

WORD FROM THE PASTOR

"WE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN GOD AND MONEY"



Today, the master who praises this dishonest manager is none other than Jesus. We are taken aback by this provocative praise. This is not the only place in the Gospels where Jesus uses surprising comparisons in His preaching. If He were among us today, he would surely often make the headlines in newspapers or on TV news. So why praise the dishonest manager and speak of making friends with 'dishonest wealth'? It is truly baffling.

The essential point emerging from the story - or parable - told by Jesus and recounted in the Gospel passage I have just read is summarized in the final sentences: 'No servant can serve two masters: 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 both God and money.'**

Let us begin by looking at where Saint Luke placed this story or parable of Jesus within his narrative—what we call the context. We see here that He is addressing the disciples specifically. He is not debating with the Pharisees, as He was a few pages earlier. He is not speaking to the crowd in general. He is focusing on his disciples—that is, the people we know: the group of the Twelve Apostles, several women who follow Him, and people from all walks of life who are part of His inner circle and live close to Him. These disciples represent us. Thus, we can say that what Jesus says to them, he is saying to us. So, what can we take away today from this story of the dishonest steward praised by Jesus?

His reaction is swift. He has no qualms of conscience. He sees Himself in dire straits, yet he is still the manager." He quickly changes course, without questioning the ethics or morality of his actions. He plunges headlong into calculated corruption. "I know what I'm going to do." He picks up the phone—as we would say today—and in a flash, using methods that were not only clever but—it must be said—dishonest, he writes off his master's debtors' accounts to ensure their gratitude. Sadly, such practices still exist today, as the news sometimes reveals. The point of the parable is clear here. Jesus praises the dishonest steward not for his dishonesty, but for his boldness and resourcefulness given the circumstances. Jesus does not commend the steward's wrongdoing; rather, He highlights his decisiveness in a situation where he could still act to secure a future for himself.

This applies to all of Jesus's disciples. **We must resolve to follow Him boldly, despite the difficult circumstances we sometimes face.** We are merely passing through this world as we await His glorious return. **Our future is being determined today, for the eternal life promised to us has already begun.** Jesus is telling us: **"Be bold and decisive in the present world, remembering the hope of the world to come that you carry within you."** The message is clear: **"We must choose between God and money. We cannot serve two masters."** Choosing to follow Jesus is a decision that takes precedence in our lives. We renew this choice every Sunday at the Eucharist. Despite our weaknesses, we can say to Jesus, **"It is You whom I love and wish to follow."** He shows us mercy, then gives Himself to us in His Word and in His Body and Blood, sustaining us on the path we have chosen with boldness and resolve.