

St Pius & St Anthony 19th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C(2025) Luke

You have to love Peter, he does listen, to Jesus' challenging words about money, eternity, and faithful service to God, but then Peter interjects, **"You talking to me? You talking to us?"** (*Is that how toughguy Robert DeNiro said it?*) Okay, Peter actually, asks, **"Is this meant for us or for everyone?"** It is an obvious attempt by Peter to sidestep a challenge! But I bet we can relate, right? How many times have we felt relieved to hear a specific other name (than us) on the end of a command from a boss, like "Whew, I got out of that one." More than once when I was growing up, my brother might say, "Get over here and help me pick up these toys, and I responded, "Mom told you to do that, not me." But the problem was though, she'd already given me another chore to do with my name on it! but here I wonder what part of Jesus' teaching makes Peter uncomfortable enough to try weaseling out of it. Was it the 'sell your belongings and give away' (Lk 12:33) part, or being the ever vigilant hardworking servant (Lk 12:38) part, that waits and waits and waits upon an unannounced master's arrival (*that 2nd and 3rd watch detail, means it is 'one more shift to work, and then one more shift to work' all the while staying as crisp/alert as if you just showed up fresh yourself to work'*) or the 'beatings' part (Lk 12:47-8) But something bugs Peter enough to try getting out of it.

We can all have that reaction to Jesus at times, when we say to ourselves, "I didn't hear that" or "He is not talking to me there". Did any of today's reading strike you that way? I grant that some people find this reading selection to be like a patchwork of unrelated sayings, (disconnected) stories. I do find a common thread through all of its parts and I will close in a minute pointing one out, but there are several great 'one-liners' of Jesus to sit and think/pray on individually from today's reading. I was struck by one at the beginning and one at the end of the reading that I'd like to pursue with you. First, Jesus said, "Provide money bags for yourselves that do not wear out, an inexhaustible treasure in heaven" (Lk 12:33) and then at the end, "More will be demanded of the person entrusted with more" (Lk 12:48).

So , let's look at them together: "money bags ...that do not wear out, an ***inexhaustible*** treasure in heaven" (Lk 12:33) ***Inexhaustible***, I think we are all interested in ***inexhaustible***? Meaning, we'd have resources or a treasury that ***never runs out***. We could go for that. Is there anything like that here on earth? It was a mistaken idea, but i remember many a time working in my parent's grocery business as cashier, and a parent and child were at check-out, and the child (as they do) asks for more, maybe a toy-maybe an ice cream and the parent responded, "I didn't bring enough money for that" and the child said, "You've got a book full of checks-write one." Of course, the child wasn't understanding that the money had to be in account (*this was before current days of overdraft protection*), or child didn't understand that a ***bunch of checks in book***, doesn't mean a ***bunch of***

money in bank. But Jesus is talking about us having an inexhaustible fund of heavenly grace, that never runs out (moths/thieves can't touch-FDIC insured-Faithful Divine Insurance Coverage!) How do we sign up to get that? By *our faithful relationship to Christ expressed in charitable work imitating His love for others.* Jesus suggests this in several other places in the gospels, about us depositing in this 'heavenly investment'. He suggests that *anything given, offered, & sacrificed in His Name to God's Glory, it's deposited into our account.* In Matt 6:4, He teaches us not to make big deal of our giving, (*not to blow a trumpet*) so that our ***"almsgiving must be secret. But your Father who sees in secret will repay you."*** God notes our faithful service, our giving is investment with Him. What we give away, becomes eternally credited to us later, coming back to us as heavenly benefit. And in Mathew 19:29, Jesus says, *"everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and eternal life."* A little or a lot, it is all noted by God in the ledger. In Matthew 10:42, Jesus reminds us that nothing is overlooked – "whoever gives even only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple....will surely ***not lose his reward***". Jesus is revealing a spiritual principle of how selfless generosity is its own eternal benefit. The more given away for God, is the more coming back to you, as an eternal dividend. What I let go of from my hand, opens/frees my hand to receive even more. But Jesus is not talking about material advantage here on earth or amassing possessions/market positions here on earth, He is talking about the Spirit/Soul and what gets through this life-beyond the physical-what is eternal (*recall from last week's gospel His talk of being 'rich in **what matters to God**' Lk 12:21*). Materially here he calls us to divest – Let it all go- everything I give away freely, all that I sacrifice lovingly here, trains my soul to experience eternity, invests me in what always goes forward-what truly lasts, what is eternal & heavenly. His words here remind me of the story of the woman who had a lot in this life but unfortunately didn't do very much with it for God's service (*enough to get in heaven, but only minimally*) or for her neighbor on earth. So, when she passed away, she was welcomed into heaven and a guiding angel, walked her past several large mansions along the way, and then turning a corner, she was shown her heavenly dwelling, a tiny little hut. Upset, she said, "I'm used to the best places, luxurious accommodations--What's the idea of me only living in a shack up here?" And her guiding angel said ***"We can only build up here, with the supplies you send up."*** She hadn't given much in life, she hadn't helped God's little ones (the poor) in His service much, so the angel told her, ***"This is all we got from you, all that you sent."*** Similar to this story, there is a beautiful old Afro-Spiritual hymn 'Sending up my timber' that reflects this heavenly building through a faithful life and works done here on earth for God. We send up our timber when we pray daily, when we serve a neighbor with a

work of mercy, when we love an enemy or forgive an offender, when we love in Jesus' name, all of this is our material sent toward heaven invested as eternal treasure. And the more I am blessed with here on earth, the more I need to bless others with, as preparation for heaven to come. Which brings me to the last 'one-liner' that struck me in today's reading, "More will be demanded of the person entrusted with more..." (Lk 12:48) The more I have, then the more I need to give. The more generously I have received from God, then the more generously I need to give more back to God. So if find this to be what's behind Jesus' two parables in the middle of today's gospel tying these stories together. We should spend our resources here as good and faithful servants to Christ, keeping 'servant's hearts' ourselves as investment for eternity. The good servant, wants to give, wants to help in Christ's name. The good servant 1) knows his/her master and just as important, knows who is beside them and 2) cares about the other servants – that life of faith in Christ reflects the generosity that keeps on giving. Our eternal treasure is grown, our heavenly home is built through such faithful love of God and love of neighbor.