

youthESource Drama

The Least I Can Do

by Rev. Dean Nadasdy

Based on the Gospel for Proper 21, the 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

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

The saddest people of all are those so rich that they cannot see the riches of God given freely in Jesus Christ.

CHARACTERS

Russ – a representative of L.F.R., Lazarus Food Recyclers, who has a way of probing people's plans and values

Miles Richman – “filthy” rich with well-defined values but poorly developed ultimate plans; this-worldly all the way

SETTING

Russ sits bedazzled in the lavish drawing room of the Richman mansion. Russ is dressed in a rather shabby suit.

Russ: (looking around himself) I sure never saw anything like this before. I hope I have the right place.

Miles: (enters confidently; Russ stands) You must be the man from uh-h-h, what was it again?

Russ: L. F. .R., Mr. Richman. Lazarus Food Recyclers.

Miles: Ah, yes. (shake hands) Your name?

Russ: Russ, Sir.

Miles: Well, have a seat, Russ.

Russ: Uh-h, yes sir. (sits down)

Miles: Now, tell me, what are you after?

Russ: Well, frankly, Mr. Richman, we 're after your garbage .

Miles: I'm sorry, Russ, but A-1 Sanitation picks up my garbage every week. They do a fine job, too. What's your proposal?

Russ: Well, Sir, we at L.F.R. have a plan where we will pick up your garbage every day at no cost to you, understanding that we will distribute your left-over food to the poor of the community.

Miles: Somebody's going to eat what we have left from our plates?

Russ: That's the plan, Mr. Richman.

Miles: It sounds rather unsanitary to me.

Russ: I suppose that all depends on your lifestyle, doesn't it?

Miles: I suppose. (thinking it over) Exactly who gets our garbage, I mean, our left-overs?

Russ: Most of it will go over to the folks in Shanty Town, you know, just North of the burnt-out section downtown.

Miles: And you'll handle all of the garbage?

Russ: That's the program, Mr. Richman.

Miles: What do you get out of this, Russ?

Russ: The folks pay us what they can for the food. Most of our funds come from the cans and stuff that can be resold.

Miles: Very commendable, Russ. A good piece of community work.

Russ: Thanks, Mr. Richman. Does that mean we can count on your left-overs?

Miles: I'm a practical man, you know. That's how I got where I am today. So answer me this. What's in it for me?

Russ: I'm not so sure I understand.

Miles: I'm asking what I get out of the deal. Why should I share my left-overs with anybody?

Russ: Just for the satisfaction. For the joy of helping your fellow human beings. For the sake of sharing. You'll feel good doing this. I know you will.

Miles: May even help me a bit in the afterlife. Right, Russ? (chuckles a bit)

Russ: I can't promise you that, Sir.

Miles: Doesn't hurt to cover all your bets though, does it?

Russ: I suppose not. Are you worried about the afterlife, Mr. Richman?

Miles: Let's just say I'm not getting any younger. When I have to stand at the Pearly Gates I'd like to have some good references, if you know what I mean.

Russ: I think I understand. You're afraid your money won't get you into heaven. You think it might take something more, like a few sacrifices and good works...like sharing your left-overs .

Miles: Very insightful, Russ.

Russ: Thanks, Mr. Richman. So do we get your business?

Miles: You're pushing me, young man.

Russ: Don't mean to. Perhaps I'll drop by again some other time. (stands to leave)

Miles: No, let's proceed. You can have our garbage. I'll have the housekeeper call A-1 in the morning and cancel our contract.

Russ: That'll be great, Mr. Richman.

Miles: Well, as I said, I'm not getting any younger.

Russ: Yes, Sir. I mean, well , none of us is, Sir.

Miles: And there are those pearly gates. Right?

Russ: I suppose so, Sir. We can plan on the first pick-up this Friday, then?

Miles: Fine .

Russ: Thanks very much. (shakes hands; begins to exit)

Miles: Greta will show you out. (Russ exits)

Russ: Thanks again.

Miles: Sure. My pleasure. The least I can do. (exits)

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