

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 16:1-9
August 17th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

His Lord Commended the Unrighteous Steward

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And his lord commended the unrighteous steward because he had done wisely: for the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light.”

Prayer in Pulpit before 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.

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

My dear friends, our Lord + Jesus never avoided tough subjects in His preaching. And so, He would talk about socially difficult issues like divorce, and adultery. He would talk about impenitence, and hypocrisy. He would talk about the evils of covetousness, and of envy. Why, He would even speak, from time to time, about money. When the Pharisees, for instance, tested Him on His loyalty to Caesar, asking, “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” Jesus said, “Show me the tribute money.” “Whose is this image and superscription?” “Caesar’s,” they said. “Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s.”

When He observed how people put money into the treasury, noting that many of the rich put in a great deal, while a poor widow threw in just two mites, our Lord + Jesus said, “Of a truth I say unto you, ‘This poor widow cast in more than they all: for all these did of their superfluity cast in unto the gifts; but she of her want did cast in all the living that she had.’” And when He sent His twelve disciples out to preach the Kingdom of God, He said, “Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats.”

And here, of course, in Luke 16, after the Gospel reading for today, He says, “He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. ... No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

The Lord + Jesus certainly did not avoid tough subjects in His preaching. But what is it about money though, particularly when the subject is brought up in church, that raises the defensive ear of some, and perhaps the ire of others? Well, I suspect in part, the subject of money has become the focal point of the message in some churches, and people, rightfully so, have resented its having usurped the seat of honor that belongs only to the Gospel of the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. “All the church wants is

my money,” some will say! “I never hear from anyone at the church until it is time for the annual pledge drive!” others might say. “I could stop attending church, and as long as I keep sending in my offering no one will really care, or perhaps even notice!” sadly some have said.

When a church places too much emphasis on money and giving, people, rightfully so, grow tired and weary of the subject. So, at least in part, that is why when money is mentioned in church it raises the defensive ear of some, and the ire of others.

To be honest though, “too much talk” about money is not the only reason that some of us become defensive when the subject is brought up from the pulpit. Some of us frankly are defensive because we have something to defend. That is say some of us are defensive because our stewardship of the money that the Lord God has given to us has not been very good. Honestly, if the Lord God has blessed a person with an abundance, in terms of financial resources, placing \$5, \$10, \$15, or even \$20 a week in the offering plate is not a sure and certain sign of faithfulness, or thankfulness for what He has done for us poor, miserable sinners. The Triune Lord God says, “This is a little thing, (money, that is) be faithful in your handling of it.” Give cheerfully and generously, even as our Lord God has been cheerful and generous in the giving of His grace to us.

Therefore, some of us are defensive and even irritated when the subject of money comes up in church, first, because in some instances money is preached about far too much in church, but secondly, because some of us have something to defend. And there is a third reason too, and that is because the subject offers a dangling carrot for us to latch onto with a prideful spirit to show how righteous and good we are. So then, even if we give a great deal in terms of our offerings, even if we give sacrificially to the cause, give to the Gospel, we are not to boast of what we give, for if we do pride has taken hold of us. In the end, money is really one of those “no win” subjects for all of us. We would all like to have it, but when it comes to stewarding it, we recognize that it demands a great deal of faithfulness and discipline on our part.

In the Gospel reading for today our Lord + Jesus cautions us to not let mammon, or money, compete for the allegiance that belongs only to Him. The unrighteous steward chose favor with his master’s debtors over favor with his master. He was shrewd in his dealings with His master’s debtors because ultimately, he would rely upon them for his future well-being. The steward’s real problem was that he was a servant of his money, rather than the master of it.

Here is what Luther writes on the subject, “To put it very briefly, God does not want us to serve money and possessions. Nor does He want us to worry. But He does want us to work and leave the worry to Him. Let him who has possessions be the master of these possessions. He who serves is a servant and does not have the possessions, but the possessions have him. For he dare not use them when he wants to; nor does he dare serve others with them. In fact, he is not bold enough to touch the stuff. But if he is master of the possessions, the possessions serve him, and he does not serve them. He, then, may use the possessions, as Abraham, David, Job, and other wealthy people did...When he sees a man who has no coat, he says to his money: ‘Come out, young Mr. Gulden! There is a poor naked man who has no coat; you must serve him. Over there lies a sick man who has no refreshment. Come forth, Sir Dollars! You must be on your way; go and help him.’ People who handle their possessions in this way are masters of their possessions. And surely, all honest Christians will do this. But the folk who are saving much money and are forever scheming how to make the pile larger and not smaller are servants.” Thus far Luther.

So, I ask, “are we a servant or are we a master of our money?” The heavenly Father, of course, has sent us the Lord + Jesus, the One Who serves, that we might be the loving master of what He has given us. Our riches, of course, are counted in many ways besides money, for we have the hope possessed only by the children of the Lord God, who knows that, come as things may, the Triune Lord

God remains our great portion, our wealth of consolation, and our abundance of forgiveness. In short, we are rich this day in Christ + Jesus, "For ye know the grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

We were and remain, of course, the poor naked one who has no coat, and the sick one who has no refreshment. Like the battered and bruised man in the parable of the Good Samaritan, we are the one who lies helpless, the one who finds himself in need of a benefactor, a helper. Christ is that Samaritan that comes along to pick us up, to bandage our wounds and to restore us to health. He is the one who charges our debts to His account, having taken debts into Himself on that cursed tree. He remains the Master of all that He gives to us, not however that we may serve what He gives, but that we may master what He gives, that we may extend His hand, that we may be an extension of His grace and mercy in the world.

Christ + Jesus has served us and He continues to serve us that we might serve one another. Indeed, His body and blood are laid upon our lips, His poverty produces our riches, His assumed wretchedness guarantees our holiness, His condemnation grants our forgiveness. And then we arise, and we pray that our Lord God would make us a servant of others, even as we are a master of what He has given us. Indeed, "We give thanks unto Thee, Almighty God, that Thou hast refreshed us [yes, even us] through this salutary gift. And we beseech Thee, that of Thy mercy, Thou wouldst strengthen us through the same, in faith toward Thee, and in fervent love toward one another." In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the 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!