

## Homily For the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time- Year C

**St. Peter's 5:00 PM/7:00PM/9:30 AM Masses- September 21/22, 2019**

**Amos 8:4-7** "Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land."

**Psalms 113:1-8** "Praise the Lord who lifts up the needy."

**1 Tim 2: 1-7** "God our Saviour desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

**Luke 16:1-13** "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

### God Will Not Forget

#### Introduction

Two older couples were relaxing after a nice supper together as friends. The two men were discussing a restaurant one of the couples had recently been to. He was explaining how great it was - the food, the atmosphere, the service. But, for the life of him, he could remember almost everything about it except the name. Finally, he thought of something. He said to his friend, "I'm trying to think of a flower that is pretty, smells nice and you might get a dozen for your wife on Valentine's Day or her birthday." "You mean a rose?" his friend answered. "Yeah, that's it. Hey, Rose, do you remember the name of that restaurant we went to?"

All of our readings today speak of what it is most important to remember, and to live as if we know what is most important and what is less important. The prophet Amos, St. Paul in his letter to the new bishop, Timothy, and Jesus in his parable about a crooked steward, all have a key message that we would do well not to forget. As a married man, I can tell you that remembering my wife's name is very high on the list, but I have to do much more than that.

#### Amos

Amos' career happened when things were going pretty well for Israel, but there was also a lot of social and religious corruption. Amos spoke harshly against those who had wealth, not because they were rich but because they were 'greedy rich'. They had no concern for those who were suffering because of their greed.

After cheating the poor all week, they made a mockery of the Sabbath itself, the holy day of the week, which belongs to God. They couldn't wait for it to be over so they could go back to cheating people. Crimes against humanity lead to crimes against God himself.

As always, we need to think about how Amos might be speaking to us, even if we are not rich and don't feel like we are cheating the poor. The Israelites had been freed from slavery and were forbidden to enslave anyone. Yet Amos watched how some were being sold into servanthood because they couldn't keep up with payments to landowners or masters. It was as if they had returned to Egypt as slaves, only now they were the slave masters and oppressors of their own people.

Amos says that God will not forget these sins against humanity. God, of course, with perfect intellect, forgets nothing. It is we who forget, because our intellect has been darkened after our fall into a sinful nature. In Sacred Scripture, when God remembers something, it means that people will be held to account for their sins. When God does forget, it means that his grace and mercy will fully heal and forgive those who have sinned but ask for that same mercy. We always should want to make God forget our sins. The way to do that is to see ourselves through Amos' eyes.

## **Luke**

Jesus doesn't refer specifically to God remembering or forgetting. Still, he is reminding people of a consistent message of salvation using a puzzling story. It is a rich man's manager, or steward, who is cheating his master and the master's customers. When he gets fired because of it, he figures out how to make some friends using the last bit of influence he has as the manager before he is booted out the door. That starts him thinking about how to survive without his position. He is physically weak, too weak to do manual labour. But he is also spiritually weak. He is too proud to beg.

That is how evil works. We see something that is good, but we become obsessed with having it and go after it in destructive ways. In the process, our hunger for the things of heaven becomes less. The term Jesus uses for this is "dishonest

wealth." Jesus says use your wealth but not to place any trust in it. Only trusting in God will lead to an eternal dwelling. Everything else is counterfeit. Everything else is false.

Jesus calls that shrewd, which seems like a compliment. But it is only a compliment based on what the world thinks is good behaviour. Jesus has three lessons for his hearers, which includes us here today. First, remember that nothing you have really belongs to you. It is all a gift from God and must be used to help the poor and anyone in need. Second is that If you get too caught up in your own wealth, whether you get it honestly or dishonestly, your material possessions will do nothing towards experiencing the heavenly reality for which God has created all of us. Finally, you cannot be a servant of God and of wealth. You have to choose. If you choose well, and prove trustworthy with what you have, you will be given a treasure which you cannot imagine.

### **Call To Action**

We are stewards of creation. We are stewards of the situation in life we find ourselves. It is true that some have more earthly goods than others. Because of this, some have more anxiety about how things will work out for them. But the Christian vocation, the Christian calling is that everything we have, or think we have, and everything we want for ourselves, even if it is good things like security for our families. Every single thing belongs to God. It is not ours. We are the stewards, the caretakers of every single thing we have been given. Our task is not about accumulating wealth, especially not in unjust ways. Our task is to prepare to live in the eternal home.

God will not forget our sins if we do not repent. But, if we do repent, and return to him, all of our offenses are forgotten and God remembers only that he loves us. And, because we are stewards of that love, we must show that same love to others, especially the poor and the needy.

Today our memory task is what Paul told Timothy to remember. "There is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, the man

Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all." He freed us because he held nothing back. I believe we can be confident in being good stewards of the gift of life and salvation that God desires for all. This God will not forget. Hopefully we won't either.

Some of you will be participating in the faith study, starting this week, called The Mass. As a teaser, I will tell you that Bishop Barron refers to the mystery of God's love for us, expressed in the mass, as a concrete something that, when you bump into it, puts you in contact with a Divine Reality." The God who gave us our lives, with all the concrete things we bump into, that we experience, remembers us by name, and has a place for us in eternity if we remember that we are stewards of that love and these lives we live.