

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (November 20, 2022)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

This is Thanksgiving week: family, friends, good food ... a great week ... except for the 46 million turkeys who will sacrifice their lives Thursday (OK, likely a few weeks earlier). Today is also Stewardship dedication Sunday. This is the final of four Sundays where we highlight our response to the goodness, and blessings, of God. All the good we have, all the good we experience, has its source in Him. How will we take care of (steward) what we have been given? Collectively, as God's community of faith here at Grace, how will we steward the legacy, the relationships, the resources, the location, the mission, and the ministry, God has given us in our life together? Wanting to be wise and faithful stewards, this morning we ask for a yearly financial pledge. Pledges are not legal documents ... instead they are faith documents, statements of love; our love for God, for each other, and for those we do not yet know but who live around us. Your pledge of support helps us build a thoughtful annual budget. That budget provides for our staff, supports our ministries, and powers our collective mission.

We are committed to be, and to become, a mission-focused church. That commitment is evident through our budgeted support of missions, our additional giving to Ghormley, to Adam's Elementary, our management of Mabel Swan, and in hundreds of ways, week in and week out, as we involve ourselves in lives across our city, our valley, and our world. There is more we can do, should do, and will do, as He calls us to risk more, spend more, love more.

The passage this morning is troubling and challenging. Why would a dishonest steward (manager) be praised? What can we learn from someone who steals from his boss in order to gain an advantage for himself? How can we live wisely, purposefully, in challenging times?

### **Shrewd** (Luke 16:1-15)

<sup>1</sup> 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 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 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 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, 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.'

<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.'"

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What does this parable tell us about the rich man's concerns?
2. What does it say about the steward's character and wisdom?
3. What does this parable tell us to do? Why?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What lessons can we learn from the Steward in this parable?
5. What is the goal of stewarding well what we have?
6. What does it mean to be a "lover of money?" verse 14.

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

7. What gifts, blessings, relationships, things, do you have in your life? Write them down. Where have they come from?
8. Why would the rich man "commend" the dishonest manager?
9. What steps will you take this week to steward what God has given you?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural, easy, and empowering, part of your day. Pray for a new understanding and awareness of all God provides. Ask God to help you take care of (steward) what He has given you. Ask God to help you live more generously, patiently, lovingly. Ask God for greater wisdom and courage. God will help us because He loves us.