

HOMILY 25TH SUN OT YRC 2019

Never give up.

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Never give up. [Then sit down]

That is my main point today. I was going to leave it at that but what the heck...I have more to say than that. I think that is the point of the Gospel reading today. Never give up on doing what is right. Never give up on God. In the Gospel reading today we hear a parable. Now Jesus frequently teaches with parables, stories that are meant to get people to think outside the box. In this parable we hear about the dishonest steward. The dishonest steward forgot the rule; never give up on doing what is right. The steward was embezzled money from the land owner, his employer. He got caught and he was fired. Now what are the things he could have done in this situation? He could have stolen as much money as he could get away with in the time he had left on the job. That is why today we walk people out when they get fired or laid off so they do not have this opportunity. He could have denied any wrongdoing and see what proof the employer had. Maybe he could have gotten away with it. He could have sued the employer for slander if he cannot prove that he embezzled. He could have given a lot of excuses, everybody is doing it, I am not getting paid enough for the work I do, I thought it would be ok. However that would not be the right thing to do in this situation. The right thing to do when we do something wrong is to admit it. So, the steward is on a better track now.

What could he have done next? He could have given up. I was fired for doing something illegal. I may be prosecuted. Who will ever hire me after this? I will never work again. I am going to become homeless. He could have been immobilized with depression and fear, but that is not what he did. The steward was very ingenious. To understand what he did you have to understand the context. The land owner was an absent land owner that did not know nor care about his tenants. You could kind of think

of him as a slum lord. Frequently the tenants were forced to borrow money from the slum lord at a ridiculously high interest rate so that he never had any hope of getting out of debt. The steward would have been in the position to set the interest rate, so adjusting the interest rate would also be in his power. Now the landowner may or may not have liked the reduction in the interest rate. That was the chance that the steward had to take. By reducing the interest rate, then tenant was more likely to pay off the debt so the landlord was more likely to get his money. Why work toward paying off a debt that was impossible to pay. And the steward would be well thought of by the tenant who may even hire him after this was all over.

What happened next was really outside the box of what we would expect. The landlord commended the dishonest steward for acting prudently. I would have expected the landlord to be really angry with the steward for embezzlement and that he would just want to see him punished. It appears that since the steward did the right thing and admitted his guilt, the landlord forgave him. That is what God does with us. When we do something wrong, if we fess up, he forgives us and helps us to get back on track. Now we are not sure what happened next. The steward may have redeemed himself with the landlord and he may have been able to keep his job. He may have lost his job, but the landlord may have given him a good reference for a future job. He may have gotten hired by one of the tenants who had their debt reduced. We do not know, but since he did not give up, it is fairly likely that he learned his lesson and landed on his feet.

It is important that remember, never give up. If we do something wrong, admit our wrongdoing and start doing the right thing. Never give up on doing the right thing. And God will always forgive us and if we do the right thing, he will help us get back on our feet. Never give up doing what is right. Never give up on God.