



# LIVING THE GOSPEL



**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time.  
September 21<sup>st</sup> 2025**

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**Theme: "No servant can serve two masters...You cannot serve God and mammon."**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 16:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> He also said to his disciples, 'There was a rich man and he had a steward denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. <sup>2</sup> He called for the man and said, "What is this I hear about you? Draw me up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer."

<sup>3</sup> Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed. <sup>4</sup> Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

<sup>5</sup> Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?" <sup>6</sup> "One hundred measures of oil" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down straight away and write fifty".

<sup>7</sup> To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat" was the reply. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty".

<sup>8</sup> 'The master praised the dishonest steward for his astuteness. For the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light.'

The right use of money

<sup>9</sup> 'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity. <sup>10</sup> The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. <sup>11</sup> If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? <sup>12</sup> And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?

<sup>13</sup> 'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

## **Gospel Focus**

In this gospel, Jesus calls us to be trustworthy but in a rather roundabout parable that makes a dishonest steward a model of prudence. This steward is careful to provide for himself, cleverly arranging to be received favorably when he is out of work. Jesus wants us to similarly prepare our spiritual accounts so that we might be ready to take on the true wealth of heaven. In so doing, we need not detach from the things of this life in order to follow God. Jesus always asks us for the wholehearted devotion. He wants nothing less from us than our whole hearts and our whole lives and our whole selves. This can seem demanding, but it is also for our own good. Being whole is healthier than being divided.

## **Gospel Reflection**

Things are not as simple as they used to be—or so it seems! Perhaps there never really was a time when issues were clear-cut and moral decisions were easy.

The parable in today's gospel is itself so complex that the only thing biblical scholars agree on is that it poses more questions than it answers, and no interpretation fully answers all of them. Questions such as these confront us: How can a dishonest steward be praised by his master? Jesus? The rich man? Is the parable about lost honor or lost income? What is the economic system presumed in this story? Does it concern usury? Or the steward's commission? What does "squandering" signify? Is the charge true or false? Who are the debtors? Is the master a sympathetic character or a villain? Is the steward someone to be emulated, or is he a picaresque character designed to give us a chuckle in a comic story?

To complicate things further, it seems that the original parable of Jesus ends at verse 8a, and verses 8b to 13 are more likely homily notes of early interpreters. These verses are stitched together by catchwords offering four different interpretations around the theme of the right use of money, none of which really captures the dynamics of the parable proper.

One possibility for this Sunday is not to try to settle the interpretation of the gospel parable but to look instead at the underlying values and attitudes that the readings propose, which orient us toward what we must do in order to be able to make good moral decision in complex situation. In the first reading, the situation seems straightforward: the dishonest merchants cannot wait for the Sabbath to be over so they can return to cheating the poor.

As with Amos, our first important step is to cultivate the ability to see from the perspective of those made poor and to be outraged, as he was, about economic practices that feed greed and "trample upon the needy." Once one sees these practices, it is then important to do whatever is possible to counter them. Publicly raising one's voice, as did Amos, is one important response. Another is to observe Sabbath days, when rest and communal and contemplative prayer can help communities of faith to cultivate eyes that see what is needed for the common good. A Sabbath rest from buying and selling also provides a hiatus from exploitation of the poor and cultivates reliance on providence.

The letter to Timothy reminds us of the importance of praying for all those in authority, so that they will be persons of wisdom, able to lead in such a way that all can enjoy a dignified and tranquil life. From the gospel, we can see that a time of crisis is an opportunity to assess one's own or a community's strengths and weaknesses while weighing different possibilities for the future. Cultivating relationships, as did the steward, is essential. When all these values and practices are put together, then a creative solution for the common good emerges, and decisive action can be taken.

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading – Amos 8:4-7**

<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you who trample upon the needy, and bring the poor of the land to an end, <sup>5</sup> saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great, and deal deceitfully with false balances, <sup>6</sup> that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" <sup>7</sup> The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their deeds."

### **Responsorial Reading – Ps 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8**

***R: Praise the Lord, who lifts up the poor. (R)***

Praise, you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever. **(R)**

High above all nations is the Lord; above the heavens is his glory. Who is like the Lord, our God, who is enthroned on high and looks upon the heavens and the earth below? **(R)**

He raises up the lowly from the dust; from the dunghill he lifts up the poor to seat them with princes, with the princes of his own people. **(R)**

### **Second Reading – 1 Timothy 2:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. <sup>8</sup> I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ...

### **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**952.** *"They had everything in common."* (Acts 4:32.) "Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy . . . and of their neighbors in want." A Christian is a steward of the Lord's goods. (Cf. Lk 16:1, 3.)

**2424.** A theory that makes profit the exclusive norm and ultimate end of economic activity is morally unacceptable. The disordered desire for money cannot but produce perverse effects. It is one of the causes of the many conflicts, which disturb the social order.

A system that "subordinates the basic rights of individuals and of groups to the collective organization of production" is contrary to human dignity. Every practice that reduces persons to nothing more than a means of profit enslaves man, leads to idolizing money, and contributes to the spread of atheism. "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13.)

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. Disciples are stewards. What is the relationship between faithfulness and stewardship? How has being faithful to God influence the way you act as a good steward of his gifts?
2. Jesus tells us that a servant can serve only one master. In today's society, what are the other "masters" that compete for our attention and loyalty? How do you personally remain focused on God amidst these distractions?
3. In what area of your life do you feel called to grow, and what small, intentional steps might you take to begin nurturing that growth?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** Lord God, you dwell in unapproachable light, yet you sustain the lowliest of the earth. May we pursue your will without failing in our pursuit of righteousness and justice for all. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen.