

Luke 16:1-13 Blessed to be a blessing

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing and acceptable to you O Lord.

I have to tell you. There are some weeks when I open the lectionary and look at the gospel lesson and say to myself “Oh no” because the text is one I need to really think about. I felt like Jacob at Penuel wrestling with the angel all night as each day passed this week.

The parable of the shrewd manager is very different than the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin we heard last week. There is deception by the manager and yet praise for such deception by the master. I don't get it. Let's dig into it a bit deeper.

As the parable goes the manager is at risk of losing his job because he has been unfaithful to the master in keeping a good record. When he knows he will be audited he realizes he will have nowhere to go unless he makes some friends because he is too old and in too bad of shape to work.

In a haste he adjusts the accounts of two of the debtors of the master decreasing the amount owing without the master's approval. He is quite “shrewd” as he tries to find a home for himself.

To his surprise the master praises the manager for acting shrewdly. He basically says to him, good for you that you would be so smart that when the individuals you have helped see what you have done, they will welcome you into their home. In the

end the parable summarized says, whether by the use of dishonest wealth, or true riches, one must use money for good. You cannot serve both God and wealth.

My first thought when I read this text was, “okay so I am to use other people’s money and give it away without permission? That’s not going to make me any friends. I know I would be mad if someone did this to me.”

What I have come to believe is that this text is not so much about money mismanagement or dishonesty but about blessings. Let me explain.

In our lives the master God gives to us to many blessings. He gives to us a wealth of love. In baptism he chooses to love us freely and unconditionally. The master has given us this undeserving love to manage and care for and to use. God provides us with this unending love and so many other blessings in our lives. We owe it to the God the master to respond to the gifts given to us by Him and share what the Lord has provided.

Now let me be clear. Wealth comes in many forms and it is clear to me that there are people of different economic status and resources. Wealth is not just about money. Not all of us can give money. God gives all of us love though. Through his Son, God has shown us to what extreme he is willing to go to show us his forgiveness. Jesus dying on the cross is pretty extreme.

The willingness to give his son because of our sinfulness, there is no greater act of love. Through resurrection, the hope and love of Jesus can live in us.

I have to wonder though what is it that keeps us from knowing that we share in God's blessings. It is so easy in today's day and age to feel unworthy. Our lives are not as valuable as others. We do not measure up to the neighbours. We are one of the lowest rungs on the ladder. The human condition is to feel less than and we are constantly in need of building up. Everyone's hearts are in need of replenishing. We as a corporate body at Zion do well to open our hearts and doors to those who need replenishment. There is always one more ministry or community need wishing for support. Prayer for each ministry and organization in the community is something we can offer. Talents can be shared.

It is not always easy to see God on down days but God is with us. Like Abraham and Sarah God has blessed us to be a blessing to others. Being a blessing to others is transformational. To serve God is to live. To share God's love is to be alive. To live and be alive allows us to be grateful. Forget about all of the distractions in life, social media, the internet, television, shopping etc. and be real! It would be a shame if we did not share such love. So be real. Be vulnerable. Be generous and give unconditionally to others. Be a blessing to others. Amen.