

BIBLE STUDY
September 16, 2019

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos 8: 4-7

Luke 16: 1-13

1 Timothy 2: 1-8

1. Amos 8: 4-7

- Amos is one of the twelve Minor Prophets: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
- Amos is called the "prophet of justice" because he had a fierce passion for calling out the ways in which the wealthy and powerful trampled upon the rights of the poor.
- He prophesied during the reign of King Jeroboam II (786-746 BC) which was a time of great prosperity in Israel. He condemns the superficiality and materialism of the wealthy. He criticizes the exterior observance of their faith to the lack of interior conversion. He calls for a return to the heart of the law and covenant. He preaches that God's word must be embraced in its entirety not selective adherence.
- 8: 4- He calls the rich and powerful "those who trample upon the needy and destroy the poor of the land."
- 5: They observe the feasts that prohibit work but all the time are counting the hours to when they can go back and cheat again. They will fix the scales and overcharge the poor for food.
- 6: They will sell the poor into slavery which is expressly forbidden by the Law in Leviticus 25: 36ff.
- 7: God will never forget what they have done. He will insure justice for the poor and oppressed.
- 8: When the Lord judges the wrongdoers, the earth will tremble and the people will mourn. They will rise and fall like the waters of the Nile.

2. Luke 16: 1-13

- This parable has confused people from the beginning. It seems that Jesus is holding up the dishonest steward as a model of action. That is part of the shock value of the parable. A parable often has a surprise twist for an ending that gets one's attention and makes one think.
- The steward has mismanaged the owner's property either by dishonesty or incompetence. For this he is fired. Then, the steward gets to work to save himself and make sure that he has people who will take care of him when he is out of a job and in need. He admits that he cannot do hard work for a living and he is too proud to beg. He needs another solution.
- Many commentators speculate that it was a common practice for a steward or manager to charge a commission for himself on top of the cost of the invoice. Maybe the steward cut his commission off the invoice so

that the customers would think kindly of him and be helpful to him when he was out of a job.

- The owner commends the steward not because he previously had mismanaged the business but that now, in the face of his need, he was ready to take a cut in his profit so that he would have people to help in the future. It was clever of him to sacrifice present profit for future security.
- Jesus concludes that “the children of this world”—those who buy and sell—are wiser and more creative—than “the children of light”—disciples of Jesus. Business persons will take drastic action to save themselves but believers are slow to make the changes in their lives that will bring salvation.
- In Luke, Jesus teaches that the only good thing about wealth is that you can give it away to help the poor and insure yourself a treasure in heaven.
- Be like the steward who gave up present reward for the sake of a future reward. Give your money to the poor and needy so that when they have the privileged places in heaven, they will put in a good word for you!
- Vv 10-13 reflect different ways in which people have tried to make sense of the parable. There is some practical wisdom: a person who is dishonest in small matters will be dishonest in big matters. If you cannot be trusted with dollars and cents, how can you be trusted with spiritual treasure? If you cannot manage another's goods, what evidence do you give that you can handle your own? You cannot serve two masters—God and money. You got to choose.

3. 1 Timothy 2: 1-8

- 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are called the “Pastoral Epistles” because they were written not to the whole congregations of local churches but to the leaders or the pastors.
- There is much discussion about whether Paul is the author or they were written by a secretary of Paul for him or later by disciples of Paul. There are differences from his earlier letters: the concern is false teachers (Gnostics) not Judaizers; there is less concern for the imminent return of Jesus; there is a more highly organized church with a hierarchy of bishop and deacon. There is advice on the proper governing of the church and instructions for the conduct of various members of the church.
- This letter contains Paul's infamous command that slaves be obedient to their masters.
- 1-2: Paul insists that at the Liturgy—the celebration of the Eucharist—that prayers be offered for everyone—those in power, believers and non-believers. They may have been a disagreement about praying for unbelievers. There is a growing awareness of the Christian community living in the world—not apart from it or in opposition to it. I few pray for each other, we will better live in peace and respect one another.

- 3-4: This inclusiveness is pleasing to God because he wants everyone to be saved and come to know the truth. "The universal salvific will of God"
- 5-6: This may be a very early creed—a concise statement of belief. It seems to suggest in this context that since we all have one God and one mediator, we should pray for all people because Jesus died for all people.
- 7: The desire of God that all be saved which is fulfilled in the mission to the gentiles that was so dear to Paul is the reason that he was appointed preacher and apostle.
- I am speaking the truth and I am not lying: Paul certifying the truth of what he says.
- 8: Prayer in common should not be disturbed by anger or argument. When we pray, we pray in unity.