



Grain

“Money is a crime
Share it fairly, but don’t take a slice of my pie”
–Pink Floyd

Field

16“There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ²So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ ³Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ... ⁸And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. ¹⁰“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” Luke 16:1-7; 8-13

Thoughts

What a tangled and cryptic parable with such a clear message at the end, “You cannot serve God and wealth.” First, we learn that the manager is squandering the rich man’s property. After learning he was losing his position, and we aren’t told why someone that dishonest wasn’t immediately thrown out the door, the manager continued to mismanage his employer’s money by not adequately collecting from the rich man’s debtors. Was the rich man’s response benevolent to someone who needed more friends as he was about to become homeless and to the debtors who would experience financial relief, or a reflex in admiring shrewdness? Questions about this parable go on, as do our questions about our own relationship with money and community; the two are intertwined in this world of ambiguities.

The message about idolatry, however, is clear. The text initially pointed my mind to other people. In the documentary, “Inequality for All,” one of the speakers shared data on billionaires who spend a surprising amount of time and money trying to impact elected officials to maintain taxes on the wealthy and tax loopholes. He said it is difficult for most of us to understand that regardless of how much money some people accumulate, they base their well-being and identity on how much more they can get. But I had to return to my own temptations. We cannot live in this society without being tempted in financial matters. Within the realm of what we possess and want more of, how are we pulled into idolatry and compromises that can harm ourselves and others? Making money for the sake of money itself is one sign that we need to step back and re-evaluate.

When advocating and voting, best choices for candidates and referendums can seem murky at times, and we discover that some issues are complex when deciding how to advocate. But according to the Gospel, a core value for how we make decisions with the information we have is clear: Don’t worship wealth. The words are meant to free us in Christ and build. Happy Monday!

Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to cindyc@loppw.org
All Monday Quotes found under the Resources & Advocacy Tools tab at www.loppw.org

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy