

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Luke 16:1-13

- 1) Almost every week now we hear the same song from the news media
 - a) The vast majority of Americans oppose what is called “Bush’s war” in Iraq.
 - b) But if it is called that now, it wasn’t three years ago.
 - c) Back then it was the War on Terror
 - i) And we were all a part of it.
 - (1) We followed, almost breathlessly the reports of the administration as it built its case for attacking Iraq.
 - (2) We sat glued to our TVs as the video game of the decade “Shock and Awe”
 - (a) Played in the streets and over the skies of Baghdad.
 - (3) We high fived each other as President bush piloted his own jet onto an aircraft carrier and in a flight uniform proclaimed that the war was over.
- 2) And yet now three years later with Iraq a shambles, Osama still on the loose, Afghanistan slipping back under Taliban control and America deep in debt as a result of the war,
 - a) It can be difficult, if not impossible to find anyone outside the administration who is in favor of continuing it.
 - i) And yet no doubt about it; it is difficult, even impossible to see an easy way to end it.
- 3) Though Our government seems to have found one; and that is to say that
 - a) The fault for the failure of the war is not theirs,
 - i) It is the fault of others,
 - (1) The fault of our intelligence
 - (2) The fault of our military advisors
 - (3) The fault of Al Qaeda
 - (4) The fault of the Iraqi people in their unwillingness to work with us
 - (5) THE FAULT even OF SOME AMERICANS in their failure to support the war
 - ii) We were right all along they maintain;
 - (a) it is others who have betrayed us;
 - (b) And thus they re write the history of the past 6 years, to justify themselves in the present.
- 4) This is perhaps the most difficult thing for many of us to swallow.
 - a) For even those who supported the war in 2002 know that the responsibility for the failure or success of the war is not someone else’s but our own; our government’s; our nation’s.
 - i) And to hear our president shift responsibility to others, to the victims, to the American people smacks of self-serving hypocrisy
- 5) Which is perhaps why the unpopularity of the war is matched only by the unpopularity of the president who started it
 - a) Because as anyone will tell us; you can rewrite the past to justify yourself in the present.
- 6) But before we judge our president too harshly,
 - a) We might pause to remember that he is not quite alone.
 - b) For

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- i) Maybe it is those bills that did not get paid
 - ii) Maybe it is that job we got fired from
 - iii) Maybe it is the friendship that has ended
 - iv) Or the marriage on the way to the divorce courts
 - v) What ever the situation, and whose soever the blame.
 - vi) Who here has not sought to rewrite our pasts, to justify ourselves in the present?
- 7) Certainly that is what the steward in this evening's/morning's gospel reading appears to be doing, doesn't he?
- a) Aware tha he is abou to lose his job,
 - i) He goes bac into the recors of the financial transactions he mae on behalf of his boss and rewrites them, charging his boss' debtors far less than their original sum.
 - (1) It should not surprise us that those whose bills he changed would be appreciative; indeed this is what the steward was hoping;
 - b) But what is going on with the boss? He praises the steward and it seems
 - c) That he is praising him for his dishonesty.
 - i) And moreover since this is a parable and the parable is from Jesus
 - d) IT seems that God is praising him too.
- 8) IT goes without saying that this is one of the most difficult parables for a preacher to preach upon.
- a) For it seems to make a virtue what for us would be a vice,
 - b) An canonize this sinful steward as the patron saint of all of us who would justify ourselves through rewriting our pasts.
- 9) And yet that is perhaps because we lie in a world of inancial transactions conducted by the rule of law nd safegarded for the mosty part, from raud.
- a) In Jesus' dayit was muh different.
 - i) Fraud and graft were commonplace, and often the commission a worker got for his work was the amount he could charge over the amont desired by his boss.
 - b) Jesus and his hearers would have known that an thus they would have pai attention to something that almost forget.
 - i) That the story begins with the stward etting fired.
 - (1) And thus it begins with the acknowledgement that this steward was unjust, , unfair, guilt