

Dishonest Manager + Luke 16:1-13

Jesus said, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

We are the servants Jesus is talking to.

We cannot serve God and money. We choose one or the other.

We will fear, love and trust in God above all things, as the First Commandment says, You shall have no other gods before Me.

This commandment places our faith where it belongs, clinging to the God who delivers us from sin, death and the powers of hell. -OR-

We will fear, love and trust in the earthly riches of this world, or we will fear, love and trust in the things of creation. This ultimately allows us to place ourselves in charge, we become our own gods.

The Second Commandment + You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Calling upon God's name in prayer and worship places us where we belong, under the authority and power of God, who will hear our prayer and answer us, helping us.

The Third Commandment + Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Holding the Word of God sacred, gladly hearing it and learning it, assures us that a right faith is strengthened in us toward God and love toward our neighbor is nourished and built up. Failing to come to church, where Jesus invites us to come into His presence that He would serve us and take care of us, there would be no peace in us, worry, fear and doubt would overtake us.

The Fourth Commandment + Honor your father and your mother.

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

This commandment forces us to see our parents and all authorities as representatives of God. To disobey our parents and other authorities, thinking that they are only responsible for providing us with what we want, when we want it, where we want it, diminishes them in their role as those whom God has given us as representatives of God, that we would grow up, parents and children alike, in fear, love and trust toward God.

The Fifth Commandment + You shall not murder.

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

This commandment forces us to see all life as a gift of God. That we would love our neighbor, because he was created by God, he was died for on the cross by God, he is the one we are called by God to go and make a disciple of, that he would believe and be baptized.

The Sixth Commandment + You shall not commit adultery.

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

This commandment forces us to see our sexuality as a gift that we give to our spouse. That marriage is a gift from God, for the purpose of husband and wife being joined together by God in one flesh, no longer two but one loving and honoring each other in sickness and health, richness and poverty, good times and bad.

The Seventh Commandment + You shall not steal.

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

This commandment forces us to see that all that we are and have are gifts from God, that He opens His hands to richly and daily provide for us, even those who reject Him and do not believe in Him.

The Eighth Commandment + You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

This forces us to love our neighbor in all that we think, say and do. Our neighbor needs our help and support, just as we need the help and support of our neighbor. If we defend our neighbor's reputation, which is a gift of God, we will also have no fear speaking the truth about God, boldly witnessing what we believe when we are attacked and persecuted for being Christians.

The Ninth-Tenth Commandments + You shall not covet your neighbor's house or possessions.

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

This forces us to consider that all that we are and have are gifts of God and we should not desire what our neighbor has, for what God has given us is what God has determined to be best for us.

As we consider these Commandments of God, we are forced to hear the words of Jesus parable concerning the dishonest manager, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

We realize that because of our sin, we are unfaithful with the created things of this world which God gives us to use for His church, in our families, and for our neighbor. We trust in the riches of this world rather than the God who generously gives them to us. We are tempted to think that we have earned all that has been given to us and deserve even greater things than what we have been given.

We are like the dishonest manager who was wasting the rich man's possessions.

The rich man called his manager to turn in the account of his management, for he could no longer be manager. The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

But in reality, the manager was strong enough to dig, he has dug himself a hole that he could not get out of. And he was most certainly ashamed, as he should have been, ashamed of his failure to fear, love and trust in the rich man above all things.

The dishonest manager decided what to do, so that people would receive me into their houses.' He summoned his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness.

The dishonest manager was praised because he took what was not his to benefit himself, and so should we. We should use the Virgin birth, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus into heaven to benefit ourselves. These things that Jesus came down from heaven to accomplish, He did for us. These gifts of God have purchased and won us from sin, death and the power of hell. These generous gifts have delivered us from judgment, punishment, and condemnation. These treasures take our focus off of earthly things and strengthen our faith in heavenly things. These treasures take our eyes off of today to see eternity.

Jesus says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

We should see in the earthly things of wheat and oil, which the dishonest manager used that they would hopefully bring him into their houses, heavenly things.

The wheat we use to make bread, which Jesus says is His body, we eat to proclaim our Lord's death and resurrection until He comes again to take us to be where He is. We eat this bread, which is Jesus' body, for

the forgiveness of sins, life and eternal salvation. We taste and see that the Lord is good, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love toward us forever. We are fed, we are not hungry.

The oil, which is used in Holy Baptism, makes us participants in the life and death of Christ. That even though we die, even though we suffer, we live. In Holy Baptism, we receive the robe of Christ's righteousness. We are not naked. In Baptism we receive the mansions known as heaven, where we are seated at the right hand of the Father. We are not homeless. In Baptism, we receive the name of God, we are children of God, we are not orphans. Indeed we are richly blessed.

Like the dishonest manager, we take what is not ours and make it our own.

We are not dishonest but faithful. We fear, love and trust in the rich man, who is God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, above all things. Amen.