is not born from God, what he will be showing will be just a humanistic kind of love that unfortunately is having its limits. But the love of God is what is exactly described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Don’t you know yet your calling from God, if you already know Him? Well, one of the callings for sure is to reach others. And this many times 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 very selfish life. Even on the spiritual side. To be always worried about how am I with God, if I’m fine, if I accomplished something. And this obviously is right, but the secret many times is to direct our sight toward the others, if they are fine with Him, how is their relationship with Him and if they are lost. This obviously is to give a hand to someone, not to push him further away from the truth or just to criticize him for his faults. And then automatically our peace, our relation with Him will be closer, because He is pleased in 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 opportunity.

I remember the verse saying that Jesus had a compassion for the people, because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd. That’s why we also see the Pharisees being called lovers of money in Luke 16:14, because of their selfishness. And we are not speaking just for money here. The love of God goes much beyond that, since someone can give His possessions away, but still not to 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 multitudes 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 multiplies. “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 to the others our time, our interest. We can’t be just waiting to receive blessing after blessing just by living normal 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 have more love is 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 that we find in Jesus is having a specific character, it rejoices with the truth, but does not rejoices with iniquity. Love is a correction as well.

If our life with God is based only on accomplishing and doing things, even having a 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.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy‘. 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, 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. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 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 speaking about love, about true love. Many times to show interest toward someone, to care about someone, to show love is considered as something least. Like asking someone how is he 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 to someone, but we can at least start with 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 means as well to be interested even in those persons that 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

Many times as we go through tough times we ask ourselves how to endure, how to bare with all of this. Well, the answer is found in the love. Love “Bears all things, believe all things, hopes all things, endures all things.“ 1 Corinthians 13:7 Many times when we struggle, we doubt or we go through a trial, we can still show love, we can look for it, we can approach someone with love. The love overcomes all these trials, difficult moments. **There is a bound 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 the faith and the hope many times. When we lack some of those two, we can always look for the 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 is been saved because the love of God reached him first and this helped him to have that faith.**

And I was saying the things above for those who are already saved. The steward in this case was a person that was already participating in God’s Kingdom, but same as many Christians who are already saved, he was not showing that love, 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 that we see in Matthew 25:31-46, speaking about reaching out “the least of these” as Jesus said, is for believers. And it speaks about things being asked from 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 kind of interest, some kind of awaiting for a reward, while the love of God is pure and not selfish, because it caries His heart. And the reward comes from God.