

# livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

## Reading 1 Am 8:4-7

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land! "When will the new moon be over," you ask, "that we may sell our grain, and the sabbath, that we may display the wheat? We will diminish the ephah, add to the shekel, and fix our scales for cheating! We will buy the lowly for silver, and the poor for a pair of sandals; even the refuse of the wheat we will sell!" The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob: Never will I forget a thing they have done!

## Reading 2 1 Tm 2:1-8

Beloved:

First of all, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity. This is good and pleasing to God our savior, who wills everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth. For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as ransom for all. This was the testimony at the proper time. For this I was appointed preacher and apostle — I am speaking the truth, I am not lying —, teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

It is my wish, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument.

## Gospel Lk 16:1-13

Jesus said to his disciples,  
"A rich man had a steward who was reported to him for squandering his property. He summoned him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Prepare a full account of your stewardship, because you can no longer be my steward.' The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the

## Reflection Process / Questions

- 5 mins Reading - underline a word or idea that strikes you
- 5 mins Writing - write what you have heard, write your response to a reflection question(s) that attracts your attention
- 5 mins Sharing / Praying - share with a friend or pray to God about livingtheword you have heard.
- When Amos preached, Israel was prosperous and at peace with its neighbours. Amos, whose 'day-job' was to look after orchard trees, was upset at the growing gap between the rich and poor. He decided to go the city of Jerusalem to shout out his concerns. False weights in scales, selling the poor as slaves because they could not pay their debt, selling to the poor the food scraps off the floor of the wheat barns of the Rich. Banks trading money, mortgagee sales of those unable to pay interest on their home loans, the rich forcing the poor further into slavery who are only able to buy 2 minute noodles for their families. Do you 'see' what is happening in society? What is your response to God who says 'I will never forget a thing they have done!' How does God feel? How do you feel?
- Timothy is a young man left by St Paul to lead and guide the community at Ephesus. He is trying to keep the Christian community together. Some believed they had special knowledge and should have more importance in the community. Others were promoting civil disobedience, not wanting to go along with Roman authorities and governmental structures. On Sunday do you lift up holy hands without anger or argument?

position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.' He called in his master's debtors one by one.

To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?' He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.' Then to another the steward said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' The steward said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.' And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? If you are not trustworthy with what belongs to another, who will give you what is yours?"

No servant can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon."

- Jesus' Parable of the Crafty Steward provides Luke with an opportunity to combine the themes of Mercy and Money. God's mercy and care for God's people is to be mirrored by the material care and support of the poor by God's people. This is the 'covenant' or 'arrangement' God's people are to live by (the reason for Prophet Amos going to Jerusalem in the first reading). Are you in relationship with anyone who is 'poor' and in need? What might living this covenant mean for you?
- The rich man has a dishonest steward, but Jesus concludes by praising some of the dishonest steward's actions. The steward has just lost his job. Before everyone finds out, he has a crafty but risky plan. He will not charge the full interest and commission on the debt. He will win friends and those in debt will also praise the honour of the rich land owner believing that the master is truly honorable in not charging them interest on their 'loan'. Jesus comments that worldly people are often more creative and faithful to their goals and use of money to build 'their kingdom' than are spiritual people. How could you creatively use money to build the 'Kingdom of God'? Have you considered any creative fund raising project which could serve the poor? Have you shared your wealth and shown a preferential option for the poor recently?
- In the Gospel of Luke, the best use of money is to use it in the service of lifting up the poor. In doing this you will also be 'rich in the sight of God' - and you will be truly welcomed into your 'eternal dwelling' in heaven. Do you connect Mercy and Money? Have you considered what standard of living is 'enough' so that you may have something to share with the poor and those in need? How could you be a 'crafty steward' of your resources and lifestyle so that you please God and the poor?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?