

# Stewardship Emphasis 2024

*During the weeks of October, we are suspending the normal daily devotion guide in order to focus our attention on the good gifts that God freely gives us as well as on our faithful response. In preparation for next Sunday, consider several times the Old Testament and Gospel readings, using the comments and questions below as a guide for your daily meditation.*

## **Monday, October 7—Mark 10:17–22**

What was faulty about the man's question in v. 17? Though we know that our works don't earn our salvation, are we sometimes tempted to think that if we do just enough then God will be pleased with us? Though the man called Jesus "Good Teacher," do you think he understood who it was standing before him? Have you ever considered what it means to speak of God as being "good"? Read Luther's description in the next column.

## **Tuesday, October 8—Amos 5:6–7, 10–15**

What consequences does Amos describe in v. 6 for those who fail to seek the Lord? The language of fire "breaking out" might be better compared to the wildfires in the western states that sometimes spread so quickly that people can't get out of the way. Should that image of God's righteous judgment give us reason to fear his wrath? What words of comfort does the prophet give us (v. 15)?

## **Wednesday, October 9—Mark 10:17–22**

The man asked Jesus what he had to do to earn his way to heaven. Note how Jesus directed him to the commandments. How many of them can you identify in v. 19? Why do you think this man could have been deluded into thinking that he had kept them all? Do we ever underestimate how thoroughly Satan can deceive us? Read 1 Peter 5:8. Are we that alert to his attacks?

## **Thursday, October 10—Amos 5:6–7, 10–15**

God speaks some very harsh words in v. 12. He knows our every transgression. Note how he singles out the mistreatment of the poor and needy (vv. 11–12). Are we sometimes tempted to turn a blind eye to those in hardship or distress? Why is it easier simply to keep our distance from such situations? Read

Amos 8:4–7 to hear how seriously God takes our neglect of the needy.

## **Friday, October 11—Mark 10:17–22**

Can you believe that the man actually thought he had not broken the commandments. But what was his weakness? How tied are you to your possessions? Or what about your reputation? How can clinging to our worldly goods threaten our relationship with God? Remember our Lord's words: we cannot serve two masters—God and money (Matt. 6:24). Why must we daily ask, "Who is my God?"

## **Saturday, October 12—Amos 5:6–7, 10–15**

Note in v. 11 how the wicked rob from the poor to enrich themselves. In the end it will be for nothing. God will take their treasures from them, if not in this life, then certainly in the life to come. Review the story of the rich man and Lazarus in (Luke 16:19–31). Then read Amos 6:4–6 to see how God castigates those who live in luxury while turning away from him. What words does Amos use to call us to repentance (5:14).

## **From the Large Catechism**

*This is how Luther describes God's goodness, putting the words in God's own mouth: "See to it that you let me alone be your God, and never seek another." In other words: "Whatever good thing you lack, look to me for it and seek it from me, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, come and cling to me. I am the one who will satisfy you and help you out of every need. Only let your heart cling to no one else."*

## **Prayer**

*Pray the Collect of the Day on the reverse side every day! Then conclude with this prayer:*

God of grace and mercy, You have called us to live not for ourselves but for the sake of our neighbor. Grant us true humility, that putting away all selfish desires and forsaking all covetousness, we may love You above all things and devote our lives in joyful service to all whom You set before us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.