

# Read

Amos 8:4-7

Psalm 113:1-2, 4-6, 7-8

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

# LIVING THE WORD

## Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 18, 2022



### REFLECTION

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a parable about a "dishonest steward" who curries favor with his master's debtors so that he will have friends to turn to after he is fired from his position. The dishonest steward had been abusing his position to charge his own interest on the debts owed to his employer. When he realizes the gravy train is coming to an end, he calls the debtors in and reduces their debts back to their original levels, and the master praises his prudence. The dishonest steward buys goodwill by forgiving debts that he had no right to collect in the first place.

Christ challenges us to be as prudent as the steward. We have no more right to earthly wealth, privilege, power, or fame than the steward has to his "dishonest wealth." Everything we have belongs to God; we are stewards of creation. Be a wise steward. Use your gifts to build up a community of love, and love will be your eternal reward.



### ACTION

The Catholic Church teaches that human beings have been entrusted with a special privilege as stewards of the earth. We believe we were made in the image of God—rational creatures with free will—to know and love our Creator, and that this gives us a particular responsibility to use his gifts wisely.

Our care for the earth cannot be separated from our care for each other. Pope Benedict XVI wrote, "The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole" (*Caritas in veritate*, 48). How can you practice good stewardship? This week, look for ways to use your time, talents, and gifts to care for the world and the people around you.



Check out some of these suggestions for being more environmentally responsible:

<https://aleteia.org/2020/01/06/10-simple-ways-to-be-a-steward-of-the-earth-in-2020/>



### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How does the Gospel idea of "dishonest wealth" translate into the modern idea of "privilege"?
- ❖ What are your areas of privilege? How can you use your privilege to bring about God's kingdom of love?





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# TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTIONARY #135C

Amos 8:4-7

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1 Timothy 2:1-8

Luke 16:1-13 or 16:10-13

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Like many things in the Gospels, we can better understand the meaning when we understand the cultural context of a particular passage. Jesus tells a parable of a dishonest steward who appears to be cheating his master. He goes to the debtors of the rich man and lowers their payments. The rich man surprisingly rewards the steward for acting prudently. It is likely that the steward is overcharging the debtors and keeping the surplus for himself. He is using the master to get what he wants. When faced with his consequences, he deals honestly with his master and the debtors. He repents and makes amends. Even if his master has dealt dishonestly, the steward can make honest choices. Integrity is what a person does when no one is looking.

**Q FOCUS:** *Repent and serve God with your whole life.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week features wonderful saints from around the globe. These saints remind us that our mission is to share the Gospel with all people. Sts. Andrew Kim Taegon and Paul Chong Hasang and their many companions are remembered on September 20. Martyred for the faith, they helped foster the Catholic faith on the Korean peninsula during the 1800s when the ruling government was violently opposed to the Catholic faith. St. Matthew (September 21) was an apostle and evangelist and spread the Gospel

among many countries and regions in the early Church. St. Padre Pio (September 23) is a modern Italian saint who died in 1968. His holiness and wisdom led many to a deeper faith.

### Church Teaching Connection

“But what does Jesus wish to tell us with this parable? And with its surprising conclusion? The Evangelist follows the parable of the dishonest steward with a short series of sayings and recommendations on the relationship we must have with money and the goods of this earth. These short sentences are an invitation to a choice that presupposes a radical decision, a constant inner tension. Life is truly always a choice: between honesty and dishonesty, between fidelity and infidelity, between selfishness and altruism, between good and evil” (Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, September 23, 2007).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Luke 16:1-13

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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."

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

In today's Gospel we meet a steward who has been caught lying. Fearing the consequence, he tries to

correct his situation, and in the end, his master praises him for his prudence.

At first glance, this can be a confusing story. Why is the steward complimented for being dishonest? Is this what Jesus is teaching me to do?

► **What is your first reaction to the parable Jesus tells?**

► **Knowing that Jesus uses parables to teach lessons about our life of faith and discipleship, what might be the lesson in this story?**

To break open this parable more, first we must examine the context of the story. A steward is a manager of another person's property. This steward is dishonest because he, most likely, has been cheating his master.

► **In what ways might a property manager (the steward) cheat the owner (his master)?**

The steward convinces the debtors to pay by giving them a discount. This discount was most likely the fees he added to the debt and would later pocket. In reducing the debt, he also stopped cheating everyone.

When faced with real consequences, the man who lied repented and did the right thing. This is a timeless lesson for each of us. If we are responsible in small matters, we can be trusted with greater ones. If we lie, cheat, and steal in small ways, we will never be trusted with more important things.

► **What are some "little lies" that young people might make in their daily lives?**

At the end of this Gospel reading, Jesus warns us that we cannot serve two masters. We only have one life and we ought to live it with honesty and integrity. If you have ever lied, it is time to be honest with yourself. God is merciful and wants to forgive you. God loves you so much that he calls you into a better version of yourself.

Jesus knows that we will face temptation in this life. He gave us the sacraments so that we can stand up again when we have fallen. The sacrament of reconciliation is a great way to renew our relationship with God and the Church, affirming our commitment to follow Jesus and turn away from sin. Every day is a choice to live as God calls us: with honesty and integrity. Even though we still sin, we know that



the grace of God is working in us to draw us closer to him so that we can more fully serve him with our entire being.

## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 26.

**Life is full of choices between good and evil; choose the good.**

**When faced with real consequences, the dishonest steward repented and changed his ways.**

**Being trustworthy in small things paves the way for greater things.**

## Act on the Word

### Box of Lies

For this activity, you will need two shoe boxes filled with random objects, a divider to put between volunteers, and paper and pencils for journaling after the activity.

This activity is adapted from a popular segment on “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” called “Box of Lies.” You can find clips of this on YouTube if you want to see how it is played. There are three parts to the activity—the game, group discussion, and then personal reflection.

#### Part I: The Game

Before the activity begins, fill two shoe boxes with random items, the more obscure the better. If possible, have a divider between the contestants so they can see each other’s faces but not the content of the boxes. Proceed with the activity as follows:

- ✱ Ask for two volunteers. The rest of the group observes.
- ✱ Ask one volunteer to select one of the boxes.
- ✱ The volunteer will look at the contents of the box but not show the other contestant.

- ✱ The volunteer will describe what is in the box. They can tell the truth, or lie about the contents.
- ✱ The other volunteer will decide if the person is being honest or not and either say “truth” or “lie.”
- ✱ Then they switch roles.

#### Part II: Group Discussion

Process the activity in small group with these questions:

- ✱ Could you tell if the person was lying? How so or how not?
- ✱ How does this game mirror real life?
- ✱ What are some reasons that people lie?

#### Part III: Personal Reflection

After processing the activity, invite the young people to journal or write down notes to these reflection questions:

- ✱ How easy is it to lie in your life?
- ✱ Honestly rate yourself. On a scale of 1 to 10, how honest are you in your life?
- ✱ Reflect on the meaning of these words in your own life: “The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones” (Luke 16:10).

## Closing Prayer

*Gracious God,  
you provide us with all good things.*

*Grant that we focus our gifts  
on serving you and leading others  
to your kingdom.*

*Through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

## For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday’s Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.Itp.org/lwgr](http://www.Itp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.