



**Church At Home**  
**St. Timothy's Lutheran Church – Pembroke, Ontario**  
**Pentecost 15** **September 21, 2025**

**Prayer of the Day**

God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

**The Holy Gospel: Luke 16:1-13**

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord.

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. 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.' 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. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' 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.' 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. 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.

"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. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 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."

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

**Homily**

I greet you in the name of Jesus, our risen Saviour. Amen.

Every now and then, we come upon a passage of Scripture that is especially challenging to preach on. Sometimes, the difficulty comes from the fact that the text is so familiar that just about everything that can be said about it has been said. Think of familiar texts like the Christmas stories or the Resurrection accounts; or the prodigal son.

Then, at other times, texts are difficult for exactly the opposite reason: they're so confusing that we spend so much time explaining the text that we never get around to actually preaching the Good News! The teaching becomes a prolonged theological essay that bores us and bypasses any possibility of transformation. It's little wonder that Martin Luther once said of preaching passages such as these, "Sometimes you have to squeeze the Biblical text until it leaks the Gospel."

The story of the dishonest manager, or shrewd manager or with a more current understanding, the gracious manager is one of these confusing texts that is hard to find the Good News! Let me try and do a little squeezing.

This story is the fourth in a series of parables in which Jesus is sharing with the Pharisees and the scribes to answer their disgust that he is hanging out with the wrong people – you know, those sinners! To understand the story and the point Jesus is making; some understanding of first century Palestine Economics is helpful.

Let us not forget the back drop to the entire Gospels is the occupation of Israel – Palestine by the Romans. The Romans were sharp operators. They would come in and do two things: exploit natural resources as well as the labour of the people and use taxation.

The Romans needed a lot of wheat and olive oil from the farm lands of Galilee. You would think that is a chance for the small farmers to get rich; well you have to remember the Romans are sharp operators. It didn't work this way. The Romans heavily taxed the small farmers; to the degree they couldn't afford to pay their taxes. The rich people of the south came to them and said....

"Do we have a deal for you.....we will pay your taxes in exchange for the deed to your property and don't worry you can live on as tenant farmers on our property for the low cost of giving us a percentage of your wheat, and olive oil."

The rich people of the south would then sell the wheat, and olive oil to the Romans. Hard to believe, the rich getting richer and the poor getting more pressure put on them.

It also helps you to know that the rich people lived in the south; in the state of Judea and the poor people; the farmers lived in the north in Galilee. The rich people were detested by the farmers; so much that they felt unsafe to venture to their holdings in the north. In order to overcome this, they hired middle managers to be their collection agents.

Now we can get to the heart of the story.

We learn the rich man, the owner of the properties, finds something not right with the books and calls in the manager. The manager is squandering his assets; his holdings. In other words, he is not getting a big enough return on his investment. He is not squeezing those farmers hard enough. The rich man decides to fire him and demands to have the books up-to-date with what each farmer owes.

This puts the manager into a bit of a tail spin and rightly so. It would do for any use. He represents many of us – the middle class, middle management always the first to go when a company is down sizing. How am I going to pay the mortgage, the monthly car payment, feed the family – you know all the costs involved in living. He has to be thinking.... “I’ve worked hard for this guy all these years and now he is ready to throw me out! I have no security. I am at the age where I can not do a job that involves manual labour – my back won’t take it being a ditch digger – I don’t want to beg!”

Then he realizes the economic pyramid he has been caught in and decides to switch sides! He begins to arrange things so that he will have friends with the poor. He makes a trip north and asks them:

How many jugs of olive oil do you owe? 100 – hey make it 50.

How many containers of wheat do you owe? 100 – hey make it 80.

The manager gets some return for the rich man but he does it in a way that gives a break for the poor.

This story is not about some who are evil and terrible; it is about someone who saw through the injustice of the economic system and decided to do something about it by switching sides and work for the poor.

Parables draw us towards a new way of thinking; a new reality. So, Jesus is offering a new image for money. Money is not the ultimate measure of all things. Jesus is challenging us to use our money in service of relationships rather than; use relationships in service of money.

Money can cause us to improperly value other things. Jesus was well aware of this and so he said, “No slave can serve two masters: for a slave will either hate the one and love the other.” Essentially, he is saying, you will either hate God and love money or love God and hate money. You cannot serve God and wealth.

I know we all have to use money yet isn’t it time we take seriously what Jesus is saying; we need to realize money and material goods are not where we should be placing our values but with our Creator, families, friends and their relationships. We have a culture that, for centuries, has looked at the oceans, and the mountains, and the rivers, the soil and doesn’t consider their inherent value at all. Although we are getting somewhat better, we only think about how we can convert them or use them to make short term profits for those people at the top of the economic pyramid. It is time for change. It is time we value these gifts more than the profits generated.

My friends in Christ. Today we are reminded, the Kingdom of God invites all of us to lose faith in a system that says, “Let the rich do whatever they want and what ever little crumbs trickle down to the rest of us” and trust in a system that says put God first. Love God first and everything else will have a new value.

Amen.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us.....

### **Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

### **Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious unto you,  
The Lord look upon you with favour and give you (+) peace. Amen.

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## *STTLC Communiqué*

### **In Our Prayers Today.....**

Sheila Zadow-Purdy, Lila Martinat, Irlavere Tubbe, Bobby Keuhl, Adele Krieger, Tracy Schori, and Christa Reitlingshoefer.

### **About today...**

As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. "Christ Jesus, himself human,...gave himself a ransom for all." Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God's gracious favor we have everything we need.