

# Entrusted, not Entitled

*A reflection to take away : Sunday 9th August 2026*

## Today's readings

*1 Corinthians 10:1–13 and Luke 16:1–9 - NRSVue*

## Warnings from Israel's History

*1 Corinthians 10:1–13*

I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did, as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." We must not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. And do not complain, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

## The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

*Luke 16:1–9*

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’”

So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’

And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

### **A thought to take away**

Jesus’ parable of the dishonest manager is deliberately uncomfortable. Jesus is not praising the manager’s dishonesty. He draws our attention instead to the urgency and purpose with which the man acted.

When the manager realised that his position was about to be taken away, he used what remained in his hands to prepare for the future. He understood that the present moment mattered.

Everything he managed belonged to his master. He was a steward, not an owner.

The same is true for us. We have been entrusted with many precious gifts: the Gospel, our church building, the Book of Common Prayer, our Christian inheritance and one another. These are ours to cherish and tend, but ultimately they belong to God.

Paul reminds us that it is possible to experience the outward signs of faith without allowing God to transform our hearts. Our worship is intended not simply to comfort us, but to form us into people of humility, generosity and love.

*“Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit.”*

We ask the Holy Spirit to change us from within, so that we may love God more fully and become the people Jesus calls us to be.

Faithful stewardship means preserving what is precious while also preparing for those who will come after us. We are called to make room for others and to help people who do not yet know Jesus discover his welcome and grace.

## **A verse to remember**

**“God is faithful.”**

*1 Corinthians 10:13*

## **Something to ponder**

*What has God entrusted to us, and how might we use it faithfully for those who are here now and those who are not here yet?*

## **A prayer for our church**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
we thank you for the Gospel of your Son,

for the worship and witness of generations past,  
and for all that you have entrusted to our care.

Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.  
Keep us from pride, presumption and fear.  
Give us grace to cherish what is precious,  
wisdom to use it faithfully,  
and humility to remember  
that the Church is yours and not ours.

Deepen our faith, strengthen our fellowship,  
and make us steadfast in prayer  
and generous in love.

Bring new people among us.  
Draw children, families and people of every age  
to know and follow Jesus.  
Give us courage to welcome them,  
patience to walk alongside them,  
and joy as we see your kingdom grow.

Make this church a place  
where the lonely find friendship,  
the weary find rest,  
the sorrowful find comfort,  
and those who seek you find faith.

Help us to remain together  
when things are not precisely as we would choose,  
and to serve one another  
with kindness, patience and grace.

Grant that we may be faithful stewards  
of all that you have placed in our hands,  
planting faithfully for a harvest  
which others may one day gather. Through Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

*Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue).*