

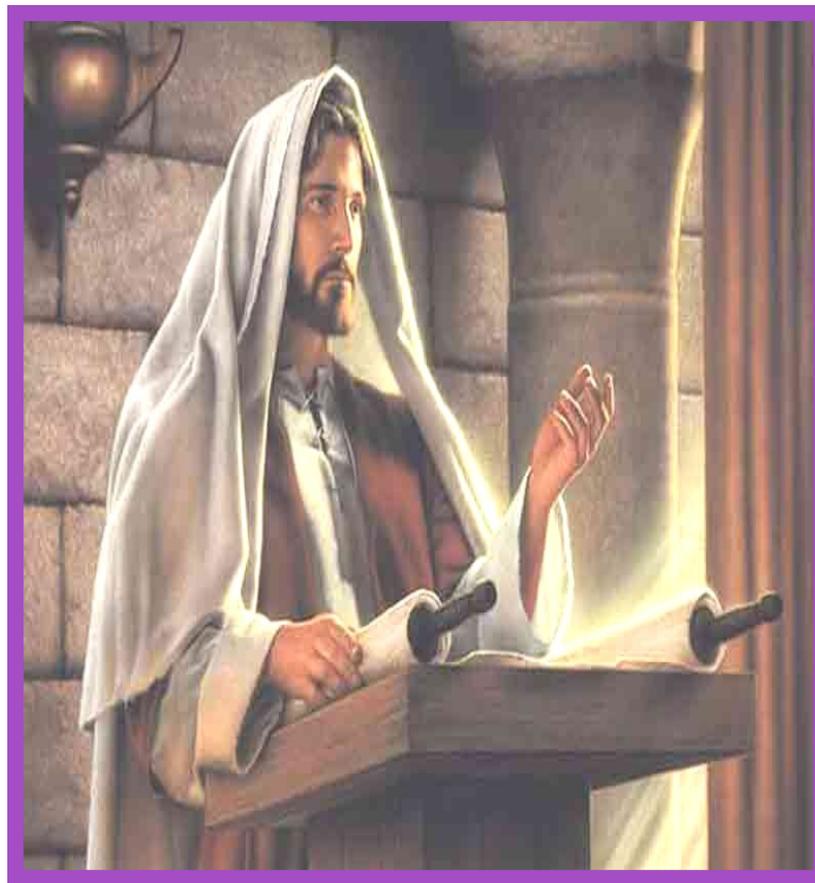
So his deliberations were without end, and his decisions kept changing. *What shall I do?* Who cannot feel compassion for a nature so obsessed? Wretched in his abundance, miserable in his good fortune and yet more miserable for the blessings to come. For him the earth does not yield harvests, but sighs and groans; not fruits in plenty, but cares, grief, grave anxieties. He grieves like those who are destitute. Is not this what he cries who is in

anguish through want: *What shall I do?* Where shall I get my food? Where shall I find clothing? This is what the rich man is saying. Is not his heart tormented; devoured with anxiety? For what rejoices others brings pain to the avaricious. He does not rejoice at his barns stuffed full. The overflowing riches his barns cannot hold torment his soul, lest perhaps overflowing from his barns they bring some of their blessing to those in want.



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**SERMON ON
THE PARABLE OF THE UNJUST STEWARD
FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH
101 - 1**



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 16: 1-9

by: Saint Basil, Bishop and Doctor

Trials are of two kinds. Either affliction will test our souls as gold is tried in a furnace, and make trial of us through patience, or the very prosperity of our lives will oftentimes, for many, be itself an occasion of trial and temptation. For it is equally difficult to keep the soul upright and undefeated in the midst of afflictions, as to keep oneself from insolence and pride in prosperity. We have an example of the first kind of trial in the blessed Job, that great and undefeated champion, who with unshaken courage and immovable purpose breasted every assault of the devil, as they came against him with the force of a torrent; and the more each attempt of the enemy appeared irresistible, the higher his patience rose superior to every trial. Of the second kind we have many examples besides this rich man of whom we have just read, who had much wealth, and hoped to have much more. And the most kind God did not in the beginning condemn him for his thankless soul; rather, each day He added new riches to what he already had, to see if, when his soul had at length attained satiety, it might then awaken to liberality and to kindness.

For He said: *The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself, saying: What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said: This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and I will build greater* (Lk. xii 16-18) Why then was the land of this man so rich; he who would do nothing of good with the abundance that was coming to him? That we might see more clearly the forbearance of God, whose goodness extends itself even to such persons, since *He maket his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust* (Mt. v. 45).

But such goodness of God brings greater chastisement upon the wicked. He pours out His rains upon the fields cultivated by avaricious hands. He gives us the sun that warms the seed and multiplies it into an abundance of fruit. And it is from God such blessings are received; fertile lands, a fitting climate, seeds that are fruitful, the work of the oxen, and all things else by which the tilled earth becomes fruitful.

What kind of person is this man? His nature is bitter; hating his own kind; of an unyielding greed. This was the return He was making His Benefactor for those blessings. He had no thought for those of his own nature; it did not enter his mind to give what remained over when his barns were full to those who were in need. He gave no heed to the words that commanded: *Do not withhold from doing good who is able* (Prov. lii 27); and again: *Let not mercy and truth leave thee* (iii. 3); and also: *Deal thy bread to the hungry* (Is. lviii. 7). He paid no heed to all the prophets, to all the teachers, who cried out to him. His barns were near to bursting with the great quantities of corn he had stowed there; but his greedy heart was not filled. For he was ever adding new crops to the earlier ones; and the mass swelling upwards through yearly increase he found himself in this predicament of avarice, that he could not let go of the first yield, nor find room to store the last.

