

Intro

Good **morning (afternoon)** my brothers and sisters in Christ. Today the theme of my homily is:

Duplicity and serving two masters

What is the definition of duplicity?

- **It is a contradictory** doubleness of thought, speech, or action
- the quality or state of being double or twofold

I have always admired our 16th President, not only for his leadership displayed during the hardest five years of our country from 1860-1865, but he was a man who never forgot his humble roots and had a way with humor . He practiced self-deprecating humor.

In the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates in 1858 for the senate seat in Illinois , Stephen Douglas accused Abraham Lincoln of being two-faced over the issue of slavery , Lincoln replied, **referencing his homeliness**, “Honestly, if I were two-faced, would I be showing you this one?”

Body

In our first reading from the Book of the prophet Amos , the prophet calls out the political and religious leaders of his time (760 BC) in Israel . The leaders seem to regard participation in the religious feasts and prayers that **‘in their opinion** ‘place them in good standing with God. But in their hearts, they did not care for the Torah. In reality, they were quite the opposite as they looked forward to the end of the religious festivals so they could begin again, **to extort the poor**. They were trying to serve two masters, they gave the appearance of serving God, but did not. They lived for their current life, but not for eternal life.

In the gospel today from Luke, we hear Jesus tell us “ **No servant can serve two masters**. You cannot serve both God and mammon. What is the word mammon? It is an Aramaic word that means wealth.

So is Jesus telling us that wealth is bad?

Jesus is not telling us that wealth is bad, but it is **how we achieve wealth** and **what we do with wealth** that becomes the moral questions?

How we achieve wealth?

I really appreciate this gospel. Jesus uses this parable of the crafty steward to give us an 'example' of what **not to do** and to give us a '**warning**'. The example that Jesus gives us is how this crafty steward uses every means to make himself comfortable for the immediate future, even if it is cheating his master in the process. Doesn't this sound similar to the crooked leaders that Amos was calling out who were willing to cheat the poor with the fixed scales?

Jesus also uses this parable as a **warning**, not to fall in love with money as the Pharisees did. We need to earn our money honestly and not take advantage of others.

We all need money to function in modern society. So the question for me is ,

Who will guide me in the method to achieve wealth?

I would like to propose that we go back to Jesus to in the gospel of Matthew (6). Here Jesus tells us not to get hung up on what we are to wear, eat and drink That we are to trust the Lord **first and not worry**. I know you are familiar with the text when you hear it.

But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.

Jesus is telling us that we need to be in relationship with HIM. **That is numero uno**, to be in a committed relationship with HIM .

We need to give to the Lord our two greatest possessions, **our hearts and our wills**.

To let our guard down, to put our trust in HIM that he will provide all that we need.

All that we need, not all that we want.

Today in modern society, we are told to plan our future retirement. Sue and I as a couple have tried to save money over the years so that we will not be a burden to our family when the time comes. We want to plan to be comfortable in retirement too, right? How much money do I need to be comfortable?

Will our plan take me away from serving my master?

The real answer is to have enough so that **“we can still walk by Faith”** .

We can have a goal of becoming financially independent; so long as that financial independence does not move us from our dependence on God? (Repeat 2x)

Money does not make a person evil, but it enhances your strengths and your weakness. Ever hear in the news about the Mega -lottery winners within a few years are out of money and are in a state of bankruptcy? Or how about the sports athletes or Hollywood stars that go into bankruptcy after making all those millions. To possess lots of money is no guarantee to security or happiness. Wealthy people are not automatically happy.

Let's speak to the true nature of Stewardship, not the “crafty Steward” that we hear in today's gospel, but God's real stewards. All we have here in this present life is on-loan from God. Our time, talent, and treasure is a gift from God that will end when we pass from this life.

Do we use our time, talent and treasure only to satisfy our temporary earthy desires, or are we using it for God's will ?

I remember a homily that Fr Michael preached one time in which he said, you will never see a U haul following the hearse to the cemetery. It has stuck with me even today?

Are we serving two masters?

What we do with wealth?

God loves a cheerful giver. God has wonderfully designed us that when we give, we really get a reward. Scripture tells us this truth and now modern science is confirming the same.

What is Neuroscience? It is the study of the human nervous system, how the nervous systems work. Today's research focuses on the brain and how it influences cognitive function and behavior. **Scientists have found that helping others helps you.**

Neuroscience has demonstrated that giving is a powerful pathway for creating more personal joy and improving overall health. While the brain is remarkably complex, the neurochemical drivers of happiness are quite easy to identify. Oxytocin (aak·see·tow·sn) dopamine, and serotonin make up the **Happiness Trifecta**. Any activity that increases the production of these neurochemicals will cause a boost in mood.

St Pope John Paul II inspired by Vatican II

that the true nature of the human person is fully revealed in Jesus Christ ; that every person has a fundamental vocation revealed by the commandment to love, to give himself to God and to others.

In other words, God has hard-wired us to receive love from God and then give it away.

This will make us truly happy

Are we serving the Lord, our true master and is mammon serving us in that goal?

Closing

In closing, I want to borrow something fun from Bishop Barron

I would like to say , if a genie appeared to you and wanted to grant you three wishes, but we are in church so let me phrase it this way

If an angel of the Lord appeared to you and offered you three blessings what would you ask for?

- Would you ask for lots of money?
- Would you ask for health for you and your family?
- Would you ask that God increase your faith, the capacity to hope and to love without cost?

(pause)

How would you answer? Think about it

Amen