

This Gospel often causes confusion

It seems Jesus is praising dishonesty in the steward

But with a closer reading

It is not dishonesty that Jesus is praising

The business owner loses nothing that he had coming

It is the steward's creativity in providing for himself

And we assume for his family, that Jesus praises

This man is so concerned with his physical well-being

He is willing to sacrifice now

For what will come

For our spiritual well-being

For our eternal well-being

Jesus calls us to the same

But with even with more urgency, more devotion

We see in our first reading what God thinks of dishonesty

The Israelite people set their watches by the moon

They kept holy the Sabbath

But they also had special feasts prescribed for the full moon

These merchants kept the letter of the law

They closed the doors of their shops

But they were hypocrites

They didn't enter into the worship of thanksgiving they were called to

They only closed their doors for practical reasons

They didn't want to be accused of not following the law

And their customers wouldn't have come anyway

Because for the most part, they did observe the feasts

They spent the days of the feast plotting how to cheat others

Using smaller containers

An ephah is similar to what we know as a bushel

They would use lighter shekels

The counter weights on a scale

Or they would fix the scale itself

They would even add chaff to the wheat they sold

All of this they did to take advantage of the powerless

The poor and the needy

The widows and orphans

The very ones they should be concerned about

The ones they should care for

Our Gospel looks at a steward rather than a merchant

A steward is one that is entrusted with the property of another

They are to care of it as if it were their own

Not wasting it

Being prudent in their care for it

This steward was failing

He was squandering the property of the master

Thinking he would not be called to task

Living high on the hog

When it is reported to the master

He sees his own future is at stake

His position in society

He would have to resort to manual labor

Or even begging for sustenance

So when it his own future that is at stake

He becomes quite industrious

He was held in high regard by his master

If not, he would not have the authority to act as he did

So we don't know if the master was over-charging

Or if the steward was reducing his commission

In either case, the master would have to honor these decisions

And practically speaking

The master praises his shrewdness

Jesus tells us that this is not necessarily a bad thing

But we should apply it correctly

The children of the light can learn from the children of this age

We can learn to use the things of this world

For eternal blessings

We have to choose which we will serve

One cannot serve both God and mammon

That doesn't mean the things of this world are bad

It doesn't mean we are called to be materially with nothing

God knows we need things

We need shelter

We need transportation

We need education

We need to take care of our children

We need food

God knows this

And He provides

Through the gifts of nature

Through the gifts of talents He has given each of us

Our intelligence, our ingenuity, our work ethic, our time

We use these things to generate wealth

To take care of ourselves, our families

And to take care of those that cannot take care of themselves

We are the stewards of this world

Use of what the world has is not immoral

But how do we use the resources we have been given?

Are we using them only for personal gain?

Or do we use them to build the kingdom?

Perhaps one way to see the kingdom is to see it as a business

As an analogy, it will fall short in some areas

But there is much to help our reflection

God is the owner

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all having interrelated roles

The currency is grace

The end products are souls

The apostles, the saints

These are the top managers

We are the stewards

Everything has been entrusted to us

As stewards, it is our responsibility to increase the master's profits

Increase the number of souls entering the kingdom

We are held in high regard by God

Even above the angels

Jesus became human, not an angel

We have the authority to act as we decide

God had created us with free will

He has created us with intelligence

He doesn't tax us into submission

What is my response?

Do we know that we are responsible not only for myself?

But also for my family?

For my brothers and sisters?

For complete strangers?

**Do you realize that there are souls to be saved that perhaps only
you can reach?**

There are those I cannot reach

Because of my personality

Because I wear a collar

Because I represent the Church

Some are drawn to that

Some are repelled

But each one of us has people in our lives only we can reach

And that is what it means to be a good steward

Using all the gifts we have received

In order to increase the profits of the Master

And we need to be creative and industrious

We are called to put as much effort building the kingdom

As we do building our portfolios

We are called to use technology if we can

There is nothing wrong with the internet

Twitter, Facebook

I have seen great You Tube posts defending the faith

Yes, any of these can be used to promote evil

But they can also be used to build the kingdom

What are we investing in?

The stock market?

Today's fashion trends?

A career that depends on another person?

Popularity?

Our health?

Any of these can be here today

And gone tomorrow

But there is one that lasts forever

God's kingdom

And our eternal souls

Do we serve God or mammon?