

# 15th Sunday after Pentecost      September 22, 2019

Proper 20(25) or 14th Sunday after Trinity  
Year C – the Gospel of Luke

**Lutheran**

## **Living the ^ Lectionary**

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.  
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

### Available on line at:

- ✦ [www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies](http://www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies)
- ✦ Through [www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com) at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
- ✦ All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

### Gather and be blessed:

- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com)
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
- ✦ **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.

What kind of  
Steward are you?

Luke 16:1-15

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUHquz37joE>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 557 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 383**

**“Seek where you may to find a way”**

There is very limited publication of this hymn by Georg Weissel, six hymnals, all with Lutheran affiliation.

“Georg Weissel (1590 – 1 August 1635) was a German Lutheran minister and hymn writer... Twenty three of his songs, written following the rules of Opitz, are extant. His most popular hymn was written on the occasion of the inauguration of the Altrossgarten Church in 1623. (He wrote the ) Advent hymn "Macht hoch die Tür", (“Lift up your heads, Ye mighty gates”, LSB, 340/341, TLH, 73) paraphrasing Psalm 24 (and) "Such, wer da will, ein ander Ziel" (EG 346), which he wrote on the occasion of his ordination in Königsberg (this week’s Hymn of the Day)...Catherine Winkworth translated the Advent hymn in 1853 as "Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates". ...”

- [https://hymnary.org/text/seek\\_where\\_you\\_may\\_to\\_find\\_a\\_way?extended=true#instances](https://hymnary.org/text/seek_where_you_may_to_find_a_way?extended=true#instances)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onAufMBYosQ> TLH, piano by [Andrew Remillard](#)

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**O.T.**– “The LORD has sworn...“Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

**Psalm** – “Who is like the LORD our God...”

**Epistle** – “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...”

**Gospel** – “*but God knows your hearts.*”

**Amos 8:4-7; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Jeremiah 8:18- 9:1 or Amos 8:4-7 (Next week: St. Michael and All Angels: Daniel 10:10-14, 12:1-3, RCL, 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 or Amos 6:1a, 4-7)**

"Silence!" is the Lord's command to Amos.<sup>1</sup>

While previously Amos has interceded on behalf of Israel,<sup>2</sup> in the midst of this vision the Lord expects silence as words of judgment thunder down upon Israel. The Lord's judgment culminates in a divine silence -- a famine of the words of the Lord in Israel.<sup>3</sup> It is only the silence of the cross of Christ that answers the aching hunger and thirst.

Amos 8:1-12 was the reading for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Proper In this pericope, a portion of which returns in the lectionary nine weeks hence,<sup>4</sup> we are encountered by Amos' report of his fourth vision.<sup>5</sup>

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=631](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=631) **Samuel Giere** Associate Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

## The Coming Day of Bitter Mourning

*8 This is what the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. <sup>2</sup> And he said, “Amos, what do you see?” And I said, “A basket of summer fruit.” Then the LORD said to me,*

*“The end<sup>[a]</sup> has come upon my people Israel;*

*I will never again pass by them.*

*<sup>3</sup> The songs of the temple<sup>[b]</sup> shall become wailings<sup>[c]</sup> in that day,” declares the Lord GOD.*

*“So many dead bodies!”*

*“They are thrown everywhere!”*

*“Silence!”*

*<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you who trample on the needy*

*and bring the poor of the land to an end,*

*<sup>5</sup> saying, “When will the new moon be over,*

*that we may sell grain?*

*And the Sabbath,*

*that we may offer wheat for sale,*

*that we may make the ephah small and the shekel<sup>[d]</sup> great*

*and deal deceitfully with false balances,*

*<sup>6</sup> that we may buy the poor for silver*

*and the needy for a pair of sandals*

*and sell the chaff of the wheat?”*

*<sup>7</sup> The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:*

*“Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.*

*<sup>8</sup> Shall not the land tremble on this account,*

*and everyone mourn who dwells in it,*

*and all of it rise like the Nile,*

*and be tossed about and sink again, like the Nile of Egypt?”*

*<sup>9</sup> “And on that day,” declares the Lord GOD,*

*“I will make the sun go down at noon*

*and darken the earth in broad daylight.*

*<sup>10</sup> I will turn your feasts into mourning*

*and all your songs into lamentation;*

*I will bring sackcloth on every waist*

*and baldness on every head;*

*I will make it like the mourning for an only son*

*and the end of it like a bitter day.*

<sup>11</sup> *“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD,  
“when I will send a famine on the land—  
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,  
but of hearing the words of the LORD.*

