



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2025 – Trinity 14

COLLECT

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 113

1 Alleluia.

Give praise, you servants of the Lord, ♦

O praise the name of the Lord.

2 Blessed be the name of the Lord, ♦

from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun to its setting ♦

let the name of the Lord be praised.

4 The Lord is high above all nations ♦

and his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like the Lord our God,

that has his throne so high, ♦

yet humbles himself to behold

the things of heaven and earth?

6 He raises the poor from the dust ♦

and lifts the needy from the ashes,

7 To set them with princes, ♦

with the princes of his people.

8 He gives the barren woman a place in the house ♦

and makes her a joyful mother of children.

Alleluia.

A reading from Paul's first letter to Timothy, chapter 2, verses 1-7.

1 Timothy 2.1-7

Instructions concerning Prayer

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone, for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all —this was attested at the right time. For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Luke, chapter 16, verses 1-13.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

I am the way, the truth and the life, says the Lord. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 16, verses 1-13.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 16.1-13

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

Then Jesus said to the disciples, 'There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, "What is this that I hear about you? Give me an account of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer." Then the manager said to himself, "What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes." So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" He answered, "A hundred jugs of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty." Then he asked another, "And how much do you owe?" He replied, "A hundred containers of wheat." He said to him, "Take your bill and make it eighty." And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

A Reflection from Hannah

Are you good with money? I must admit, whenever money is spoken about, I just glaze over, which certainly doesn't help with today's parable!

In the story, the rich man's manager, when accused of dishonesty and threatened with imminent dismissal, does something to try and mitigate against the accusations and keep his name decent for life beyond this job. He slashes the debts of two of the people who owe money to the rich man, and is then commended (by his master) for his shrewdness. What is going on?! The clue is in what is owed. One person owes olive oil, the other owes wheat, and the former gets more reduction on his bill. This has led some writers to suggest that what the manager is actually removing from the bill is the interest- and there would be more interest on olive oil because it was a more valued commodity. The Hebrew people were forbidden to charge interest on money, so one way to get round this was to charge interest in kind- so in terms of olive oil, or wheat. In removing the interest, the manager forces the rich man to own up to his own shady business practices, and it's clear that both have lacked integrity along the way.

But remember, this is a parable, so there is a double meaning. If (like me) you've rather zoned out because of all the money talk, this will come as a relief! Whenever 'master' and 'servant' figures appear in parables they usually represent God and God's people respectively. So this parable is really all about stewardship- the manager had been given the task of stewarding the master's property. He is commended for removing the 'extra' bits from the bill- those bits that were not the original debt, but in fact the interest- the stuff that had grown as time had gone on. Jesus was talking to the pharisees, so we are immediately put in mind of the intense clericalism that was being wielded at the time. The main thing- to love God in response to God's love for us- had been eclipsed by all sorts of stuff that wasn't the 'main thing'- an obsession with the law, a focus on behaviour rather than the heart, fervent policing of the boundaries...

So for us, here and now, this story is a reminder to check ourselves for those things that may be cluttering up the space which ought to be occupied by Christ. Christ is the heart of our life, and if it's become 'Christ and...' then we are compromised. Those final words 'you cannot serve God and wealth' ring in our ears! There is great freedom in sitting lightly to the things of this world, and treading lightly upon it. Money and possessions are not things we own, but things we steward. They are not things we serve, but things we offer back to God, for the furthering of the kingdom of love. Jesus asks us, again and again, to follow him wholeheartedly, recognising that we cannot serve two masters.