

# TRINITY 9

**August 2017**

Old Test: 2 Samuel 22:26-34

Epistle: I Corinthians 10:6-13

Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

## ***Standing...***

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The basis for today's sermon is the Gospel lesson we just heard—that of the shrewd steward, who is the villain. Or is he the hero?

Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord—our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

## ***Sitting...***

The problem interpreting this parable is that Jesus praises a man who's a scoundrel.  
Encouraging us, as children of light, to be just like him.  
What's going on?

Well, by way of review...

A rich man has a manager—a steward who saw to all the rich man's affairs.  
He looked after his property.  
Paid his bills.  
Invested his money.  
Hired and supervised all the employees.

The steward had enormous power,  
and everything he did was binding.

Think of him as Joseph of old, who managed all of Egypt.  
Second only to Pharaoh.

Then some nameless informant—gotta watch those nameless informants—  
convinces the rich man to sack the steward.

And sure enough, in walks the rich man with pink slip in hand.

"This is your termination notice."

"Put my affairs in order."

The steward didn't see this coming,  
 and he knows, according to verse 3,  
     he's got bad relationships with everybody in town.  
 There is no way he'll ever land another job—not like this one.  
     He'll be reduced to begging, or manual labor—  
     and with his soft hands and bad back—he won't survive.

His plan is,  
 to inform his master's debtors that he's knocked enormous amounts off their debt.  
     Actually, what he's done is take out his fees.  
     The thought is, which I think is helpful,  
         is this steward built into these debts an enormous cut,  
         for himself,  
                 which allows him to write off one bill by half—  
                 another bill by a fifth.

Obviously, the debtors are elated.  
     And what's the steward done?  
         He's created friendships that he didn't have before.  
         Friendships which will hopefully allow him to land on his feet,  
         once he's escorted out of the master's house.  
         He's seen as gracious in the eyes of the debtors.

What bakes our noodle is verse 8,  
     where the rich man comes in,  
         sees what the steward has done,  
         sees the bottom line and commends him.  
             The rich man is impressed, for the steward gave up short term  
             financial gains and put his money into something that in the long  
             term was more valuable...  
                 namely, making friendships.

Our Lord's point in verses 8 and 9 is,  
     here's a man inside a secular framework.  
     One who pays no attention to the kingdom of God or the life everlasting—  
         and he is wiser with the use of his wealth  
         than the children of light are with theirs.

That's the first point Jesus makes:

*"The sons of this world are more shrewd ... than the sons of light."*

In other words, "Look at how clever this steward is in securing his future."

Why is it that you aren't as zealous about your eternal future?"

Alright—so there's two things for us to consider.

I'll be brief, but they're hard hitting.

Also know that I've lived with this text all week long—

you get it for 15 minutes.

First, you are a steward—just like the guy in our lesson.

You are a steward of money, hear me...

That. Is. Not. Yours.

"Wha—Whose money do I manage?"

I'm glad you asked.

You manage God's money.

"Well, I never..."

I know...I know, you think it's all yours. I do too.

But it's not, and we need to repent...

We forget that we're the steward and not the master.

Our money is all God's. "All? Did he just say, All?"

"But I made it with my own two hands!"

You mean the hands God gave you?

"It was my skill!"

You mean the skill God gave you?

Along with the health, and the strength, and the breath...

It's all God's. What you have has been given to you as  
a gift, to be used as the Lord sees fit.

Just listen to David,

a wealthy man, who prays in I Cor. 29—

*Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. For all things come from you...*

Gang, you are a steward of money that is not yours.

And Jesus calls us to live from a different perspective—

that being the perspective of generosity.

Again, inside a secular framework where one has no thought of the kingdom of God or eternal life at all, people intrinsically know to put their money in something that'll increase in value.

But what do we believe as children of light?

That there's nothing here that's going to last.

There's nothing in this world,

no material thing,

no asset,

no place you can put your money that will really last.

So—so invest your money into what will last forever.

And regarding what lasts forever—

Jesus describes heaven.

When discussing heaven

we're used to hearing about glory, crowns, harps, streets of gold—

but none of that moves me, and I assume it doesn't move you either.

None of that moves me to be generous.

How does Jesus describe heaven?

Friends—Jesus says heaven is a place of friends.

It's a place of love—that which we all long for.

For in this life, many times love is a source of pain

more so than a source of joy.

Because from time to time friends sin against one another, whether on purpose or not.

It's just what sinners do...

Friends use each other. There's pride among friends, jealousy among friends, pettiness and moodiness among friends—and even death.

Death separates the closest of friends.

But not there—none of those things exist in heaven.

What is our Lord doing? He's explaining a love that's not here. It's there. So what does He say to do in the meantime? To be like the steward in this parable who realizes it's more important to have friends in the future than money in the bank right now—be like the steward who gives up what he's ultimately going to lose to gain that which he will never lose. That being friends—surviving beyond death—who will welcome you into eternal dwellings.

Now look, many of you already know this—

you live out this teaching of Jesus in so many ways...I've seen it.

For crying out loud, there **will be / was** a presentation check given today back to this church for the aggressive payment of the addition—

An addition that is used for what?

Is used to catechize, instruct and disciple people.

It's used to help people get all the way to heaven itself.

Giving to the Building Campaign is not just so we can be out of debt. It's being like the shrewd steward, who gives up what he can have in the short-term, to invest in the long-term.

Again, so many of you have already learned this.

You are generous to those in need,

you even forgive what others owe you

and you generously give to your Church—

so that the Word and Sacrament ministry here continues for years to come.

But others of you...

You have not learned this lesson, and you know it.

You have not learned the way our Lord would have us steward His gifts.

You can get upset if you'd like.

I hope you don't...

again, I've lived with this text all week long—

wondering why I couldn't be at Calvary today preaching something entirely different.

Why isn't Pastor Bruss here?

You who have not learned this lesson—

repent—repent of your stinginess—

and practice being generous with the mammon—the money—

that's not even yours to being with.

Put it towards those things that will help people get to heaven and mend their broken lives.

Do you need some examples?

How about Topeka Lutheran School?

See, it's one thing to give to the construction of a building,

where you can see what's being done with "your" money.

It's another thing to give what you can't see—namely souls.

The souls of children.

How about our missionaries?  
 We've only reached half of our goal for the year.  
 How about one of our LCMS seminaries?  
 Where pastors are trained to preach  
 and administer the sacraments.

Do you see how these examples are helping people hear the gospel  
 and grow in the knowledge of the Lord?

I conclude with this.

In II Corinthians chapter 8 St. Paul encourages the church in Corinth to give money—their hard earned money—to a problem that arose in Macedonia. There'd been a famine, and St. Paul tells them, "I don't want you give your money away because I'm ordering you. I want you to do it out of love."

Then he tells them how—  
 how to make them generous with their money,  
 St. Paul says, think about Jesus Christ.

*"That though he was rich, yet for your sake became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich" (verse 9).*

Who is the steward in our lesson? It's Jesus.

Who looses all of His wealth,  
 looses all that He could have had—  
 to make friends for Himself.

Friends were once His enemies—that being you and me.  
 By going to the cross He turns enemies into friends.  
 And because He did so, we are on the receiving end  
 of an ultimate friendship—living with Him forever.

Learn the lesson: Be generous like the shrewd steward.  
 In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**8:15—we remain standing for the Canticle—Hymn 940.**

**11:00—Sitting—Hymn 704**