

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time - C – 2022
Amos 8.4-7///1Tim.2.1-8///Luke 16.1-13

→late one night, a robber wearing a ski mask jumped into the path of a well-dressed man, stuck a gun in his side and demanded.... “give me **your** money.”

→Annoyed, the affluent looking man said.... “you can’t rob me...I am a member of the United States Congress!”

→“in that case,” replied the robber, “give me **my** money!”

→that is what the rich man in today’s gospel wanted: his money

→he finds out that his employee [his steward] is taking advantage of him...now whether that indeed was the case or not.... isn’t the main point...

→likewise the employee [steward] reducing the debt that various others owed his master is not the point of the parable either...

→what is the main point is that the employee was clever enough.....and wasted no time in planning for a secure future ...i.o.w...he looks to take care of himself first at the expense of others

PAUSE

→recently, I was reading the results of a survey that focused on how we view life today

→it asked a variety of questions attempting to rate our experience

→[and] one of the more interesting questions was this..... “as a person living today ... what do you consider to be your number one priority....

→surprisingly....the results were very interesting

→ [well] the most popular answer was "financial security" [no surprise]

→number 2 was "good health"

→next was "job security"

→#4 was "family"

→and #5 was "taking care of myself and my well-being"

→"taking care of the poor" [well] was #8

→and surprisingly....."being a good Christian, or a good person, or being a person of faith...of serving God...being seen ///or [being] perceived as a religious person" was #10

→now obviously...../////.....-->the point of the survey was to consider where people's priorities lie.....and not to anyone's surprise the most popular was with money

→and amazingly...today's gospel story seems to parallel this recent study

---in fact...many of the same elements are present in both scenarios

→because in today's gospel story we hear the parable about a rich man and a manager who **both** have as a prioritymaking money.....[and]....being resourceful

→and...the response Jesus gives is somewhat startling....because at the outset he seems to be praising the manager for his resourcefulness...his determination...his initiative

→but that is where the praise stops ----because in the very next sentence...///...

→we hear Jesus scolding his listeners....telling them to start using that same type of determination, resourcefulness, and initiative to serve God and the gospel message

PAUSE

→[and] my sense would be..... that if J. was standing here in front of us today...he would be saying the same thing to you and me as well.....he would be praising us for being a determined, imaginative and resourceful people

→but at the same time, he might also scold us because sometimes our priorities are very similar to those of the manager in the gospel story.

→and so, I believe, that the true lesson of this gospel...is to ask ourselves exactly where do our priorities lie these days...what is important to us...what motivates us...what is the source of our drive, our purpose....our meaning

→in simple terms....what do we value?

→is it our family....the people closest to us....I would hope so...but it is very easy to ignore our family obligations these days...with work, jobs, careers, stress and anxiety, competition to make more, have more, earn more...it is very easy to put family and family life aside

→and even easier when we choose to text and tweet rather than talk to one another

→so what do we value these days....is it our vocation...our choices in life...I wonder...

→we've made it easy to get out of any commitment, to remove ourselves from any responsibility, to live without any accountability towards others...more and more it seems that we live in an "I" world...where all that matters is what I want, what makes me happy, what I desire...with little or no regard for others.

→so...“**what do** we really value these days? is it our care and concern...our watching out for others...[well again] I don't know...but what I do know is just make the smallest mistake in traffic or on the freeway or in line at the grocery store and look at reaction you get

→is it our faith, our Church, our morals?...I don't think so...since less and less people are practicing their faith these days....and belief in God seems to be declining

→is it human life that we value the most...--our health, our well-being?...

→and yet.....these are all the priorities...the ways in which Christ is calling us to serve one another and to serve God

→these are the ways....from today's Gospel reading....that Christ is urging us live our lives...to choose as Christian believers

PAUSE

→you see [in reality] this is not a reading about [or against] money.....///... as much as it is a lesson for you and me to choose what we need to do in order to become better Christians and better people

→**that** is the master we need to serve ---these are the priorities we need to be about

→today's the lesson is quite simple [and straightforward]

→because in essence, we are facing the exact same dilemma that the listeners of Christ were facing at the time he spoke these words and that is

→do we want to serve God as followers of Christ?

→do we want to be a true example of the Gospel message?

→and if we answer **YES**

→then what Jesus is saying to the people in the Gospel....he is saying to you and me...

START ACTING LIKE WE ARE SUPPOSE TO

→And in today's terms.....that means getting our priorities, the priorities of family and faith in order

→it means...realizing and understanding what is truly important and what is not

→it means... in very straightforward terms...start living the gospel message and what we say
we believe

→[and] sadly....from the looks of it, and from the way things are in the world is today

→and from the way we sometimes live and act....

→[I think it is safe to say] that all of us have some work to do