<sup>12</sup> *They shall wander from sea to sea,  
and from north to east;  
they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the LORD,  
but they shall not find it.*

- a. [Amos 8:2](#) The Hebrew words for *end* and *summer fruit* sound alike
- b. [Amos 8:3](#) Or *palace*
- c. [Amos 8:3](#) Or *The singing women of the palace shall wail*
- d. [Amos 8:5](#) An *ephah* was about 3/5 bushel or 22 liters; a *shekel* was about 2/5 ounce or 11 grams

“When will the holidays be over so that we can get back to business?”

When faith in a providing God fails, greed takes over. Amos is the first prophet whose sermons were recorded. He was taken by the Lord to tell the Northern Kingdom that their time was short: the Lord was about to let the Assyrians destroy them.

The Lord’s plan to bless the world through Israel was failing. Israel should have known better. Yahweh had distributed the land to them equally, but now they were parceling it out among the wealthy. The poor were being sold into slavery. Business practices were sharp and dishonest.

Faith leads to obedience, but Israel was no longer obeying the terms of the covenant with Yahweh. Disobedience is the symptom; the illness is faithlessness.

Amos, in the service of his God, proclaimed: “I, the Lord, will never forget any of their deeds.” He who has the power to cast sin behind his back (Isa 38:17) will not do so in face of brazen unbelief.

**Forget God and God remembers your sin.                      Remember God and God forgets your sin.”**

- [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/18-3\\_Trinity/18-3\\_Hillmer.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/18-3_Trinity/18-3_Hillmer.pdf) “Faith in the Old Testament: Pentateuch and Prophets for Pentecost”, Mark Hillmer, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota
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**Psalm 113; RCL, Psalm 79:1-9 or Psalm 113 (Psalm 91; RCL, Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 or Psalm 146)**

*“When I think of interpreting the psalms I am immediately thrust into a world that is both foreign and familiar.*

*As someone born half a world away, separated by 3,000 years of culture and history, and a non-Hebrew speaker, I wonder how I might read, hear, and interpret the words as the Word of God. It is a rocky ground on which I walk and a slippery streambed on which I travel.*

*Written in Hebrew and later translated into English and a host of global languages, the psalms intone a language made for the people of God. They are meant for those who would count themselves as part of the “in” group. They are directed toward those who would stake their life on a covenantal relationship with the living God. They are personal laments and reflections on life, corporate songs and prayers to remind people about what makes a life worth living, poetry about the activity of God, and prayers of praise to God...*

*Psalm 113 is from start to finish a hymn of praise about God. It is a call to the people of God to remember who God is and what God has done. Under an arc of the sun’s transit across the sky, earthen landscapes rotate and people go about daily life. In the ordinary movement of each day*

they are called to praise God. Perhaps the Psalmist is encouraging the people of God to join in what the Apostle Paul would later call in his first letter to the Thessalonians, "prayer without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

*In berekah form\*, the psalmist breathes a prayer that echoes praise to God at the beginning and end. In between the two explosions of praise, the cause for praise is lifted up. The creator of all that is and ever will be is somehow concerned with the ordinary activities of people. The psalmist declares the radical uniqueness of a God that cannot be easily defined. There is nothing in all creation that can be compared to this God, and yet this God is concerned about people..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=673](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=673)  
**Paul O. Myhre** Associate Director of the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology, Wabash Center, Crawfordsville, Indiana

\* "The Hebrew word for blessings. Typically, they begin, "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe," followed by naming that for which God is blessed, such as "who brings forth bread from the earth." Scholars distinguish between berakoth and hodayoth prayers. The latter begin, "We give you thanks." Jewish liturgical prayers have tended to use the berakoth form and Christian prayers the hodayoth. These Jewish prayer forms lie behind the Christian Great Thanksgiving (BCP, pp. 333ff, 340ff, 361ff, 367-376). The Jewish thanksgiving after meals, which includes both forms, is almost certainly the ancestor of the Christian eucharistia, or eucharistic prayer."

