

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 16:1-9
August 1st, 2021
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

This Man Was Wasting His Goods

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Thou Great Shepherd of Israel, Who, by Thine outstretched arm, didst bring Thy people of old out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage, guiding them safely through the wilderness to the Promised Land: we pray Thee to deliver us from the bondage and slavery of our sins, and so lead us through the wilderness of this world, feeding us with bread from Heaven and with water out of the smitten rock, and uphold us amidst the swellings of Jordan, that we may enter at last into that rest which remaineth for Thy faithful people; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

A certain rich man had a wasteful steward. This parable from the Evangelist St. Luke is about us. We are the wasteful steward. We are the ones who waste the gifts of the Lord God. We act just like our first parents, Adam and Eve. They were given the stewardship—the management—of the Garden of Eden. They were to tend to the Garden, and for food they could eat the abundance of herbs and fruits that the Lord God graciously gave to His beloved creation. All the trees in the Garden were for their food. The Lord God richly gave them all that they needed, and if they needed more, the Lord God would have supplied even that to them. This is how much the Lord God cares for His creation; it is how much He cared for our first parents, Adam and Eve; and, it is how much He cares for us. He gives to us just as abundantly as our first parents. He gives us all that we need to support this body and life.

Our first parents, however, just like us, their children, squandered the gifts that the Lord God had given to them. Instead of eating from the abundance of trees with fruit in the Garden that were good for their food, they instead allowed that devil of a serpent to deceive them into thinking that the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was going to be good for them. In their lust and concupiscence, they looked upon the fruit of that tree which had been forbidden them, and they took and ate. Eve took from the tree, and Adam, her husband who was with her and not correcting her behavior in anyway, also ate from the tree. So, it has been with all of their children, even as it is with us. In our lust and concupiscence, we squander the gifts that the Lord God has given to us, to seek out that which is forbidden us, so that we might satisfy ourselves from our own sinful hands.

Consider the steward—the manager of the house of the certain rich man—from the parable that our Lord + Jesus tells us today. As house manager he would have been given a supply of the riches of the rich man to satisfy his needs. Furthermore, if that was not enough, he could have asked for more and the rich man would have gladly given it. But we learn from the text of St. Luke's Gospel that the

wasteful and unjust steward was ashamed to beg. The word in Greek literally means, “to ask for more.” He was afraid to ask for more, hence, he was afraid to beg the rich man for more. So, what does he do? Well, first he just treats the rich man’s things as his own things. He just takes for himself what is not his to use. He uses the rich man’s riches for his own pleasure. As the house manager, he was supposed to rightly divide possessions of the rich man to those who needed it. He was not supposed to use it for himself. He was supposed to give it to those in need. The rich man would have gladly given him all that he needed for his own support. But instead, he is wasteful of the rich man’s things.

And, as it is whenever we do something contrary to the Law and will of the Lord God, that sin will be eventually find out. Indeed, on the Last Day, for all of our works, good and bad, we will have to give an account. We will have to stand before the Judgment seat of the Lord and answer for all of our deeds; for how we did or did not use the gifts that the Lord God has given us for the use of our fellowman. Just like the steward in the parable of our Lord was summoned before the rich man to give an account of his house management. Since he was a poor steward, the house management was going to be taken away from him and given to another.

So then, what does he do after he is found out and had sentence declared against him; after he was found to be wasteful of the rich man’s possessions? He becomes even more wasteful of the rich man’s possessions by calling all of his debtors and forgives them a portion of their debt. One individual had half of his debt cancelled. Another debtor had twenty percent of his debt cancelled. And, even though only two individuals are used as examples, our Lord + Jesus makes in clear in the telling of the parable that ALL of the debtors had a portion of their debt forgiven. For this the rich man commends the unjust steward. In clearing the debt of the rich man’s debtors, not only did this benefit the steward who was seen as the person forgiving the debt, but also the rich man was looked upon by the debtors as a gracious person.

