



Daily Reflections

September 18, 2016

Scripture

Luke 16:1-13

Jesus said to his disciples,
"A rich man had a steward
who was reported to him for squandering his property.
He summoned him and said,
'What is this I hear about you?
Prepare a full account of your stewardship,
because you can no longer be my steward.'
The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do,
now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me?
I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg.
I know what I shall do so that,
when I am removed from the stewardship,
they may welcome me into their homes.'
He called in his master's debtors one by one.
To the first he said,

'How much do you owe my master?'

He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.'

He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note.

Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.'

Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?'

He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.'

The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note;
write one for eighty.'

And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently.

"For the children of this world

are more prudent in dealing with their own generation

than are the children of light.

I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth,

so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

The person who is trustworthy in very small matters

is also trustworthy in great ones;

and the person who is dishonest in very small matters

is also dishonest in great ones.

If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth,

who will trust you with true wealth?

If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another,

who will give you what is yours?

No servant can serve two masters.

He will either hate one and love the other,

or be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and mammon."

Our Scripture Reflection

Many have wondered in light of today's Gospel text if the Lord is giving the steward a pass for what appears to be dishonest behavior. Of course not!

The manager or "steward" had a most trusted position on his master's estate, the likes of which we have nothing to compare in today's world of commerce:

1. He would have come to the master's household at a very early age so that he could grow up with the master's family. This would enable him to think and live as a trusted member of the family.

2. His position of "steward" was second to none in terms of his authority with regard to administration of his master's affairs.

3. His signature was equal to that of the master, especially when the master was away. He could buy, sell and transact business as though he was the master.

4. For some reason, he has not fulfilled his obligations to the master and is about to be let go. We are not told why by Luke.

5. In order to "feather his nest" for the lean times ahead, he lowers the invoice of those who are in debt to the master. What he is marking down is HIS OWN COMMISSION, the master loses nothing owed to himself.

Jesus's point: if we could only be as shrewd and creative with our Kingdom affairs as we are with our secular affairs. However, God often gets the leftovers or a partial effort from us, after we take care of our personal business. Should God not get the first and best of our efforts?

Food for your Journey

Kristin Hayes of Arlington, Virginia, took a look at the contents of the nonfat, nondairy creamer that she uses to doctor her daily dose of coffee, and she saw that it raised a question about the substance of her life.

"Do you know what's in that stuff?" she asks, in a *Washington Post* reflection (March 21, 2004). "Nothing, apparently. Zero percent of your daily fat, cholesterol, sugar, or protein. It's evidently puffed-up air."

Thinking about nonfat, nondairy creamer, she gets nervous that her life will end up like it. "Maybe you fool some people; maybe some people even prefer you to the 'real thing.' But what if, when all is said and done, you give no real nutritional value, nothing of real substance? Just human Coffee-mate."

One bitter winter morning, Flo Wheatley of Hop Bottom, Pennsylvania, took her son to Manhattan for a medical checkup. As they hurried through the cold, she noticed many homeless people huddled in doorways. One stood out from the others because he was wrapped in a bright pink, hand-knit afghan.

Most of us have had similar encounters and felt helpless to do anything. No one of us alone can solve the staggering economic and social problems behind this urban tragedy. So most of us just avert our eyes.

Not Flo Wheatley. As a nurse, she knew well the lethal potential of hypothermia. She couldn't stop thinking about that man and his handmade blanket

Back home that night, she took a pile of her children's castoff clothing and some old bedspreads and quickly assembled them into a simple sleeping bag. This first emergency sleeping bag was so gratefully received by a homeless person that she and her family continued to turn them out. That first year they made eight, which she and her husband, Jim, distributed themselves. Soon neighbors began to notice this unusual activity. Once they saw the potential for saving lives with recycled discards, they enthusiastically joined in. The project grew and acquired a name, My Brother's Keeper Quilt Group.

Today, Flo Wheatley is the dynamic leader behind a nationwide movement of thousands of volunteers in dozens of cities and towns. ... As of 1996, Flo and Jim have had 49,000 Ugly Quilts (as these bags are sometimes called) pass through their own garage distribution center, and thousands more are being made and given away by church groups, youth groups and individuals around the country. The cost-free procedure that started on her kitchen table has grown into a nonprofit organization with a 13-member board of directors. Flo's home has become command central for the project, as she shares information and connects donors, volunteers and distributors. Her front porch, barn and garage have all acted as temporary clearing-houses for local donations, and her calendar is crowded with how-to pep talks for churches and civic organizations. Flo's basic message is simple: "Start here. Start now. Everyone can do something."

--Roger Crawford, *How High Can You Bounce?* (New York: Bantam Books, 1998), 210-211.

Some see a homeless man huddled in a doorway. Flo saw more than meets the eye. Tag line: Not a man in a doorway, but a doorway to a mission.

Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, When You came into this world, You came to give everything for my eternal salvation. You shed every drop of Your Precious Blood on the cross. Please Lord, help me to realize how blessed I am by Your sacrifice. Make me grateful and humble to give my best to You. Amen.