

## Trustworthiness

Twenty-fifth Week of Ordinary Time-September 18, 2016-Luke16: 1-13

The scriptures for this weekend are very specific on the proper treatment of the poor and the responsibility that we have to be trustworthy in the handling of our own affairs, temporal and spiritual. The prophet Amos opens with the words, **“Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land!”** The prophet has called for everyone’s attention, noting the practices of those who cheat in their business dealings and **“buy the lowly for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals”** will be subject to judgement. These practices of corruption and dishonest trade were prevalent at the time of Christ.

These same issues seem very relevant today, as we search to end the suffering of so many, the expanse of nuclear weapons and the continual decline of the created world. St. Paul says to us, **“First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers, for kings and for all in authority that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. This is good and pleasing to God.”** It appears that St. Paul is saying that in the midst of the bad, our prayers for good are necessary for the good of all. We must be vigilant in our prayers to convert a disordered world.

Jesus clarifies this week’s teaching with his parable of the steward who is called out by his master as **“squandering his property.”** I have to admit, this gospel is a bit confusing. At first glance, the corrupt steward is trying to save his own skin, knowing that he will soon be out on his own. In an attempt to win favors from those who are indebted to the master, the steward reduces what they owe.

How can this be the correct response as it appears that he is using the master’s earnings to save himself? A bit of history is needed to understand that most stewards charged exorbitant interest on the debts that they oversaw. The steward could reap from the debtors a sizable profit from the indebtedness of the lowly. Sound familiar? In the story that Jesus tells, the steward changed his life by dismissing his accumulated interest, with the hope that the goodwill he has sewn will allow him to survive in the world once he is dismissed from this job.

Jesus uses this very strange parable to teach us a lesson about the connection between our eternal life and our human existence. **“The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.”** What we do in this life makes a difference. If we do not use the many gifts and blessings for the betterment of the world and God’s people, how can we be trusted to the matters of the spiritual life and salvation?

Dishonest practices, cheating and scandal for our own profit will be judged. We are called to a life of goodness, holiness and the sharing of our lives with others. This is the only way we arrive at the gates of heaven. **“You cannot serve both God and mammon.”**

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler