

Late one night, a robber wearing a ski mask jumped into the path of a well-dressed man – stuck his gun in the man’s side and demanded: “Give me all your money.”

Angry at the interruption to his busy life, and stubborn enough not to give in – the man said: “You can’t do this to me. I am a United States Congressman.”

“Oh, in that case,” the robber said, “give me my money!”

“Give me my money” – that’s what the rich man in today’s gospel wanted: his money.

He heard that his employee was taking advantage of him. Whether the steward was stealing from the rich man or not isn’t the main point of the parable – although more than likely, he was stealing.

And whether the steward reducing the debt that various business people owed his master was honest or dishonest --- or whether he was just knocking off the commission on the debt he was owed --- - is not the point of the parable either.

No, the main point of the parable is --- this steward, this employee of the rich man was clever --- and wasted no time in planning for a secure future for himself. . .

Jesus is telling this parable to us –to indicate that we need to be just as clever in planning for a secure future for ourselves as was the steward -----and not just for the few years we spend here on earth ----

but for our time spent in eternity, after this life on earth is completed. . .

Jesus is constantly reminding us that material things can make us feel so secure in *this* life – that we may forget about what is most important – *our eternal life*.

This was also the point of today’s reading from the prophet Amos.

The prosperous times the Israelites were enjoying at this time in their history – long after they were led out of slavery in Egypt – and long before the birth of Messiah --- those prosperous times – led them to forget all about the God who had blessed them so richly. They had lost a sense of humility – they had become proud: thinking of themselves as owners, permanent possessors in their own right – rather than as stewards: temporary gift-holders from God.

And we they lost touch with the fact that things not theirs had been entrusted to them for a time to be used for the good of, and in service to, others --- they lost touch with God ---- which led them to the moral decline of the Israelite nation –

And its eventual collapse.

Jesus doesn’t want us to make the same mistake! He is reminding us today in this Gospel to use the blessings God has given us to help us get closer to God and one another --- and not let our possessions become a god in themselves.

With God’s grace, and only with God’s help – can we do that.