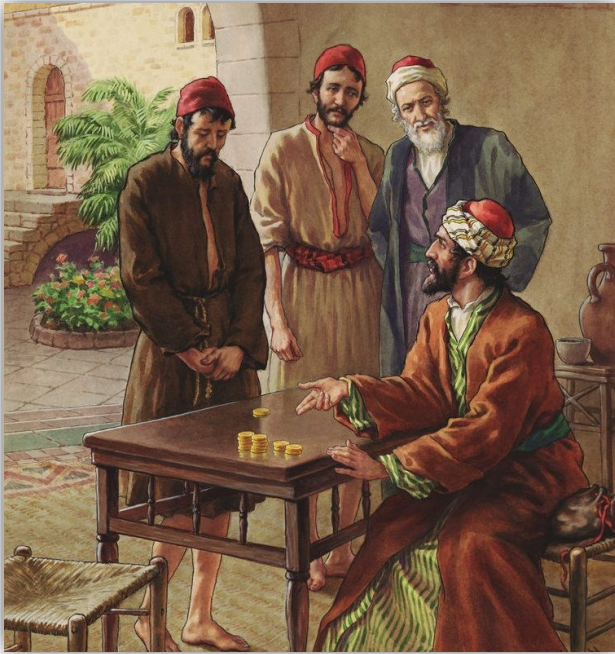


JESUS' PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST STEWARD



Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' And the master

commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours? No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

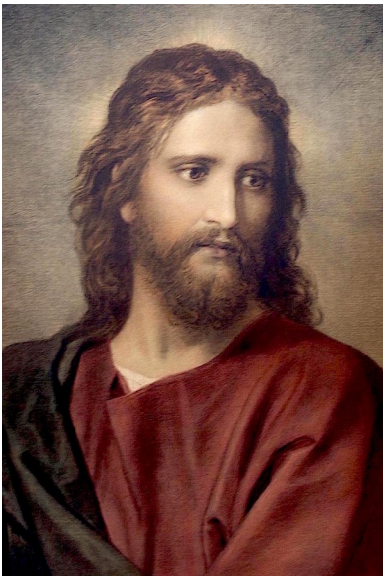
1. Explore It!

The steward was responsible for managing his wealthy landowner's property. The steward very likely overcharged his master's tenants for their use of the land and kept more than his fair share of the pay. When the landowner discovered the steward's dishonest practice, he immediately removed him from his job, which would leave him without money or shelter. Before news of his firing became public knowledge, the sly steward struck a deal with his master's debtors. In decreasing their debts, he was able to gain favor with the debtors while

also pocketing money for himself since he soon would be without a job. Since he acted as the landowner's financial manager, this deal made his master look very generous and forgiving towards those who owed him money. Surely, everyone would praise such a generous landowner. Since the master could not undo the steward's cancellation of the debts without making his debtors resent him, he praised the steward for outwitting him as a generous and merciful landowner.

5. Remember It!

***"No servant can serve two masters."
(Luke 16:13)***



6. Pray It!

O LORD, all that I have are gifts from You. May I love You freely and generously with all that I possess. Help me to be a wise and honest steward of my resources, including the use of my time, money, and possessions.
Amen.

2. Connect It!

Obviously, the steward knew the master was a generous person and would not risk being ridiculed by the debtors. Therefore, in verse 9, Jesus is not praising the dishonesty but the ability of the steward to recognize the generosity of his master, see what was coming, and use what he had at the time to obtain something far greater: self-preservation.

In verses 10–12, Jesus explained that if one is faithful in “very small matters” (i.e., dishonest wealth), then one will be faithful in “great ones.” Similarly, if one is dishonest in small matters, he will also be dishonest in great matters. If we can’t be faithful with earthly wealth, which isn’t even ours to begin with, then how can we be entrusted with “true riches?” The “true riches” here refers to the stewardship and responsibility in God’s Kingdom along with all the accompanying heavenly rewards.

Think about when you’re in school and studying for a test. How easy is it to procrastinate and cram the information in at the last minute? Even if you get that A, you forget the important information the very next day. In the same way, we can’t just pursue quick, superficial desires in life, but we must recognize and work towards the long-term goal of receiving the rewards waiting for us in heaven.

3. Reflect It!

The dishonest steward is commended not for mishandling his master's wealth, but for his shrewd plan in avoiding personal disaster and securing his future livelihood. The original meaning of “shrewdness” is “foresight.” A shrewd person grasps a critical situation with foresight, sharpness in practical matters and determines resolutions to avoid serious loss or disaster. However, in this parable Jesus is concerned with something more important than a financial crisis. His concern is that we avert spiritual crisis and personal disaster through the exercise of faith and foresight. If we spent as much foresight and energy on spiritual matters as we do on earthly ones, then we would truly be better versions of ourselves, both in this life and in the one to come.

Think back to a difficult time you had this month, whether it be at home, in the classroom, or among your friends. What could you have done to bring Christ into your life that could have helped you through this time? Pray to God? Reach out to fellow VEYM members? Perhaps even reading the Bible to seek guidance? These are all ways we can exercise our faith even before we encounter hardships!

4. Live It!

[Honesty] — displaying good and truthful characters

To lead an honest life as God wants us to, here are a few ways you can follow in your daily life:

- Tell the truth
- Return what you have borrowed
- Do not deceive others for your own benefit
- Respect others’ properties
- Avoid situations that might cause you to be dishonest