

Gospel lesson

Today we hear a parable about how people may scheme in hope when they are desperate.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/qnpi-068-unjust-servant/>;
credit: Good News Productions International
and College Press Publishing

Luke 16:1-13

(NRSV)

¹ Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property.

² So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.'

³ Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.'

⁵ So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

⁶ He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'

⁷ Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'

⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

¹¹ If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches?

¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?

¹³ No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

The Word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

<Interactive time>



Background picture from <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/hispanic-heritage-month-outreach-resources> (bulletin insert)

What does “Hispanic” bring to mind for you? What do you think of when you hear “Hispanic”?

<Let them respond>

Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 is officially Hispanic Heritage month. What is that, exactly? <Let them respond>

According to [TIME](#), “Hispanic Heritage Month is an official celebration of American citizens whose ancestry can be traced back to Spain, Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean.”

Do you know why it starts in the middle of the month? <Let them respond>

According to [TIME](#), the “celebration starts in the middle of the month, as opposed to the end, because the 15th marks the independence days of five Latin America countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile, and Belize follow shortly after, on Sept. 16, 18 and 21.”

Hispanic Heritage Month has been celebrated primarily in the US. Do you think Hispanic Heritage will be celebrated well this year? <Let them respond>

I spoke a couple of years ago about the Latin American contribution of Liberation Theology to the church. How do you think we can best honor Jesus

during Hispanic Heritage month? <Let them respond>

Let us always seek to live for the glory of God by showing the love of Christ to all people, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

<Hymn “I Want a Principle Within”

UMH #410>

Message: For the Glory



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/i-will-call-upon-the-Lord/fifteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fifteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Great God of our salvation,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may be better equipped to live for Your glory in all we do. Amen.

As “~~I Will~~ [We] Call Upon the Lord,” we consider what living “For the Glory” of God really means.

“Worship is not an escape from the world but a place where we are edified and equipped to live as the people of God in the world.”

As I was visiting this week, Lonnie Hakes was all smiles in telling me about her children,

grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who had gathered as her family. She pulled up pictures for me to see, and they are a beautiful bunch of people. She glories in the legacy that they are to her love/care.

I got to wondering afterward, would God be proud to brag about us humans? For myself in particular, there are times when I think maybe “yes, God would like what I am doing” and times when I am pretty sure the answer would be “not about this!”



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/anv-job/>;
credit: Aya and Nicole Velasquez

The ancient Jewish people were supposed to live as God instructed them to, essentially showing love and justice for all in their kingdom so that the world could see the glory of God blessing them.

Unfortunately, they got caught up in selfish endeavors and idolatry, so God put an end to that, sending the people into exile with Solomon’s temple destroyed.

I think that our country, especially after the Great Awakening religious revivals, was supposed to be an opportunity again for God’s grace to shine for the world, blessed when we strive to live in love of God and show nurturing love to one another – and like the Hebrew kingdom, for a long time it has.

Unfortunately and for a variety of reasons, the US has gotten caught up in selfish endeavors and idolatry. This has become particularly pronounced in recent decades as online interactions replaced face-

to-face encounters and technology (embedded in search engines and AI) drives us apart. Now, like the Hebrew kingdom, our just God is allowing us to reap the fruits of our actions.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/jtjm-minor-prophets/>; credit:
The Jewish Museum / A gift of the heirs of Jacob Schiff

The cry of Jeremiah asking for healing of the people resonates with me. The weeping prophet expressed great sorrow for those lost when the temple fell; my heart weeps for those lost when greed and pride undermine society and the authority of the church.

Yet we have greater hope than the ancient Hebrews did, for we know that God did not abandon them and will not abandon us. The psalmist asked God to save them not because they deserved it, but for the glory of God to be made known to the world. For us, the world already knows the glory of God.

So what can we ask for, to bring God glory? To begin with, as Paul wrote to Timothy, we need to pray for everyone, particularly for our leaders, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” – and then we need to model that living as best we can. We need to do as Jesus taught, loving God with all that we are and neighbors as ourselves.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/photos/great-feast/>;
credit: FreeBibleimages.org

Think about that dishonest manager from the Gospel story today. He was squandering his master's

property, presumably for self-indulgence or gain. But when he lost his job, he realized that the possessions did not matter compared with his relationships with other people. So, he used what he had available to gain favor with them, so that when he was in need he would have their help.

Society and technology push us to think of ourselves first, often seeking material gain at the expense of others. Jesus teaches us to think of others, to work on our relationships as the primary importance – and our relationship with God (as individuals, as a church, as a nation, and as humanity as a whole) is the most important of all of our relationships.

That means showing love for one another, nurturing one another to be the best people we can be, and praising God for all of the blessings enabling us to live in that love.

Lonnie is not just proud of her family because they exist. She is proud of them because of the love-filled relationships they share. She is able to brag about them because they share their lives with her.



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/i-will-call-upon-the-Lord/fifteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/fifteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-c-graphics>

What do we give God to brag about? How do we live for the glory of God? How are we inviting God into our lives today, inviting God each and every day?