

Today's gospel speaks about stewardship. A steward is a person who is given responsibility to handle the goods and property of his/her employer. The parable has a lot to teach us about stewardship. How careful and honest are we in taking care of our master's possessions? All of us are stewards in one way or another. The lesson today involves, the dishonest steward who let down his master's trust to win friends, who will care for him in future. Stewardship calls for **responsibility and accountability** in our dealings with God, and our neighbor. As such it has very important lessons for church leaders, priests who are stewards of God's people but also for all of God's people in general.

Our first reading from the prophet Amos, underlines the abuses to which greed for money gives rise. Amos lived in the eighth century BC, one of those rare periods when Israel was relatively peaceful and prosperous. Ideal trading and business had triggered '*an economic miracle*', leading to accumulation of riches for some people. Behind this success story, Amos sees a world of injustice. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, who mercilessly exploit the many poor farmers and labourers. Cheating on weights and measures, tampering with scales, inflating the value of goods, and deflating the value of money. What they are doing is '*buying up the poor for money*'.

What Are the Biblical Principles of Stewardship?

No matter what type of stewardship we're talking about, the Bible makes it clear that God has given us gifts that we ought not to take lightly. In the parable of the talents, we see what happens when someone improperly uses a gift he has been given temporarily.

We live a short period on this earth and must give an account of how we used our time and talents. The Bible tells us clearly the following:

1. Everything belongs to God. [Psalm 24](#) tells us that everything belongs to God: "*the world and those who dwell therein.*" There isn't a thing we are given - whether money, responsibility, or talent - which truly belongs to us. "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*". Every Christian is equipped by the Lord to be the steward of a gift to use for his purposes according to his direction.

2. We must look after what we are given. Jesus was sent by God to care for his sheep. '*Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one,*' except for Judas of course, who was taken by Satan to fulfill prophecy. "*All things have been handed over to me by my father*". Christ is our model for how to care for people and he even models the correct attitude towards this responsibility. He would leave the 99 and go after the one that is lost. Then, when the lost sheep is found, he would "rejoice". Stewardship is a joyful responsibility, not a burden.

3. Stewards invest and share. "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth*" ([Matthew 6:19](#)). If we have money, we are not permitted to hoard it, but we must ask God how he

would like us to use it. The man who hid his master's money in Jesus' parable was declared "wicked and slothful" ([Matthew 25:26](#)).

4. Stewards can lose their commission. The master took his slothful servant's talent away. Worse still, he was sent to the "outer darkness" where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" ([Matthew 25:30](#)). It's like that popular saying - "use it or lose it." We are all commanded to spread the gospel, but if we don't use what God gives us to that end, he will take away our gifts. The parable of the talents implies that if we are good at something, like singing or administration, we are compelled to use those gifts in Jesus' service.

5. Good stewards enjoy rewards from God. If we treat our responsibilities with care, respect, and wisdom, then God will increase them. "To everyone who has will more be given" The more we use, the greater will be our reward. But what about Jesus' warning that you can't serve both God and Mammon? If financial decisions result in self-indulgence at the expense of honesty and justice, then you are serving mammon.

When it comes to stewardship of God's gifts, a lot of people feel inadequate. But we must not let that feeling prevent us from giving what we have. We must like the steward in today's Gospel make the best of a difficult situation. Jesus assures us that if we are trustworthy with small things, he will give us greater responsibilities.

God Bless You.