

TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C 2016

1. Is Jesus recommending dishonesty?
 - a. That could be our initial take on the parable
 - b. Understand parable think in terms of small villages, relationships are more important than laws
 - i. Steward is responsible for managing the estate of a landowner
 - ii. He makes agreements and signs contracts for the landowner
 - iii. Been dishonest, squandering property
 - iv. Master tells him to prepare to settle the accounts
 - v. Steward is going to be dismissed
 - c. Master, unwittingly, provides an opportunity to the steward
 - d. Steward in a fix
 - i. Can't dig ditches
 - ii. Don't want to go begging
 - e. The steward settles the accounts by quickly goes to the debtors and giving them discounts on the debts
 - i. How much olive oil do you owe my master?
 1. 100 gallons, I will give you a discount, let's make it 50 gallons
 - ii. To another, how much wheat do you owe my master
 1. 100 bushels, I will give you a discount, let's make it 80 bushels
 - f. By the time the landowner discovers what the steward has done, he is in a bind
 - i. He could go back and tell the debtors, that the steward did not have the authority to reduce debts
 - ii. Debtors would be upset since they acted in good faith
 - iii. Most likely they would blame the landowner, instead of the steward
 - iv. He might even look bad to his neighbors if he dismissed the steward
 - v. They would see the landowner as being cruel to a generous steward
 - g. The landowner in the story is commending the steward's shrewdness
 - i. You may be dishonest, but at this point I will have to keep you on
2. People hearing the story are not likely to be landowners, more likely debtors or stewards
 - a. Their sympathies going to lie already with the steward
 - b. Imagine them saying, after hearing the story, you know that steward really was pretty smart
 - c. They would want to cheer him on as the underdog

3. The punch line for the story is the next words
 - a. Children of this world are more prudent dealing with their own generation than are the children of the light
 - b. The steward shrewdly developed connections, friends to take him in if dismissed
4. Jesus tells this story to remind us that we are more like the dishonest steward than we might like to admit
 - a. A principle awareness of our faith is that everything comes from and belongs to God
 - b. Every blessing we have, does not really belong to us
 - c. God has allowed us to be stewards of his creation
 - i. Our first vocation is to make the world a holier and better place
 - d. some may have responsibility to care for families or children
 - e. our skills and education comes as result of others sacrificing themselves for us to carry out God's command to nurture and make holy the world
 - f. Our jobs and careers are ways for us to serve God's people
5. like the dishonest steward we are tempted to use whatever we have simply for our own pleasure or whim rather than do God's will
 - a. We squander God's gifts by putting ourselves first rather than be truly thankful to God for his love goodness to us
 - b. How often do we focus on keeping ourselves happy without thinking of our neighbors?
6. The question Jesus asks us is when God calls us to account for his gifts, how will we be able to respond
 - a. Who do we have to take us in when God tells us he is dismissing us from our stewardship of his world
 - b. Tradition that Church has given us for finding friends has been almsgiving, fasting and prayer
 - c. Almsgiving is making friends with God's special people the poor
 - i. They will testify before God how generous we have been to them
 - d. Fasting may mean giving up food, but it is really about letting go of our obsessions
 - i. It could mean sharing some of our productive time with others
 - e. Prayer is putting God first in our life at least for that moment
 - i. In prayer we unite ourselves with those spiritual friends we have made through fasting and almsgiving
 - ii. We also join ourselves to the sacrifice Jesus made for us as a promise of his love and forgiveness
7. Through these spiritual relationships we have hope that God will commend us and welcome us into His company despite our unworthiness a that moment of accounting.