

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Our Stewardship over Money** Thirty-first Week in Ordinary Time Saturday,  
November 8, 2014 8:15 AM Phil 4:10-19; **Lk 16:9-15** (BVM) (Trustworthiness  
then is a matter of using everything for the master.)

As usual, we have to ask: To whom is this teaching addressed? It is addressed not to the crowds and not really to the Pharisees, but to Jesus' disciples. **Whenever there's a teaching addressed to the disciples** it takes a bit of vetting, a bit of cautious examination. **You can be sure that it contains some very subtle teachings.**

One of the presumptions of this teaching is that **we are put on earth only as stewards.** That is not a cultural belief. That is not something that Jewish people believed or American people believe or any other group believes. Getting ahead is the usual idea, gaining control over one's life, even exercising power as the goal of life. In Scripture we are sent into the world as stewards. **Dominion is understood as stewardship, serving the master, indeed as a way of trial or test to see how well we can be servants.**

This particular teaching is about the use of money. **How do we use money?** It's called "dishonest wealth," which is a rather odd word. It's actually "dishonest" in Greek. Why dishonest? It really means in this context "worldly wealth" as opposed to the wealth that accrues to a person through good works or through acts of love and service of others. But even worldly wealth is not normally thought of as dishonest.

The point that Jesus is making here is, however, that it has no permanent value, at least not for you. This of course is a theme he borrowed from the Old Testament that ridicules people who accumulate money. They accumulate money; they spend their entire life accumulating money and then they die. So what's it worth? **Jesus' point is, well, it's worth something because you can use it for doing good.** You can use it as a good steward serving the master and, therefore, the master's purposes. But for that to be true, then **you can't let**

**money itself be your master.** “You cannot serve God and mammon.” Money can take over and become the master, or **we can subjugate money and wealth to the service of God.**

**That is being a good steward and that is wisdom.**

So there is a purpose for everything. “If, therefore, you are not trustworthy with dishonest wealth, who will trust you with true wealth?” **Trustworthiness then is a matter of using everything for the master,** for God, and not becoming the master or allowing money to be the master. This is not impossible. It takes some thought, some care; but **it leads to freedom,** and that’s the point of this teaching.