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THE LORD'S SERMONS

»The parable of the unjust steward«

St. Luke XIV, 1-13: He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

"So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

This Gospel deals with an unjust steward who, after his lord had been told about his dishonesty, endeavoured to secure himself a loophole so as not to become destitute and be compelled to earn his living by hard labour.

I gave the Pharisees and scribes this parable because they, most of all, paid homage to the money or mammon and in order to obtain plenty of it were not ashamed to use any means to achieve their purpose.

What the unjust steward did in this parable, namely, reduce by half the debts owing to his lord so as to win favour with his lord's debtors, was also done by the Pharisees in their religious laws. They were strict with the poor and lenient with the rich, as is still the case today with your priesthood.

The precepts I taught My disciples: My advice to win friends for themselves with the mammon so that they need not suffer hardship in times of need; also the following verses: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much, and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much!' 'If therefore you

have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to trust you the true riches?' 'If you have not been faithful in what belongs to another man, who shall give you that which is your own?' 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or the other way round', which in the spiritual sense means: 'You cannot serve God and mammon', - all these verses contain - with only slight differences - one and the same. Only the ninth verse seems to contradict the ones following it because it advises to win friends with the mammon so that in times of need a friend may assist us, whereas in the other verses the emphasis is on the fact that one cannot serve two masters, with the thirteenth verse clearly stating: 'You cannot serve God and mammon'. How can a person win friends with mammon and still serve God?

You can see that there appear to be contradictions in this; for God and mammon - or the material world with its riches and pleasures - are surely quite opposite things, and it is obvious that he who pays homage to mammon and the world cannot at the same time love God and follow His precepts.

In order to clarify these contradictions, let us have a closer look at these verses and endeavour, notwithstanding their apparent contradiction, to find a common striving for the one goal.

In this parable I said that the bad steward considerably reduced the amounts his master's debtors were owing. In a spiritual sense this means simply that the offences a person has committed against Me as the Supreme Being, are regarded with more leniency taking into consideration his own nature and the circumstances under which he has to live. If I judged your actions or even punished you without this consideration, all mankind would be in a hopeless situation. The end would have to be a second extermination of the entire human race, similar to that at the great deluge. And when creating new men, I would have to make them machines instead of free men, if I did not want them to follow in the same footsteps.

If it says: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon' this means as much as: Ease the burden of him who is burdened with sin and a bad conscience. Make it clear to him that his guilt is great before Me, but that he should not consider it as irredeemable. Prove to him that man cannot live on earth without the world, but that he has to live with his fellowmen. However, he should do as much good as he can, even if bad influences may put obstacles in his way. Teach him not to look upon Me as a supreme, severe judge, but as a loving Father, Who, with every sin committed, is quite aware to what extent the sinner himself is responsible and how much of it is due to the world.

In this way, you ease the burden of the worried and reconcile them with the world which they may want to forsake in their overzealousness. By thus comforting them with good advice, you act in accordance with the words: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon.' Thus you win the hearts of others who otherwise might have, in their despair, thrown themselves into the arms of the world, or despaired of God, eternity and even the existence of their own soul.

The next verse, the tenth, says that he who is faithful in the least will also be faithful in great things. This means: Once a believer has realized that he can resist the world with his limited strength by not giving in to it and seeing all things in their proper light, he will not be deceived by material splendour. And even if circumstances should place him in a higher position, he will remain faithful to his principles just the same as he did with less power and in a limited sphere of action.

This is also confirmed by the twelfth verse, for 'another man's' denotes your material, and 'your own' denotes your spiritual destiny. To devote oneself completely to one or the other is, of course, only possible if one is completely neglected and homage is paid only to the other (which means that one cannot serve two masters), while it is possible to make use of the one to fully achieve one's purpose in the other. Only in this way is it possible that men draw closer to Me and strive after their spiritual perfection, when they living in the world, use all its riches and treasures with the one object in mind, by

cleverly using what has been entrusted to them to prove to their fellowman, and through him to Me, how they have comprehended My two commandments of love.

The following parable of the rich man and the poor Lazarus was to show My listeners even more clearly the consequences that arise if a person fully surrenders to mammon instead of using it for spiritual purposes. It was to show them that in this way one receives his reward already on earth, whilst the reward for the other one is saved for another much longer life; the one life being-of a short duration, the other lasting forever. It will be quite as impossible for the worldly-minded to enter upon the road to beatitude - except if he does it from within -as it will be to the already perfected to return to worldly-mindedness.

That the rich man in his torment had asked to save at least his brothers, whereupon Abraham replied that even if the dead returned to the world, they would be unable to convert one who does not believe in his religion and its principles, means that those who have completely surrendered to the world, or to mammon, would take little notice even if supernatural influences would approach them, as they had long since ignored the supernatural as non-existent and denied it with words and deeds.

Hence it follows from this whole Gospel of the unjust steward that you people - and particularly those of you whom I, more than others, want to introduce to My secrets of creation and My teaching -, if you want to win friends for yourselves and children for Me, must not make the way more difficult for others by exaggerated demands, and as far as you are concerned, when you have sinned, you must leave it to Me to decide to what extent I shall make you responsible for your mistakes or not.

A "too much" is at all times detrimental. Neither for yourselves nor for others must you make the road to Me too difficult. Do not try to be My spirits while you are still weak humans! Your human nature cannot stand up to such aspirations. You can still be full of love for Me and your fellowmen and keep your moral purity in the bustle of the world; you can serve Me completely without having to turn your back on the world.

Don't you see how I Myself, am using the worldly events towards the spiritual education of mankind? I do not despise and cannot hate what I, Myself, have created. And all human activity, bad as it may be on the part of one or the other, has still to serve Me towards the spiritual perfection of My children and all mankind.

Just as I, as the supreme judge and ruler, act, you should, too. You should also make use of the circumstances, situations and events, which you encounter during the course of your life, in such a way that you help to further My purpose mainly through your actions towards your fellowmen. Then it will be unnecessary to recall the dead - as the rich man in the parable asked - if you, the living, are the best visible witnesses for the fact that amid the bustle of life the human soul, remembering its high mission, cannot serve two masters, but only one, the Lord of the Entire Universe, Me alone, making use of the existing circumstances for the sole purpose of accelerating and successfully completing the great destiny of man.

Thus you see from a parable where injustice serves as an example, how useful even such circumstances can be that appear bad, but result in the most glorious thing that I, as God, as Jesus, have striven for and which you, as My children, are meant to help Me complete! Amen.