

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 16:1-9
August 18th, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Give an Account of Your Stewardship

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who hast bountifully given us Thy blessing and our daily bread: We beseech Thee, preserve us from covetousness, and so quicken our hearts that we willingly share Thy blessed gifts with our needy brethren; that we may be found faithful stewards of Thy gifts, and abide in Thy grace when we shall be removed from our stewardship, and shall come before Thy judgment, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When our Triune Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, created Adam and Eve, our first parents, He placed them into the Garden of Eden and gave them dominion over all of creation. Adam and Eve were to be stewards of all of the Lord God's gifts to them; all of creation. We, as their children, also have dominion over all of creation—all of the Lord God's good gifts to us. We are to be stewards of all that the Triune God has created for our benefit and good. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, squandered their stewardship by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—the tree that our Lord God heavenly Father told them from which they could not eat. We have learned, as their children, to also squander and waste our stewardship of the Lord God's creation.

We are indeed prodigal, that is, wasteful, sons and daughters of the Lord God heavenly Father's good gifts. Consider all of the things over which we have been given stewardship, and how we waste and abuse that stewardship.

Parents have the stewardship over their children to make sure they grow up in the knowledge and admonition of the Lord. We squander our stewardship as parents when we allow our children to "find their own way" in the world instead of raising them in the Christian faith, and doing all in our power to raise them in the Christian faith, so that the Church continues after we are gone.

The same is true for other vocations. Teachers have the stewardship over their students to train them in the knowledge that they were trained to teach. Our political leaders have the stewardship over our government in order that they may create and establish laws that promote Christian morality and peace. Pastors have the stewardship over the flock entrusted to their care to train them in the Christian faith, and admonish them with the Law and comfort them with the holy Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Employers have the stewardship over their employees to provide a livable wage and safe working conditions. Employees have the stewardship over their labor to not be lazy and earn the wage that is given to them by their diligence in their work.

We also have been given earthly blessings to which we are to act as stewards. Everything that we own, our house, our car, the money in our bank account, our clothes, and all our possessions have been given to us by our Lord God heavenly Father. These earthly gifts are given to us so that we may use them to give honor to the One Who gave them to us, and to help and serve our neighbors.

So then, there are many ways and opportunities in this life where we are to act as stewards, that is, caretakers, of the things that our Lord God has entrusted to us. However, on account of our manifold sins and iniquities good stewardship is hard to find and is rarely done. There are parents who do not raise their children in the Christian faith. There are teachers who are lazy and do not care for the education of their students, or at best only do the bare minimum. There are pastors who only care about their bellies and their station in life, and do not make the sacrifices necessary to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. They are unwilling to bear the scorn and shame that comes with being faithful to the pure preaching of the Word of God. Employers do not always pay fair wages. Employees are at times lazy and do not work hard to earn the wage that they are paid. Politicians often do what is politically expedient instead of what is right and proper for the maintenance of righteousness and the hindrance of wickedness.

We also, in our sinful state, hoard our possessions, and do not use them to honor God or help and be of service to our neighbors. We have been falsely taught that what we have is our own to use as we see fit. This is not the way it should be. We have been given our earthly gifts to help our neighbors. We need to remember that our earthly possessions are not going to follow us into the grave. All things that we possess will either be destroyed when we die, or given to someone else. Therefore, we should use these gifts to help all those whom the Lord God has put in our path to help and not waste and squander them by storing them up so that rust and moth will destroy them.

To this end, our Lord + Jesus, instructs us in a parable in today's Gospel pericope from the Evangelist St. Luke. There was a rich man whose steward had wasted his possessions. The steward, like us, had abused his position as steward to live the high life. He used his master's possessions to better his own life to the disadvantage of his master. This wastefulness was reported to the rich man. The unjust steward was forced to give an accounting of his stewardship and the stewardship was taken from him.

This is how it will be on the day of our death when we are no longer stewards of the possessions that our Lord God entrusted to us in this life. On that day we will have to give an account of our stewardship to the Lord God. All of our works will be judged. All of our works have been reported and written down. It will reveal all that we have done and not done. It will give an accurate accounting of our stewardship.

Our faith, however, need not be shaken by the multitude of transgressions that we commit, nor by the countless ways in which we have failed to perform some good work on that day. For our faith can look to the works and merits of our Lord + Jesus Christ. His stewardship was perfect. He did not waste or squander the Father's gifts. But He healed the sick and lame; the lepers and crippled. He cast out demons, and raised the dead. He preached the Gospel of repentance toward the forgiveness of sins, and then He offered up His life as a ransom for all of mankind to atone for their sins, so that all those who believe on Him may be justified with the Lord God. His perfect stewardship is credited to us on account of our faith in Him. So, we need not fear the day of death, even though our stewardship is horribly lacking.

Faith, however, does lead us to desire to be good stewards. It leads us to admit when we have been poor stewards of the Lord God's earthly gifts, and to seek to do better with our stewardship, all while trusting in our Lord + Jesus' perfect stewardship. Even though we know we fail miserably and daily, faith drives us to always do better and confess when we do not. This is why the Lord + Jesus tells

His Apostles that “the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.” For the sons of this world diligently seek after wealth and mammon. They work really hard to earn a prize that will fade away and be taken from them when they die. The sons of light, that is, us, need to have that same diligence and work ethic when it comes to the spiritual things with which we have been entrusted.

We have been promised a crown of eternal life—an eternal reward. Does it not make sense to work harder for an eternal reward than a temporal one? Our Lord + Jesus has left us with abundant gifts of which we are to be stewards. He has given us His holy Word, Holy Baptism, Confession and Absolution, His Holy Supper, and He has given us the Liturgy and others who attend upon it with us. These gifts are for our eternal benefit. They create faith in us and bring us to the gates of Heaven. Let us be diligent in their use, and be diligent in inviting others to join us here in this holy sanctuary where they can receive the stewardship of eternal things, too.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, wasted the stewardship given to them in the Garden of Eden, and were cast out of paradise. Those who waste the eternal things of the Lord God will also be cast out of the paradise of Heaven into the desert of Hell. We often live our lives as if no one else matters and our possessions are ours to do with as we please. But we have been granted the position of steward to honor our Lord God and help and serve our neighbors. Let us use the same shrewdness that the sons of this world use in attaining mammon that will not last, to attain the eternal treasure of life in Heaven with our Lord + Jesus and all the saints by continuing faithfully in the use of the means of grace. And when we fail, let us not lose hope, but cling in faith to the works and merits of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, who in His perfect stewardship won for us forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, Heavenly Father, Who hast appointed us all as Thy stewards, grant that we may not waste the good entrusted to us, but rightly employ them, and with our temporal things make to ourselves friends, that we may be received into everlasting habitations; through Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!