

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Week 5

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Recap

In the parable of the Unjust Steward or “That Conniving Businessman”

- The master commends the steward for his shrewdness (*phronimos*) which might best be described as “street smarts” or “situational savvy”
- The steward is an example for Jesus’s disciples because he used material resources belonging to another wisely
- The economy of the kingdom of God assumes:
 - Everything we possess ultimately comes from and belongs to God
 - Worldly goods can be put to eternal use
 - This world’s “unrighteous mammon” will eventually fail

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Going Further

- How might a parish's approach to stewardship benefit from a deeper dive into this parable?
- How could we, as communities of faith, look to our buildings, endowments, staff, programs, and more as resources given to us by God for the advancement of God's kingdom values in the world?
- Can you think of any other ways your parish or community of faith may benefit and grow from reflecting on God's generosity and our subsequent responsibility?

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[The Parables of Jesus: Making the Familiar Strange - Week 5](#)

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Going Further

Have you ever lost something?

- What do you do when you lose something important to you?
- What effect does it have on you to lose something?
- And what do you do in order to find it again?

How does this parable help expand your understanding and appreciation of God's generosity?

How does the father's behavior toward the younger son expand your sense of responsibility toward (or solidarity with) "tax collectors and sinners"?

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Going Further

Saint Augustine uses the image of "that younger son" to describe the human condition of wandering away from God and our need to return to God "needy" (Confessions I.28).

- How have you found yourself in need of God's abundant love?
- How have you experienced his open arms waiting for you, or how has this parable and lecture equipped you to do so?

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Going Further

In what ways do you find yourself in the position of the older brother?

- Can you see him exhibiting any “respectable sins” as we discussed previously?
- Where do you tend to question God’s generosity for others, or feel contempt for those you consider unworthy?
- How does God’s prodigality (in the figure of this parable’s father) confront and transform those attitudes and enable you to rejoice and celebrate with those whom God calls his children?
- How might we reach out our arms more widely so that others “might come within the reach of God’s saving embrace” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 101)?

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Going Further

What does God’s preoccupation with lost things mean for you?

- How would it look for God’s preoccupation to become our own?
- How might our church or ministry aim to reflect the joy of God and the hosts of heaven at the repentance and transformed lives of sinners?

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