

**Sunday September 18**

**Why does Jesus use parables?**

**The parables of Christ are meant to point out our blindness / Those who refuse to see truth / But those who seek to understand: Jesus reveals: "*Knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God*;**

**Parables work by turning our ordinary understanding of the world upside-down (To be over the top to get our attention) / We would be greatly short changed, if we did not seek to understand and follow the instructions that emerges from these, funny, off-putting, and strange stories.**

**These NT stories are not usually understood by those who do not know or follow Jesus / They are blind because of their disobedience / Jesus says: *they may look but not see, and hear but not understand.*"**

**Two things to ponder from today's strange parable:**

**(Of all of Jesus' parables) This one may be the most puzzling.**

**-It is similar to the parable of the unforgiving steward in (Matt 18:23-35; Lk. 7:41-43): Whose moral message—if you wish to receive forgiveness / Extend forgiveness—the moral message of today's parable of the dishonest steward at first doesn't make sense.**

**-Today's steward, who has misused his master's money, faces the loss of job and status / He uses dishonest means to gain favor / Doesn't admit guilt / ask for forgiveness / Or attempt to make matters right.**

**-Yet, this steward is—shockingly— *commended* by his master / Why would Jesus praise dishonesty? /Remember parables are to shock us.**

**-St. Augustine: This parable is not meant to praise the sins of the steward but to "show he sought to secure his future. TO SECURE HIS FUTURE**

**-So My 1st Point: Jesus said, he had acted prudently.**

**The Greek definition for Prudence: "We use practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance, and the wisdom to choose the right means to achieve it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1806).**

**-In order to have and to increase prudence, we should always keep in mind Jesus' concluding exhortation: "No servant can serve two masters." / Remember we are not of this world, but are children of light and of God.**

**-Prudence means we Christians need to question worldly ideas / Ask: Does this square with God's revealed law and Commandments / Our humanity and sexuality as revealed to us by God through His Church and the Bible?**

**-We should reject any pop-culture idea that harms our marriages / our families / That seeks to re-define our bodies as evil or that our bodies are not connected to how God created us / We are to Seek (virtue & communion with God and neighbor) not (dishonesty and selfishness).**

**My 2nd Point: Jesus speaks of money almost 50% of the time.**

**-He knows our hearts can sometimes simply follow the money.**

**-Become obsessed with acquiring wealth / Which Never satisfies / Nor will we ever have enough.**

**-We can let Money define us / We sometimes attach our value & worth to it.**

**-(One friend defined others & friendships by the size of their checkbook).**

**-Money can then replace God.**

**-Keep us from putting God first / Seeking God and our salvation (Kingdom 1st).**

**-From what is most important / Keep us From being Prudent.**

**-Almsgiving is always an antidote to obsession with money.**

**-Giving our lives away as gift along with our money opens us to God.**

**-Remember: To be Prudent is to prioritize our actions and decisions that will get us to Heaven / Thus, Prudence will lead us to true human fulfillment and happiness because we are wise to seek the light and the things of God.**

**Special thanks to Carl Olson and Allen Hunt for the themes and deeper reflection to prepare this homily.**

I will be away this week on a Spiritual Retreat.

Vivat Jesus: Fr. Vic Gournas