- <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/berakoth-singular-berakah> "Glossary definitions provided courtesy of Church Publishing Incorporated, New York, NY,(All Rights reserved) from "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians," Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors"

## Who Is like the LORD Our God?

### 113 Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD,  
praise the name of the LORD!

<sup>2</sup> Blessed be the name of the LORD  
from this time forth and forevermore!  
<sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to its setting,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised!

<sup>4</sup> The LORD is high above all nations,  
and his glory above the heavens!

<sup>5</sup> Who is like the LORD our God,  
who is seated on high,

<sup>6</sup> who looks far down  
on the heavens and the earth?

<sup>7</sup> He raises the poor from the dust  
and lifts the needy from the ash heap,

<sup>8</sup> to make them sit with princes,  
with the princes of his people.  
<sup>9</sup> He gives the barren woman a home,  
making her the joyous mother of children.

**Praise the LORD!**

“All four texts assigned for this Sunday are rich with possibilities for preaching. The word about “a quiet and peaceable life” in 1 Tim 2:1-2 is especially appropriate as we think about the coming elections. In this season of remembering our nation’s history and preparing for its future, all in the context of the color of autumn, I suggest preaching on Psalm 113.

This is a typical hymn, with a **call to praise (vv. 1-3)** followed by **reasons for praise (vv. 4-9)**, all framed with “Hallelujah,” or, literally, “Praise the Lord.” The gathered congregation is invited to praise God throughout all time (v. 2) and throughout all space (v. 3). Let us not accuse these psalmists of thinking too small! Praise is a reasonable thing to do, and the psalm provides two reasons. God is great, high and exalted (vv. 4-5). God is also good, stooping down to care for individual persons. The psalm which begins by stretching our imaginations as high as the heavens and as wide as all space now focuses on the particular. This mighty God helps the jobless to find work and a position of dignity in the community (vv. 7-8). The Lord has been hearing the prayers of the unemployed for a long time! God also hears the prayers of the childless couple. The psalm concludes with an unforgettable scene: a young Hebrew mother who had been childless is now playing happily with her children in her home. When you have meaningful work, when you see a young wife enjoying her children, you have reasons for praising God and saying Hallelujah! There is more. This psalm speaks of a God who is high and exalted, but who also stoops down to care for people. This is the God who sent Christ Jesus, a ransom for all (1 Tim 2:6)”

- [http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/12-3\\_Music/12-3\\_Limburg.pdf](http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/12-3_Music/12-3_Limburg.pdf) The Autumn Leaves: Pages from the Psalter for Late Pentecost JAMES LIMBURG Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota

**1 Timothy 2:1-15; RCL, 1 Timothy 2:1-7 (Revelation 12:7-12; RCL, 1 Timothy 6:6-19)**

**Any thoughts on why the Revised Common Lectionary stops at verse 7? Hint, "Look Out! Here Come the Ladies, the Bishops, the Presbyters and the Rules!"\***

*“The passage before us serves as an exhortation to pray for the salvation of all people. It is part of a larger section where Paul deals with organizational matters in the church...”*

### **Prayer for public welfare**

*An observer once suggested that the overwhelming evidence is that prayer doesn't work. The evidence he used to support his argument was that in the Church of England, prayers are always offered for the monarch, but that there is no evidence that the monarchs had "health", or were "long to live", in comparison to any other person in England over the last thousand years. A good point, that is of course if prayers for health and a long life are promised blessings of the kingdom.*

*We can ask God for anything. He is a loving father and wants us to place all our cares with him. Yet, a prayer that seeks to prompt the hand of God must be based on the will of God. The prayer that works is the prayer that taps into God's intentions...”*

➤ <http://www.lectionarystudies.com/sunday25ce.html>  
Pumpkin Cottage Ministry Resources

## Pray for All People

2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man<sup>[a]</sup> Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (continued below)

- a. [1 Timothy 2:5](#) *men* and *man* render the same Greek word that is translated *people* in verses [1](#) and [4](#)

This week's passage picks up and sustains the theological grounding of the offer of free grace for all (regardless of whether all receive that grace), and situates it in a practical context.

