

Stewardship Emphasis 2024

For our fall stewardship emphasis, we are giving special attention to several of the Sunday readings. On Monday and Tuesday, we will review two of the readings from the past Sunday, while for the rest of the week we will examine two of next Sunday's readings.

Monday—Mark 10:17–22

Note the specific detail Mark includes in v. 21: Jesus looked at the man and *loved him*. That “look” must have also included a tinge of sadness, because he knew that the man’s love of money was a hindrance to the complete trust that Jesus requires. Hear again Luther’s explanation of the First Commandment: “We should fear, love, and trust in God *above all things*.” Then read his words nearby from the Large Catechism

Tuesday—Amos 5:6–7, 10–15

In Amos’ day, the town elders sat at the city gates to arbitrate disputes. According to v. 10, those who had defrauded others didn’t want to hear the truth about their evil deeds. We don’t much like hearing the truth when our shameful deeds pointed out to us either, do we? Yet, even in the midst of God’s severe condemnation, he holds out hope for us. What words in v. 15 should you always cling to?

Wednesday—Mark 10:23–31

Note that Jesus doesn’t say that those with riches cannot enter the kingdom of God. But it is difficult. Why? In what ways do the pleasures and treasures of this world divert our eyes from the things of God? Can you identify areas in your life where that might be the case? Should Jesus’ illustration about the camel and the needle force you to stop and think about the potential dangers of dwelling on our possessions or even our reputation?

Thursday—Ecclesiastes 5:10–20

The entire book of Ecclesiastes speaks of the futility of chasing after wealth and possessions. The more one earns, the more ways it is spent (v. 10). Accumulate all you can, but just as you came into the world with nothing (“naked”), so will you leave it. What image does the writer give in v. 16 to describe this futility?

Friday—Mark 10:23–31

Have you ever thought: “These words of Jesus don’t pertain to me because I’m not rich.” Yet, compared to the vast majority of people in the world—especially when you include past generations—every last one of us is incredibly wealthy. In what ways have we become accustomed to things we consider the basics in life that many around the world don’t have. Are we at risk of forgetting that God is the giver of everything we have?

Saturday—Ecclesiastes 5:10–20

Note how v. 19 speaks about contentment and finding enjoyment in one’s toil. Read Eccl. 2:1–11 for a description of Solomon’s own accumulation of treasures. After gaining all that wealth and fame, what did he ultimately conclude (v. 11)? When the things of this world dominate our thought and conduct, how easy is it to fail to acknowledge God as the source of all that we have?

From the Large Catechism

Although much that is good comes to us from others, we receive it all from God through his command and ordinance. Our parents and all authorities—in short, all people placed in the position of neighbors—have received the command to do us all kinds of good. So we receive our blessings not from them, but from God through them. Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings.... Do you have the kind of heart that expects from him nothing but good, especially in distress and want, and renounces and forsakes all that is not God? Then you have the one true God.

Prayer

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

Almighty God, heavenly Father, You have called us to be Your children and heirs of Your gracious promises in Christ Jesus. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may forsake all covetous desires and the inordinate love of riches. Deliver us from the pursuit of passing things that we may seek the kingdom of Your Son and trust in His righteousness, and so find blessedness and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.