This point is not a small one. For if this parable about the wasteful steward is about us; if we are the wasteful steward, how are we to treat the possessions of the rich man—Who is the Lord God? The things that we have been given in this life are not ours alone. They have not been given to us only for our enjoyment. The possessions we have are given to us to serve our neighbor—our fellowman. When we chase after riches; when we hoard our possessions, we are being wasteful and unrighteous with the possessions that our Lord God has given to us. The things we have are not for us but for us to use to benefit our neighbors. This is not only true of the physical blessings that we have been gifted, but also of the spiritual things. The forgiveness that we have received in spite of our manifold transgressions, is the same forgiveness that we should offer and give to our fellowman when he sins against us. We are to forgive his debts, just like our debts have been forgiven.

Furthermore, we should not worry that using our gifts to help our neighbor is somehow going to be detrimental to us. For our Lord God knows all of our needs and richly supplies them. We need not be like the wasteful steward who was ashamed to ask for more. Our Lord has promised that whatever we ask for in His Name He will richly supply us. This is especially true when we ask for more in order that we may help our neighbors in need. And when we are feeling crushed by the weight of our sin, and our inability to keep the Law of God, we should not be ashamed to ask our Lord God to comfort us even more with His Holy Ghost; to open our ears to hear that we have forgiveness in our Lord + Jesus.

For our house management is only worthy of condemnation. We are poor, miserable stewards of the treasures of our Lord God. This is why the management has been taken away from us and placed into the hands of our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. He did not squander the possessions of His heavenly Father, but freely gave healing, life, and comfort to all those who came to Him. Indeed, He gave all that He had to provide for us poor, miserable stewards, including His own life on the tree of the holy cross. He took that which was given to Him, our flesh which He took upon Himself, and offered it on our behalf as an atoning sacrifice for us on the tree of the holy cross. On account of His sacrifice,

not just twenty percent; not just fifty percent; but all of our debt has been paid; He paid one hundred percent of our debt on the tree of the holy cross, so that when we cling to this atoning sacrifice in faith, we are gifted with eternal life and salvation.

For this treasure we should seek after diligently. For the forgiveness of sins and eternal life and salvation, we should make every effort to secure. This is why it seems that the Lord + Jesus is praising this unjust steward for his wastefulness. He is not praising his wastefulness, but the effort that he put in to obtain treasures that will pass away. We are promised an everlasting crown, and yet by our behavior we show that we squander that gift. For, are do we make every effort to come to the house of the Lord and receive from Him His good gifts? Do we drive hundreds and thousands of miles, or put in countless hours of our time to attend worship in the house of the Lord? Do we forsake all earthly possessions and temptations to come and gather here in this house to rejoice in our Holy Baptisms, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord + Jesus in bread and wine?

The truth of the matter (and the purpose of the parable) is that the world puts us Christians to shame. Think about how much effort some people put into acquiring riches and fame in this world. They work tirelessly to achieve something that will not last after they die. They will not be able to take their riches with them. But, the riches of the spiritual gifts of our Lord God—our forgiveness, life and salvation—we will keep them throughout all eternity. This life will pass away. Our life will pass away. We will all die one day. All the earthly possessions that we have accumulated and built up, will end up in the junk heap, or in someone else's possession. Yet, we strive for these perishable crowns with all due diligence, while we neglect to run after and obtain the crown of life which will never be taken from us. This is why our possessions are given to us to serve our neighbor, because they will not be ours when we die.

My dear friends, sadly, we are wasteful stewards. We are just like our first parents, Adam and Eve, who lusted after an earthly fruit instead of seeking to do the will of the heavenly Father. We are always chasing after perishable possessions. How glorious it would be if we expended that same energy to secure the possessions that serve our souls: to daily read and study the Word of God; to daily pray to our Lord God to give us all that we need to support this body and life that we may use them to help our neighbor, and that He would grant us grace to cling to Him and His promises in faith. Let us repent of our wastefulness and squandering of the gifts of the Lord God, and cling in faith the works and merits of the Just Steward, our Lord + Jesus, Who gave all that He had—even His own life—to secure for us an imperishable crown that we will wear for all eternity. Thanks be to the Lord! 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 goods 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!