That context appears in the opening admonition that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions" (2:1f), and it continues in verses that the lectionary omits (about the behavior and duties of women, 2:9-15). The God of grace whom we have already learned to identify as immortal, invisible, and unique (1:17) has made that grace available for the sake of all humanity. This is done through the redemptive mediation of Jesus Christ who became human so that we might, in solidarity with him, participate in his divinity.

These epistle readings identify God's purpose as deliverance: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1:15) and "[God] desires everyone to be saved" (2:4), but the letters do not define "salvation" (deliverance, rescue) more specifically, nor do they identify what its opposite might be...

It suffices that we know God longs to rescue us from undesirable circumstances. We need no more know those circumstances exactly than we need to know exactly what married life would be like when we venture upon it, or to know exactly how miserable we would be to betray our beloved.

Faith knows that God delivers us from a worse condition -- a condition so much worse as to require Jesus' life to save us.

This saving mission of Jesus is for all ("*everyone* to be saved" 2:4, "ransom for *all*" 2:6), just as last week's lesson emphasized the boundlessness of God's grace...

Thus this lesson instructs us to pray for kings and other rulers, and the succeeding verses (which the [RCL] lectionary omits) give us a dress code for women with a view toward not giving offence to others. What do these have to do with one another? They both are consequences of the explicit purpose of this passage: "so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity." Our calm, peaceable, godly dignity bespeaks the character of God to onlookers who might not otherwise know anything about our God. We would belie the role of these instructions if

we took them to require particular behaviors that alienated the people around us — if instead of helping Christians to lead quiet and peaceable lives, they stirred up discord and brought hostility on the church...

Thus the readings for this week knit together last week's teachings on grace and on God's uniqueness with today's concern that the church's conduct in a world that lives by non-Christian customs (the letter takes this as the rationale for Paul's calling as an apostle "to the Gentiles," which may in this context be may read as a figure for any "foreign" way of life)...

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=717](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=717) [A.K.M. Adam](#) Tutor in New Testament, St. Stephen's House, Oxford University, Oxford, England, U. K

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\*"...none of us should ever leave this Preface and head for Verse 8 and the verses following it without being cognizant of the difference between the snapshots of our heritage and the videos of our own time." Phyllis Tickle, *The Hardest Question*, 2013

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This section of Timothy creates difficulties for many. There are many perspectives and a close study of words as they translate into English for current cultural understandings is needed. Read them as they appear in Scripture, compare various translations and do some in depth study.

Resources for doing that are:

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2&version=ESV> Putting in a single verse will allow seeing it in multiple translations
- [https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1\\_timothy/2-8.htm](https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/2-8.htm) Multiple commentaries, "Expository (English Bible)" and "Exegetical (original languages)"

*"How are men and women to behave and relate to one another in the church? This question and this particular passage have been on the minds of many in recent times. For many, the passage before us has been regarded as a major hill to be taken in an interpretive battle. But the teaching of 2:11-15 is just one piece in a larger puzzle, and by itself it is incapable of providing a complete answer. Specific circumstances required Paul to answer the question asked above in specific ways. The concern here will not be to generalize those specifics but rather to set out the issues that Paul addressed and those that we must consider in the church today..." (continued after the reading)*

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/1Tim/Men-Women-Worship> IVP New Testament Commentaries are made available by the generosity of [InterVarsity Press](#).

<sup>8</sup> I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup> likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, <sup>10</sup> but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. <sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and

Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.  
<sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

“When Paul instructed men and women (some think husbands and wives were specifically in view) in his churches (see also 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:33-35), the immediate problem was disturbances in the worship service. On the one hand, changing attitudes about the man-woman relationship led women to assert themselves in the worship service in ways that threatened unity and perhaps also reflected a disregard for biblical and cultural distinctions between men and women. Disruptions by women included inquiring about the meaning of prophecies (1 Cor 14:33-35) and teaching men (1 Tim 2:11-12). But the present passage also reveals that the anger and arguments of some men were contributing to the disruption of the church's worship service. As pointed out above (see on 2:1), Paul drew upon certain material in such cases in order to restore peace to the community by encouraging appropriate behavior. In this his concern both for biblical patterns and for the perceptions of those outside of the church is evident.

