

Scripture**Luke 16: 1-13****(NRSVUE)**

16 Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you?’ Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ ³ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me?’ I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ⁷ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ ⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

In our scripture today, we often look at the importance of being wise and good stewards of the resources and opportunities we are given in order to serve both earthly and heavenly purposes. Jesus tells a parable about a shrewd manager who was accused of wasting his master's possessions. The scene is set in a large estate, where the master calls the manager to give an account of his stewardship. The manager, realizing he is about to lose his job, comes up with a clever plan to secure his future by reducing the debts owed to his master's debtors.

The characters in this scene include the master, the manager, and the debtors. The master is a wealthy landowner who entrusts his manager with overseeing his affairs. The manager, facing a crisis, quickly summons the debtors to renegotiate their debts, making them indebted to him instead of the master. The debtors, eager to benefit from the manager's scheme, agree to the new terms.

The surroundings are opulent, reflecting the wealth and status of the master. The estate is likely adorned with luxurious furnishings, expansive gardens, and servants bustling about. Jesus uses this parable to teach a lesson about using worldly wealth wisely and being faithful in small matters. The scene captures the tension between the manager's cunning actions and the master's eventual commendation of his shrewdness.

This parable often serves as a reminder to reevaluate our priorities and consider how we can be faithful stewards of all that has been entrusted to us as we seek to use our resources in ways that bring glory to God and to further that kingdom here on earth. We can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others and lay up treasures in heaven that will never fade by being wise and intentional with our wealth.

The relevance of this message in contemporary society is profound, urging all of us to uphold ethical standards and to prioritize integrity over personal gain. It serves as a poignant reminder that our ultimate allegiance should be to God, rather than the fleeting allure of earthly possessions. By reflecting on the teachings encapsulated in this parable, we are encouraged to navigate the complexities of modern life with a steadfast commitment to moral principles and spiritual values.

Today, I would like us to consider another thought about this lesson: that of having enough, being enough and loving enough. How often do we forget how valuable we each are as people living in the Jesus-way?

The verses today show us the importance of using our resources to further God's kingdom and for eternal purposes. And they challenge us to consider ourselves as worthy. In the quest to be wise with all that we have, do we also realize that what we do and say is enough. I want us to know that what we shepherd has much to do with, not only helping others, holding ourselves as accountable, but also valuing ourselves as important in the kingdom...being enough.

When people ask why I follow Jesus, I tell them about a dream I had when I was twenty years old. When I decided to follow Jesus, I prayed that God would not allow me to shut the door on faith. I continued to live the same way I had been before, with little, if any, transformation. Then, one night I dreamed that I was trying to shut a door behind me, but it wouldn't shut. I kept slamming it and slamming it, to no avail. In that dream, I turned around to see what was blocking the door and who was standing there? Jesus, absorbing blow after blow with His body. I believe the dream was God speaking directly to me and when I recount that dream, I think of two things:

- First, *really? Why me?* Was it really God speaking directly to this twenty-year-old (now former) Catholic, accounting student at Lemoyne College? Or was it indigestion? (Perhaps one beer too many?) An overactive imagination? How did I know it was God, and how did I know it was personal, and how did I know what it meant? *Was I enough?*
- Second, on the reverse side, *why not me?* Both what the message was and that it was God speaking. My life transformed after that experience, and I have not drifted from the initial conviction that I was supposed to follow Jesus in word and deed. *Maybe, I am enough!*

This unexpected and important moment in my life prompted me to reflect on whether my priorities are aligned with God's and how much I am enough for that call.

So, here's the question: Are we valuing the things that have eternal value, or are we focused solely on temporary possessions? God desires for us to be good stewards of what we are given us and to use. And we should also realize our own worth in God's eyes: to know we are worthy, and ***we are enough***. Take the time regularly to assess how we use our resources, knowing that what we can do is valued. We can store up treasures and be confident in ourselves to serve heavenly causes that make a lasting impact for the kingdom of God by being intentional and wise with our blessings and knowing that we are enough.

Utilize your resources to benefit others, honor God, handling the gifts you've been bestowed with. And, do all that when you know that you are enough and what you do will be enough. Amen!