

The Faithful and Unfaithful Steward

Luke 12:41-48, August 2, 2015

Trinity Sunday IX

Sermon Text, Luke 12:41-48 (KJV):

“Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

Beloved of the Lord.....Every Christian wants to be faithful to God. We want to learn and know His Word better. We want to be good to our neighbor, gentle and kind. We want to serve God with all our heart and soul and mind. Every Christian husband wants to be a perfect father to his children, and a perfect spouse to his wife. Every Christian wife wants to honor, respect and obey her husband, and be a good mother to the children. When we Christians go to work, we want to be a good examples to the world of what a true Christian is. We want to work hard and be faithful to our boss so that he is always pleased with us. We don't want to complain or be bitter, and we want to be content in all things. When we have bad days, we want to cling in faith to Jesus and trust in Him above all things. It is certainly then true Christians want to be faithful in the calling God has given.

“But how to perform that which is good I find not.” In other words, though we want to be good husbands and fathers, employees or pastors, we never hit the bull's eye. We keep falling short and we get frustrated. “O wretched man that I am!” Such is our complaint.

But there is good news however, in that faithful Servant which we call Jesus Christ. Though we by way of sin are totally incapable of fulfilling God's law with a pure heart, Jesus came, Jesus kept, and Jesus fulfilled the law in the stead and place of all men. Moreover His sacrifice and offering to God as our Substitute was pure in every way, acceptable to God. We are justified by that sacrifice, which was a sacrifice of God's own blood to pay for our sins.

When it comes then to doing good works our catechism says “The Holy Ghost has sanctified me in the true faith, that is, He has by faith in Christ renewed my heart, so that I can now overcome sin and do good works.” Ephesians 2:10 says, “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” You have God's promise then God will help you to be faithful as a father or mother, son or daughter, pastor or employee. Likewise we can rejoice that God has also promised to preserve our faith by the Means of Grace, such the Holy Communion you will receive today, and His Gospel Word. And so while

it is true we can fall away like a bad steward, it is also true that God has given us a promise that He will help us so this doesn't happen. Philippians 1:6 says "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the Day of Jesus Christ." Likewise I Peter 1 says "You are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Today then let us take comfort in Christ and find strength by the power of His Spirit sent unto us. God can and will help us by His Spirit so that we do good works, and He will also preserve and keep us in the true faith unto life everlasting. Therefore "Be strong and of good courage, and do *it*: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will be* with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

I. The Unfaithful Steward who loves sin more than the Lord. As we begin, let us note the verse just previous to our lesson. Jesus said "be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Since none of us know which day is Judgment Day, and since God does not want any one of us to fall away from the faith and be lost and beaten with countless stripes in hell, Jesus warns us by the parable of the faithful and unfaithful steward. This is indeed a sermon to preach to Christians so we are warned not to turn away from the precious love of Jesus, and instead give ourselves over to the power of sin and the devil.

"Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of meat in due season?" We could ask the same question this way, *When God returns to judge the living and the dead, will God find you faithfully keeping God's commandments and waiting in faith for Jesus to take you to heaven?..... or will God find you living in unbelief, abusing your neighbor, getting drunk, breaking God's commandments as if God will never come?*

Speaking first of the unfaithful steward, we can assume that for a while he was faithful, but when he began to think his lord was not returning, he began to do wickedly. This happens to Christians who begin to think God is not going to return and judge. A fallen Christian is one who lives in sin and unbelief. They begin and start out as Christians, and are raised with God's Word, but over time they fall in love with the world, or they are overthrown by pride or they indulge their flesh so that sin gains power over them and smothers their faith. This is just like God's warning to Cain who slew Abel. God said to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." This means if you give yourself over to sin, it will rule and destroy your faith.