His instructions are given in two parts. First, they encourage cooperative behavior among men in the worship service in relation to the specific task of prayer outlined above. Second, women are instructed concerning appropriate dress and then concerning appropriate behavior in the worship setting in relation to teaching. (The appropriate demeanor of men (2:8))

The NIV omits the word "therefore," which in the original Greek sentence connects the instructions to men with the preceding instructions about prayer. A connection is intended, as in fact Paul now lays down two principles to ensure the effectiveness of the church's prayer...

**First, prayer that is acceptable must come from holy, purified hearts.** The physical lifting of hands was important in the Jewish act of prayer. But the purity of the hands, originally a physical prerequisite to be fulfilled before one approached God (Ex 30:19-21), came to be symbolic of the condition of the heart. The early church understood such purity to be a condition of acceptable prayer (Jas 4:8). When we pray, our communication is with a holy God. He requires of us that we deal with our sins before making our approach.

**Second, prayer that is acceptable must come from people in right relationship with one another.** For this reason Paul adds the stipulation that our prayer be without anger or disputing. This principle too was widely known in the early church and goes back to Jesus' own teaching (Mt 5:23; 6:12, 14-15; Jas 4:3; 1 Pet 3:7). Simply put, difficulties in our relationship with God or in our relationship with fellow believers can hinder our prayer. The reference to arguments has the dissension caused by the false teachers in mind (1 Tim 1:6-7; 6:4-5; Tit 3:9-10). A divisive spirit had invaded the worship service, where unity was to be most evident. Interpersonal harmony is a resource of incalculable value for the prayer life of the church. (The appropriate demeanor of women (2:9-15))...

We run the risk of misusing 2:8-15 if we make it a proof text in our modern debate. The passage as a whole calls for men and women to relate to one another in the church according to the standards of acceptability, in awareness of the theological realities of the age in which we live. Although Paul's reference to the creation story cautions against viewing his teaching as simply suited to his culture, his sensitivity to culture should also be considered in addressing questions related to the role of women in the church today. There is a need to explore the degree to which there existed in the apostle's thinking about the female-male relationship a difference between

nonnegotiables (aspects of this relationship that seem to stem from God's creative will) and negotiables (aspects of behavior within the relationship that may be expressed differently from one culture to the next). If 2:15 envisions an acceptable role for women, then, depending on the culture within which we find ourselves, verse 15 may well need to allow room for astronauts, surgeons and business executives in addition to missionaries, church workers of various sorts and, indeed, housewives. **But in any role godliness will need to be found in this incomplete age through our reliance on God's promise in the continuing struggle with sin.** ... But easy answers that either simply impose culture on God's will or neglect culture altogether must be resisted."

- <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/1Tim/Men-Women-Worship> IVP New Testament Commentaries are made available by the generosity of [InterVarsity Press](#).

**Luke 16:1-15; RCL, Luke 16:1-13 (Matthew 18:1-11 or Luke 10:17-20; RCL, Luke 16:19-31)**

*Any commentator will tell you that this is a difficult text.*

*The story itself sounds quite contemporary. A dishonest manager is about to lose his job because he has misspent his employer's assets. Because he doesn't want to do manual labor or receive charity, he goes around to all the people who owe his employer money and reduces their debts. He does this so that they will be hospitable to him after he loses his job. To our surprise, the employer commends the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. Why is he commended? And, why does Luke include this story in his Gospel?*

*To begin to answer these questions, we can note that this parable serves as a bridge between the stories of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) and the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31). Like the prodigal in the preceding story, our dishonest manager has "squandered" what was entrusted to him (15:13; 16:1). And, like the story that follows, this parable begins with the phrase, "There was a rich man" (16:1, 19).*

*Although our dishonest manager does not repent (like the prodigal) or act virtuously (like Lazarus), he nonetheless does something with the rich man's wealth that reverses the existing order of things. In Luke, reversals of status are at the heart of what happens when Jesus and the kingdom of God appear..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1783](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1783) [Lois Malcolm](#) Professor of Systematic Theology, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

## "The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 16th Chapter"

### The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

16 He also said to the disciples, "*There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.* <sup>2</sup> *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.'* <sup>3</sup> *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.* <sup>4</sup> *I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from*

