

### The Choices That Shape Us

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

A young professional working in finance recently shared how she faced a tough decision. Her company discovered a loophole in a client's account that could be legally exploited for profit. The move was technically "legal," but not just. She brought it to her boss's attention, who praised her honesty and chose not to act on it. She later reflected: "It wasn't just about numbers. It was about who I'm becoming." Her prudence, guided by conscience and faith, was a quiet victory of integrity over convenience.

This is the heart of today's Gospel, when Jesus tells the curious parable of the dishonest steward (Luke 16:1-13). At first glance, it's a confusing story. A steward, about to be fired, quickly reduces the debts of his master's clients, not out of honesty, but to win favor and secure a soft landing. Yet Jesus surprisingly commends the steward, not for his dishonesty, but for his shrewdness, his foresight in preparing for the future.

Jesus uses this example to challenge his disciples: if even worldly people can act with cunning to secure temporary futures, how much more should we act with spiritual wisdom to prepare for eternity? The Gospel invites us to view our lives and resources through the lens of stewardship. Everything we have—wealth, time, relationships, opportunities—is entrusted to us by God. How we use them shapes not just our legacy but our eternal destination.

The Catholic understanding of this parable emphasizes prudence, a virtue strengthened by the Holy Spirit calling us to manage what is "small" (earthly wealth) with integrity so that we might be entrusted with what is "great" (heavenly riches). Jesus plainly says: "The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones." In other words, the spiritual life is tested and revealed in the details of daily life in how we treat others, in how we handle money, and in how we respond to need.

The parable also reminds us that we cannot serve two masters. "You cannot serve both God and mammon." In a culture driven by consumerism, this message may feel like a sting. But it is also liberation. We were not made to be slaves to wealth, status, or possessions. We were made to serve God in freedom, and that freedom is found in detachment, generosity, and a clear focus on eternal rewards.

As Pope Benedict XVI once said, "Life is truly always a choice, between honesty and dishonesty, between fidelity and infidelity, between selfishness and altruism, between good and evil. . . Basically it is a matter of choosing between selfishness and love, between justice and dishonesty, and ultimately, between God and Satan."

This Gospel, then, is not a mere economic parable; it is a mirror for our lives. What choices are we making with what God has entrusted to us? Are we using the gifts of this world to build up the kingdom of the next?

Each day offers us small but sacred decisions. And in those, our hearts are revealed.

Yours in Christ,  
Fr. Rudy