

Sermon Notes – September 21, 2025
The Holy Gospel of St. Luke 16: 1-13
Peace Lutheran Church

“Managing What God Has Blessed Us With”

In the Lord's Prayer we ask for the kingdom of God to dwell among us. In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther explains that this kingdom does not require our prayer in order that it might come but, rather, in revealing how God's reign comes “here, in time, through the Word and faith; and secondly, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation.” The reign of God is both already here and not yet here, which creates a framework for engaging this week's texts.

The epistle for this Sunday invites prayers for “kings and all who are in high positions” (I Timothy 2: 2). This may sound like appeasement, a difficult message especially when leaders and rulers often act against God's realm of freedom and peace. This is as true historically as in contemporary times. Yet this petition also includes a “so that...”, pointing to the fruit of the action. We pray for leaders *so that* we may live in peace with dignity. When leaders oppose God's abundant life, our prayer for them becomes resistance to oppression and embraces a freedom in Christ Jesus. This prayer for leaders is yoked with a prayer for all and the understanding that Christ is the head of our lives. This shows the already/not yet-ness of this passage. Those in high positions are temporary; Christ is everlasting.

The Hebrew (Old Testament) Scriptures for today point to prophecy against the exploitation of people. Amos speaks judgment against those wishing for the sabbath to end so that they can get back to abusing others. The Jeremiah text pleads, “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?” (8: 22). The weeping comes from people living in a community that has abandoned care for one another, a feeling of abandonment of God's presence. The kinship of the people is torn. The reign of God is not yet among us, let thy kingdom come.

Today's gospel includes a parable followed by several interpretations of the same. Those in the parable - the owner, the boss, and the workers - are recognizable roles. None of them appear to be metaphors for God, and the parable is not framed as a description of His realm. Instead, we are invited into a story revealing how we are called to live in community.

Within the parable, the boss was originally aligned with the owner. But once the owner dismisses the boss, the boss is isolated. His shrewd actions shift his allegiance from the owner to the workers. In doing so, the boss is no longer isolated but is instead brought into the fellowship of the workers. The owner's praise for this action is surprising. Perhaps the owner sees the power of generosity within the community. Maybe the owner fears the new alignment of the boss and workers and chooses to support rather than oppose it. Or maybe

since the boss made the owner look generous in the eyes of the workers, the owner doesn't want to bring shame by revoking that perceived generosity. While the motivations of the owner are not clear, the actions of the story show that everyone in the community has a new relationship as debts are forgiven.

Each of the interpretations of the parable points to a difference between the ways of the world and the ways of God. His realm, though not fully realized, is something in which we are called to participate. Our prayer for the coming kinship among people and the reign of God is that it will be “on earth as it is in heaven.” We pray for realignment of community rooted in peace and love everywhere.