

Who Is Your Master – God or Money?

Sunday, 9/22 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 9/23 at 7 PM

15th Sunday after Pentecost / 14th Sunday after Trinity – 2019

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: *God has ENTRUSTED us* with various resources like abilities, money, and possessions. Now, we have two basic choices:

- ➔ We can be like *unbelievers* by using such things according to our own selfish desires.
- ➔ We can be like *Jesus* by using such things according to the instruction of God's Holy Word.

In today's gospel reading we will meet a dishonest manager; when he is caught, *but before he turns over the books*, he quickly takes even more dishonest action for the purpose of gaining favor with his customers. As you continue reading, ask yourself: Who is my master: God or money?

1. **A Parable – An Earthly Story with a Heavenly Meaning:**
 - a. Caught: ¹ [Jesus] also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to [the rich man] that this [manager] was wasting his possessions. ² And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' // The evidence was convincing,

so the rich man had already made up his mind; as soon as the manager brought the books, he would be fired!

- b. Now what? ³ **And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management 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 removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ ⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ // In both examples of what was owed, *the amounts were very significant!* Also, *by the customer rewriting his own bill, ♦the fraud was hidden AND ♦the customer also became guilty, along with the manager. Therefore, the customer would ♦keep quiet AND ♦be indebted to the dishonest manager – to provide for his needs. Can you see how the dishonest manager used the money under his control for his own selfish gain?***
- c. The rich man’s response: ⁸ **The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness [smartness]. For the sons of this world [the unbelievers] are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation [that is, with unbelievers] than the sons of light [believers]. // What does that mean? It means that unbelievers tend to do a better job of using their money for this life, than BELIEVERS using their money for THE LIFE TO COME!**

2. Jesus Applied the Parable to His Disciples:

- a. Focus – on this life or the life to come: ⁹ **And I tell you [my disciples], make [Christian] friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth [the money of this world], so that when it fails [thus, when you die] they [that is, God the Father and God the Son] may receive you into the eternal dwellings.** // Regarding the dishonest manager, we saw him go from **bad to worse** in the use of the money entrusted to him. NOW, Jesus is inspiring us as believers to go from **good to better** in our use of the money entrusted to us! Consider these comparisons from **Lenski (831-832)**:
- i. The man was a manager – we too.
 - ii. He was entrusted with money – we too.
 - iii. He made friends with it – we too.
 - iv. His life came to an end – we too.
 - v. **“The sons of this eon care for earthly houses, the sons of light are set on entering... heavenly mansions.”** Similar actions, but different motivations: *The one wanted to please himself, the other wanted to please God!*
- b. Heart – for self or for God: ¹⁰ **“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹ If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth [the money of this world], who will entrust to you the true riches [spiritual, eternal riches]?” ¹² And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?** // We are only the managers, AND NOT THE OWNERS! Regarding all

that God has entrusted to us, how are we managing those things – our way or His way?

- c. Your master – God or money: ¹³ **No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.** // When money is our master, we have a negative view of God's instruction about money. When God is our Master, we act according to His Word!

3. **Jesus Was Rejected by the Pharisees:** ¹⁴ **The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him** [money was their master, which gave them a negative view of Jesus' instruction]. ¹⁵ **And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men** [thus making yourselves appear righteous], **but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."** // Rather than exalt or lift up ourselves, God calls us to ▶see our sins, ▶humble ourselves, ▶trust in Jesus, ▶rejoice in His gift of forgiveness, ▶know that we have His gift of eternal life, and ▶allow God's Word to guide the use of our money!

This Week's Challenge: Does God's Word guide the use of your money OR does your money guide your response to God's Word?

Let Us Pray: Dear Father in heaven, we T.Y. for the money entrusted to us; please make our hearts for You and help us to use our money according to the instruction of Your Word.

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