

SUNDAY OF THE STEWARD

ST. LUKE 16:1-13

The steward is the highest class functionary of the great and noble families of ancient times; he controls the entire finances of the family and administers almost all the affairs of the hours.

The sin of the steward is the same as that of the prodigal son: spend-thriftness; using for other purposes properties entrusted to him. Both the prodigal son and the steward spend the belongings of others for their personal use.

The parable of the steward is rightly considered to be one of the most difficult parables of the Gospel to understand. In order to understand this parable one has to differentiate between the explanation of the "sons of light," and the "sons of this world." There exists for Jesus but two classes of men. The first class is composed of those who live just for this world and according to its laws. The people of the second class are those who live for heaven and consequently in accordance with the laws of God. By this parable, Jesus takes an example from the life of the "sons of this world" to give the "sons of light" a lesson and instruction.

The steward of the Gospel is a fraudulent person and is qualified as "unrighteous." He is a typical "son of the world," very clever, smart and far-sighted. He is a man who knows how to make profit from all the opportunities provided him for personal benefit. He wastes the possessions of his landlord for his personal use, instead of using them for the family. The landlord, having been informed of the fraud, decides to dismiss him and, therefore, invites him to render an accounting. The shrewd functionary uses even this critical situation for his material security. To gain their friendship, he discounts the debts of his landlord's debtors so that, when he is put out of office, he may be welcomed to their houses. The landlord learns about this new unfaithfulness, but he acts like a "gentleman son of the world." The Gospel says: "The Lord commended the unrighteous steward for his prudence."

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