

C - Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - September 18, 2022  
Deacon Steve Livingston

Our readings can make us a bit uncomfortable ... as they remind us that we must decide ... whom we will serve during our time on earth. They remind us that we must choose whether to serve the world ... or serve God. We simply cannot do both.

Our First Reading from the Book of the prophet Amos warns us against greed. The Israelites were waiting impatiently for the end of the holy days and Sabbaths ... days of rest ... times when no business could be transacted. These they scrupulously observed but then ... they were anxious to get back to business as usual ... which meant continuing their practices of using dishonest scales and measures to cheat their customers. They would also mix bad grain, which should have been discarded ... in with the good. Amos reminds them that the Lord will punish their behavior: "Never will I forget a thing they have done!"

In the Gospel reading from St. Luke ... we hear the parable of the dishonest steward ... perhaps one of the more difficult passages from Sacred Scripture. We do not know exactly what the steward's offense was but we can make a pretty good guess! Typically, a steward would be allowed virtual autonomy in administering his trust ... a situation fraught with temptation. One could assume that his offense was charging an exorbitant interest rate ... and grossly inflating the value of what was lent ... so that he could line his own pockets and still show his master a profit.

Once he was caught and told he was to be dismissed ... he cleverly made friends with those he had been cheating by lowering the interest rate back to what it should have been in the first place ... thus making himself appear benevolent ... thus ensuring he would have friends to help him out after he was dismissed from his master's service!

Without studying this reading a bit further one could draw the conclusion that Jesus approves of cleverly gaining dishonest wealth. For He tells us that the master commended ... the dishonest steward for his prudence. Note that Jesus says The Master commended ... not Jesus ... but the Master!

Jesus then says: "... the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." What He is observing is that people are more absorbed with planning for their financial future ... for this life ... than with their eternal future.

He goes on to say: "... make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." When He says dishonest wealth ... He means worldly wealth. He is calling on us to use worldly wealth in a way that will help secure our eternal future ... by giving alms and supporting the Church.

And He sums up the lesson by telling us we must choose: God or money ,, we simply can't have it both ways!

Finally ... In our Second Reading from the First Letter to Timothy ... St. Paul is every bit as counter-cultural when he tells us of the need to pray ... for all those in positions of authority ... an obligation, I fear, that is difficult for many in our current climate of political polarization. Do we pray for all of our leaders ... even if they are not of our preferred political party? And if they hold immoral positions ... do we pray for them that God may grant them the grace to change their hearts? This is what we are called to do! And if ... we were to do ... that which St. Paul tells us we must do ... and pray for all those in authority, might we not have better people in power ... rendering better service to our country ... and to our world. But this is the world we live in ... so once more ... we see that the wisdom of our world is not the Wisdom of our God.

C - Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time -  
September 18, 2022

Our readings can make us a bit uncomfortable ... as they remind us that we must decide ... whom we will serve during our time on earth. They remind us that we must choose whether to serve the world ... or serve God. We simply cannot do both.

Our First Reading from the Book of the prophet Amos warns us against greed. The Israelites were waiting impatiently for the end of the holy days and Sabbaths ... days of rest ... times when no business could be transacted. These they scrupulously observed but then ... they were anxious to get back to business as usual ... which meant continuing their practices of using dishonest scales and measures to cheat their customers. They would also mix bad grain, which should have been discarded ... in with the good. Amos reminds them that the Lord will punish their behavior: "Never will I forget a thing they have done!."

In the Gospel reading from St. Luke ... we hear the parable of the dishonest steward ... perhaps one of the more difficult passages from Sacred Scripture. We do not know exactly what the steward's offense was but we can make a pretty good guess! Typically, a steward would be allowed virtual autonomy in administering his trust ... a situation fraught with temptation. One could assume that his offense was

charging an exorbitant interest rate ... and grossly inflating the value of what was lent ... so that he could line his own pockets and still show his master a profit.

Once he was caught and told he was to be dismissed ... he cleverly made friends with those he had been cheating by lowering the interest rate back to what it should have been in the first place ... thus making himself appear benevolent ... thus ensuring he would have friends to help him out after he was dismissed from his master's service!

Without studying this reading a bit further one could draw the conclusion that Jesus approves of cleverly gaining dishonest wealth. For He tells us that the master commended ... the dishonest steward for his prudence. Note that Jesus says The Master commended ... not Jesus ... but the Master!


Jesus then says: "... the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light." What He is observing is that people are more absorbed with planning for their financial future ... for this life ... than with their eternal future.

He goes on to say: "... make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings." When He says

dishonest wealth ... He means worldly wealth. He is calling on us to use worldly wealth in a way that will help secure our eternal future ... by giving alms and supporting the Church.

And He sums up the lesson by telling us we must choose: God or money ,, we simply can't have it both ways!

Finally ... In our Second Reading from the First Letter to Timothy ... St. Paul is every bit as counter-cultural when he tells us of the need to pray ... for all those in positions of authority ... an obligation, I fear, that is difficult for many in our current climate of political polarization. Do we pray for all of our leaders ... even if they are not of our preferred political party? And if they hold immoral positions ... do we pray for them that God may grant them the grace to change their hearts? This is what we are called to do! And if ... we were to do ... that which St. Paul tells us we must do ... and pray for all those in authority, might we not have better people in power ... rendering better service to our country ... and to our world. But this is the world we live in ... so once more ... we see that the wisdom of our world is not the Wisdom of our God.

 ReplyForwa  
rd