When young men or young women gives themselves over to fornication, alcohol or drugs, their love for the sin becomes greater than their love for Jesus and His forgiveness. Faith cannot live and stay and remain in the heart of that person who becomes hardened and impenitent. The Holy Spirit must depart the Christian heart that has given itself over to the power of sin so there is no more faith in Jesus' blood to forgive. That steward then in our lesson who begins to think the lord is not coming back, is the fallen Christian who thinks God will never judge him for his sins. He is dead wrong and the wrath of God abides upon him, for he has forsaken the living waters of Jesus Christ, and now he lives in the filth of sin. Such a poor soul is in need of repentance. No soul on Judgment Day is ever damned because they have committed this or that sin, but all who do not believe in Christ will surely perish in their sins because they were not clothed in the garment of faith. We Christians are justified only by the merits of Christ, His holiness, and not our own. But to despise Jesus in our heart and push away His salvation from our soul, that is a naked sinner whose sins are open to the sight of God on Judgment Day. So it is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Also it should be mentioned here, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." This agrees with that steward who knew the Lord, who is beaten with many stripes, as opposed to that steward who did not know the Lord who will be beaten with fewer stripes. What does this mean? When God gives a person that most precious gift of faith, so they are true

Christians trusting in Jesus blood, yet they turn away and despise the love of Christ only so they can indulge themselves in the pleasures of sin, their damnation will be worse than that of an unbeliever who never knew the Lord. The one never had faith and never knew the Lord, as opposed to the other who knew the Lord but later despised Jesus in his heart.

II. The Faithful Steward who loves the Lord more than sin. But turning away from such unfaithful stewards, let us talk about that Steward which is always faithful. His name is Jesus Christ. Now it is true in our lesson, verses 42-44, the faithful steward Jesus speaks of is the believer, but Jesus is the first and foremost Steward in the Christian Church, and we are like little stewards after Him. For example, consider verses 43 and 44 and then think of Christ. "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." This is what happened when Jesus ascended into heaven. Philippians 2 says of Jesus, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth." Jesus then is the Son of God who came to earth to serve God and men, by offering up His own body upon the cross for our sins. Indeed His sacrifice was so pleasing and acceptable to God, that God exalted Christ above all other men, so we are to see Jesus is both Lord and God, our Savior and perfect Mediator, our Ransom for sin!

When we thus speak of faithful stewards on earth, these are faithful only because of that FIRST STEWARD who shed His blood for all sinners, even the whole world, Jesus Crhsti. When we understand and receive Jesus by faith alone, we are new creatures so our heart is changed converted in love to Him. We love Him ONLY BECAUSE He first loved us. And what is it that loves does dear steward of God? Doesn't love serve, even if we have that high office of father or mother, pastor or elder? And doesn't love love to serve Him who has given all? Can love fail? Can love fall short? Though it is true we daily fall short, that part of us which loves Jesus doesn't fail because it is His own love that is working and active in us. Faith worketh by love, and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Even all the commandments can be summarized with that one word, "love".'

Does love beat the manservants and maidens, or is love kind, tenderhearted and forgiving? Does love yield to those God has placed in authority over us, or does love despise God's authorities? Does love find its happiness and contentment in a bottle of alcohol or illegal drugs, or is love content knowing we were not redeemed by gold or silver, but the precious blood of Christ? Does love find joy when it is exalted above others so they have to serve us, or does love find joy ONLY when it stoops down love to serve others? Is love happy to feed the littles of God's children, babies and infants? Does love lust after the things of this world, or does love seek after God to find Him with all its might? Does love ever die or get tired of loving, or does love search for anything else that needs to be done? Does love hold back as if it must keep some for self, or does love freely give knowing Jesus has freely given all? Even so charity "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth."

And so, beloved of the Lord, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." This is a most sweet promise of God and God is faithful. Indeed we are saved by His faithfulness and not our own, even as we are saved by His love and not our own. Likewise His reward of heaven is a reward of grace, but those stewards who are faithful on earth more than others, will likewise receive a greater reward above. This means since none of us have been as faithful as that Apostle Paul, his reward and glory in heaven will be greater, and rightly so. Yet knowing this, do you want the highest seat in heaven, or are you content with the lowliest of seats? Jesus said, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." May God thus help us

all to be faithful to the glory of His name, keeping His commandments, and may God find us all ready in faith when He comes. Amen.