

youthESource Drama

A Matter of Trust

by Rev. Dean Nadasdy

Based on the Gospel for Proper 20, the 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Luke 16:1-15

Retelling parables is a little bit like retelling a good joke. You can't expect people to laugh as hard as they did the first time. Jesus' parables are masterpieces that stand for all time on their own. There is no competing with them. Still, one tries to grasp the depths of their meanings. These dramas represent such an endeavor. They are parable on top of parables. Some nugget of truth from Jesus' stories has been pulled and recast in contemporary terms. Hopefully, the recasting enhances rather than detracts from Jesus' first and best intentions.

These are Gospel dramas. By that I mean that they are meant to enhance the reading and preaching from the Gospel (Series C) for a particular Sunday. The dramas require little staging and rehearsal. Usually, one rehearsal is adequate for production. The Focus section might be included in the morning worship folder or read before the drama is presented. The best place for the drama in the service order is probably after the Gospel has been read.

Have fun with these dramas. Probe your characters and make the lines alive with feeling. True, you're piling parables atop parables, but you're working with stories that have stood the test of centuries of retelling. You can't top the one who first told them, but you can help ensure that people today hear His message, and maybe even laugh well—twice.

FOCUS

We cannot be dishonest in one area of our lives and expect to be trusted in another. Greedy sin has a way of haunting us. Those who waste and abuse earthly treasure may be no more reliable with heavenly treasure.

CHARACTERS

Jack - insightful employer; wants the best for his firm

Sam - an operator; transparently dishonest

SETTING

Jack and Sam sit in Jack's office for a job interview. A desk, two chairs, and office trim will set the stage.

Jack: (reading resume) Impressive record, Sam.

Sam: Thanks, Jack.

Jack: Very impressive. (reads further) You've bounced around quite a bit, haven't you?

Sam: A little, I suppose .

Jack: How do you explain that, Sam.

Sam: Progress, I guess. Never did take a step down, you'll notice.

Jack: Right. I did see that. (reads again) And your family?

Sam: Just fine, Jack. Happily married. Two children. Just fine. They've got everything a family could ever want. I've worked hard for them. We have a boat now, you know.

Jack: (preoccupied with resume) A boat, you say? Fine, Sam, fine. Why are you interested in changing jobs again?

Sam: Oh, I have a feeling General Finance will be laying a few of us off very soon. I thought it was time to start looking, just in case .

Jack: I see. Any reason for the lay-off?

Sam: No, can't say. Just a feeling a few of us have.

Jack: I understand. (hesitates) Well, Sam, as I said, the only thing that concerns me here is how much you've moved around. We'll sure keep your name in the running, though, and let you know either way once the position is filled.

Sam: That would be fine. (hesitates, then proceeds) There was one more thing, Jack.

Jack: What's that?

Sam: Well, I probably should approach this gently. I have noticed, though, that your firm has had a request in for some time with General for a large commercial loan.

Jack: Yes, that's right. We've been waiting for months to secure a loan for building expansion.

Sam: Right. I could be helpful there, you know.

Jack: Really, Sam?

Sam: Money's tight right now, and as it stands, our commercial loans are stacked up by the date of application for consideration. You may not even come up for months the way things are, before the board, I mean...unless...

Jack: Unless what?

Sam: Unless I were to doctor up the application a bit. You know, just to help the cause.

Jack: The cause?

Sam: The corporation.

Jack: You mean our corporation.

Sam: Right. Right.

Jack: And what's in it for you, Sam?

Sam: Let's just say, you'll remember my name with fondness when you're reviewing applicants.

Jack: And that's your proposal? You'll give us special treatment if we do the same for you?

Sam: Mutual back-scratching. The stuff of which business and politics is made. How does it sound, Jack?

Jack: I'd be kidding you if I denied that we really need to move on getting a loan, but Sam, you just lost yourself a job.

Sam: I don't get it. What do you mean?

Jack: So we go with your idea. And we get a loan a few months sooner. And you get a job here with us. How would I ever trust you again? How would I know you were loyal to us first and not to some other firm that was reaping the benefits of your little favors? Tell me that, Sam. How could I trust you?

Sam: You can trust me. Look, I was just trying to get an edge. The job here pays more than I've ever made. I want it. I want it badly.

Jack: You want it badly enough to cheat other people waiting in line for loans and to break company policy?

Sam: Maybe I do.

Jack: Well, I'm sorry, Sam, this is one firm where people mean more than money, and where company loyalty means more than individual advancement. I'm beginning to see now why you haven't lasted long anywhere. It still finally all comes down to trust, Sam. And I wouldn't trust you with a dollar of this firm's money!

Sam: And that's your last word?

Jack: That's it.

Sam: So big deal. I'll go elsewhere. Some places know how to do business. It's a matter of pushing the right buttons.

Jack: No, Sam, it's a matter of trust.

(Sam exits; Jack follows)

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