*management, people may receive me into their houses.’<sup>5</sup> So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’<sup>6</sup> He said, ‘A hundred measures<sup>[a]</sup> of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’<sup>7</sup> Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures<sup>[b]</sup> of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’<sup>8</sup> The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world<sup>[c]</sup> are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.<sup>9</sup> And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth,<sup>[d]</sup> so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.*

*<sup>10</sup> “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.<sup>11</sup> If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?<sup>12</sup> And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?<sup>13</sup> 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.”*

## The Law and the Kingdom of God

<sup>14</sup>The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, *“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*

- a. [Luke 16:6](#) About 875 gallons or 3,200 liters
- b. [Luke 16:7](#) Between 1,000 and 1,200 bushels or 37,000 to 45,000 liters
- c. [Luke 16:8](#) Greek *age*
- d. [Luke 16:9](#) Greek *mammon*, a Semitic word for money or possessions; also verse [11](#); rendered *money* in verse [13](#)

## Cross references:

1. [Luke 16:8](#) : [See Matt. 25:2](#)
2. [Luke 16:8](#) : [ch. 20:34](#); [See ch. 10:6](#)
3. [Luke 16:8](#) : [See Matt. 25:2](#)
4. [Luke 16:8](#) : [John 12:36](#); [1 Thess. 5:5](#); [\[Eph. 5:8\]](#)
5. [Luke 16:9](#) : [\[ch. 12:33](#); [Matt. 6:20](#); [19:21](#); [1 Tim. 6:10, 17-19\]](#)
6. [Luke 16:9](#) : [ver. 11, 13](#); [Matt. 6:24](#)
7. [Luke 16:10](#) : [Matt. 25:21, 23](#)
8. [Luke 16:10](#) : [ch. 19:17](#)
9. [Luke 16:12](#) : [\[1 Chr. 29:14, 16\]](#)
10. [Luke 16:13](#) : [\[See ver. 9 above\]](#); [ver. 11, 13](#); [Matt. 6:24](#)

*“This is the Gospel of the Lord”    “Praise to You, O Christ”*

“Phyllis Tickle calls it “The most difficult parable of them all.” [David Lose](#) calls it “The most confusing parable.” The New International Version labels it “The Parable of the Shrewd Manager.” The New Revised Standard uses the word “Dishonest” instead of shrewd. The Common English Bible goes it different direction with the subheading “Faithfulness with Money.”

“All parables have an element of strangeness. That is sort of the point of them. Jesus uses parables to teach about the Kingdom of God, which is a strange concept. Forgiveness, compassion, self-sacrifice, these are counter-cultural concepts that take strange stories to understand. Some parables are strange because we don’t understand the cultural weight of words like Levite or Samaritan. Some parables are strange because of the actions people take (who would plant a weed – one that gets really big – in a garden?) Yet despite the general strangeness of Jesus’ parables, the one found in [Luke 16:1-13](#) seems to be the three-dollar bill...

Perhaps the level of confusion that this parable stirs is evidence of how remarkably important it really is. This one blows our mind, because it seems to go against all of our common understanding of fairness...

And that’s just it. The Kingdom of God has little to do with fairness. It has little to do with keeping proper ledgers and making sure that everyone gets what is their due. The Kingdom of God is about relationships. It is about reconciliation...

➤ <https://fatpastor.me/2013/09/19/the-strangest-of-them-all/> Rev. Rob McCoy, pastor of [Two Rivers United Methodist Church](#) in Rock Island, Illinois



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“This strange parable is a doozie. It is a challenge. It is a challenge to look at what cancelling debt really looks like. It is a challenge to take a close look at how I serve wealth over God. It is a challenge to look at how I spend money, how I save money, and how I treat others. It is a strange one, all right. Maybe that’s how God intended it.”

<https://fatpastor.me/2013/09/19/the-strangest-of-them-all/> Rev. Rob McCoy [The Fat Pastor](#) - I am certainly not the only overweight clergy, but I was the first to pick this blog title. Why do I call myself the Fat Pastor? [You can read my reason here.](#) I am the pastor of [Two Rivers United Methodist Church](#) in Rock Island, Illinois, and a 2006 graduate of Eden Theological Seminary and ... ordained ... in full connection with the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of the United Methodist Church in 2010. “