

Trinity 9

So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

What are you still doing here?

That's the question that I would like to ask of this fired steward.

He is being fired for mismanagement and yet, the master still keeps him on.

Now, surprise of all surprises, he wastes more of his master's goods.

I hold the master partially to blame.

He should have had a security guard take away his keys, watch him while he removed his personal effects from the office and and show him the door.

That would have prevented this further waste.

Either the master himself is a poor businessman or he has other goals.

Which brings us to another question: Why are there evil people?

Why doesn't God use His power to wipe out tyrants and our enemies.

Instead, we see them live on and on while children and innocents are killed.

This observation even causes some people to question God's power, wisdom, good will and even His very existence.

"If there really is a God, how can He let the holocaust happen?"

Such evil persons are certainly wasting His goods and killing his people.

For everything from the hairs on their heads to the people they are killing are given to them by God.

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

But this leads also to one more question: still closer to home.

Why are you here? Why haven't you been wiped out and shown the door?

Are you able to recite this list of God's gifts and stewardships and claim that you are stewarding all of these things and people as God would have you do it?

Are you able to say that you are not wasting His goods?

When you use your eyes for evil and your body for self-gratification, is this not a waste? When you overeat and overdrink, is this not a waste?

When you mistreat wife or husband, children or grandchildren, is this not a waste?

The fact is that God gives you all these things and many more not for your personal gain but as a stewardship to serve Him.

Your money and time, your talents and energy are entrusted to you for a little while in order that you may be God's own steward in serving your neighbor.

And this service is done by faithfully raising your children and loving your spouse.

By providing for the Gospel to be preached to family, community and world.

And by humbly and honestly serving your employer.

So, seriously, if God knows you and your life, why are you still here?

The answer is this: God's mercy and God's love.

Just as God does not want you to use your stewardship for self but for others...

...so also, God does not use you for self-service but rather, serves you Himself.

When you fail in your service of Him, He still serves you.

He is interested in your salvation and rescue from hell and waste.

And so, He gives you more time--more stewardship--more of Himself.

That is also why God does not immediately strike down tyrants and enemies.

For He seeks to rescue even these. Nobody is written off. Nobody.

He casts out His gifts freely--even recklessly: more time and more of himself.

When we see God do this for those we have written off, we think He's wasteful.

But when He does it for you, it is anything but.

Jesus commends the unrighteous steward for recklessly spending His goods.

For recognizing that it is only a stewardship—it all belongs to God—and so, giving it away to serve others is really no skin off your back—it is off of God's!!

The way that it comes across in the parable seems like criminal neglect.

We are expecting that the master will find out and punish the steward for giving away all of his goods to the master's debtors. But he doesn't! Why not?

We learn here that your Master who gives you the stewardship WANTS to give away what He has. He WANTS to cancel the debts of His creditors!

So, Jesus is a perfect example of what a shrewd steward does.

Look at His most holy life, how He did not concern Himself with the accumulating wealth—or with the gathering of worldly friends—or creaturely comforts.

His sole aim was to do the will of the Father and thereby to love you His neighbor.

To do and say whatever God gave Him to do and say.

To suffer and endure whatever the Father gave Him to suffer.

He held nothing back but gave up his family. His friends, and all that He had.

He emptied Himself of honor and became the object of spitting and scorn.

He even poured out His very life and health in pursuit of the Father's will.

And all of this spending of His life and stewardship is not done behind the Father's back as though it were a frivolous waste of His great stewardship.

Jesus' suffering and death seems like criminal neglect of His life and gifts!!

But it is not. Rather it is with the Father's full knowledge and blessing.

For the Father gave Jesus His stewardship to do just exactly this!

Jesus continues to be the ultimate wise steward—for He continues to give today.

It is here in this Church, from this pulpit and from this Altar, that Jesus continues to give away all the Father's goods to you.

In doing this, He cancels and your debt and fills you with His abundance.

He gives you a new family of brothers and sisters in Christ.

He gives you eternal friends and not only those that last for a season.

He gives riches that neither rot nor rust and that no thief can steal from you.

These are the everlasting habitations that you receive in Water and Word in Bread and Cup.

To believe this is to seek after these things with same the wisdom and shrewdness that the sons of this generation use in pursuing worldly wealth.

So that having these things, you now are perfectly supplied with all that you need so that giving it all away is easy—because you give from a bottomless supply.

And when you fail and die—be it today or tomorrow—you will be received into everlasting habitations. AMEN.