

2023 Summer Clarion

A Newsletter of Christ Ministerial Fellowship

-a non-denominational communion of ministries with the purpose of mutual encouragement, like-minded fellowship, and love toward one another.

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In This Edition

Pages 1-2, 4 The Unjust Steward
by Lou Pressman;

Page 3 Spring CMF Conference
Synopsis-Bert Ghilardi

Page 4 Missions Musings

Page 5 June Women's Retreat
Report—Arlene Ghilardi

Page 6 Announcements and
Prayer requests

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of Conference messages.

The Unjust Steward

by Lou Pressman

There are three parables found in Luke 15, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the lost son better known as the Prodigal Son. These parables are illustrations, or spiritual lessons of things lost then recovered. The three are fairly easy to understand. However, when we continue reading into the next chapter, Luke 16:1-9, the Lord brings us to another parable, the "Unrighteous Steward", where toward the end of this parable things are not so easily understood (see ↓ bold underlined section).

*Luke 16:1-9 "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and this steward was reported to him as squandering his possessions. And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.' "And the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, they will receive me into their homes.' "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' "And his master praised the unrighteous steward because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light. "**And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.**"*

As you can see the end of this parable (the bold underlined section) is not so easily understood.

The parable starts off this way; it was reported to the Master his steward, who should have been trust worthy, was not. His steward was squandering his Master's possessions.

Continued on Page 2

The Master confronts the steward and says "Give an account," but he could not because he was guilty. The unrighteous steward thinks "What shall I do, since my master is taking the stewardship away from me." His position as steward was not taken away yet but before he is released the steward analyzes his situation and quickly puts a plan of action together and what was the goal of his plan? That by the time he is released he will have found such favor with others they will welcome him or receive him into their homes or business. He quickly puts his plan into action. The two debtors are a representation and both debtors owe a hundred measures, no small amount. The first debtor, who owed a hundred measures of oil, he discounts it 50%. The second, who owed a hundred measures of wheat, he only discounts it 20%. Keep in mind, the steward was perfectly within his rights to make it worth their while to settle the Master's accounts.

For the moment, put aside he is unrighteous, what is it the Lord is wanting us to see? It is this, the unrighteous steward was smart, quick to analyze situations, understood people and took quick and decisive action.

Why was the first debtor discounted 50% and the second only 20%? He knew exactly what it would take for them to settle the Master's account quickly. With the first he had to take a deep discount, 50%. With the second, all it took was 20%. To be clear, it was not for the purpose of getting his job back, nor to recapture a working relationship with his Master for he knew he was going to be removed. It could also seem like the Master is ok to use the mammon of unrighteousness to manipulate people, or take advantage of people, or use people but of course this is not what the Lord is saying or even remotely implying.

One of the keys in understanding all this is to recognize who the Lord is addressing. There were three groups of people listening; The tax gatherers and sinners, 15:1. The Pharisees and the scribes, 15:2. The disciples, 16:1a.

What the Unrighteous Steward did was good for the debtors, good for himself, but not good for the Master. So why did the Master praise the Unrighteous Steward? "because he had acted shrewdly," vs. 8a, NASB. The Greek word for "shrewdly" is also found in the parable of the ten virgins.

Mt 25:1&2 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent"- or wise, the same Greek word used for shrewd.

What the Lord is inferring in the parable of the Unrighteous Steward, is that the "sons of light" need to be more "shrewd"- wiser, more practical, more sensible than the sons of this age! The unrighteous steward understood that his action then, would affect his future.

Once again, the Lord is addressing tax collectors, sinners of all sorts, Pharisees and scribes and the disciples. All who sought or once sought the mammon of unrighteousness.

The Pharisees and scribes; those who should have been wise and righteous stewards. Instead squandered the possessions of their Master, therefore, were in that place of being cast out, they were the unrighteous stewards.

The tax gatherers, sinners, and disciples who were once unrighteous stewards were now given the opportunity of becoming righteous stewards.

"make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," use it wisely, use it in a manner that will further your witness and testimony. So that it would be beneficial for the debtor, good for yourself, and will honor our heavenly Master.

Luke 16:9b "that when it fails," that is the mammon of unrighteousness. Which we generally think of as some sort of economic collapse, but not necessarily. For whatever has earthly value or even benefit will someday fail. For in the end everything earthly will fail.

2 Peter 3:10 "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up."

Continued on Page 4

April 2023 CMF Spring Conference in Athens, PA



It was wonderful to gather in April for our Spring Conference. The Lord met with us in a very special way. Three nations were well represented as old friends found it possible after many years to come in our midst. Clayton and Judy Weller came from Canada with friends Gold Clark and Carolyn Johnson. It was refreshing to see Dan Beaulieu from Winsted, CT and our friend, John Penrosa who made the long trip from Florida. Also our brother Melchizedek from Andhra Pradesh, India blessed us with his presence and ministry. It was good to have Jim & Luann Brown from Georgia as well.

The retreat started Wednesday night with a message from Bert Ghilardi on how the Lord uses weakness in the life of the believer.

He showed how Reuben lost the birthright and blessing because He relied on natural strength. Joseph on the other hand, came to the throne because he allowed the Lord to weaken his hands. This topic of God working through our weakness was expanded the next three messages and on Thursday morning Pastor Dan Beaulieu gave a powerful message how the Lord has used weakness in his life in recent days. He exhorted that we can't allow the devil to tell us we are a has been while we are being weakened by the Lord. Our brother Melchizedek followed up with a message of God's grace that gets us through times of utter weakness using the Body of Christ to minister when we are at our lowest. Thursday night Pastor Ric Vargas had a wonderful anointing on the topic, "Behold, The Servant: A Synopsis on the Book of Mark". Ric showed that out of weakness, the Servant, Jesus Christ moved in great authority.

Finally, Friday morning Pastor Lou Pressman closed the conference with a message pointing out the need to be filled with the fullness of the Spirit. He paralleled Saul with David and the wise and foolish Virgins. He closed with an important challenge that our invitation to the Marriage Supper will be based on the infilling and government of the Spirit in our lives.

The food preparation was handled by the team from Bethany Fellowship Church and others from Montrose Christian Fellowship and House of Bread Fellowship Church. Set up and clean up was done by the registrants themselves. It was a group effort by all and working together enlarged our fellowship for which we are thankful. **We hope to see many of you at our Fall Retreat October 25-27, 2023. By Bert Ghilardi**

The Unjust Steward continued from Page 2

“they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.” Who are the “they”? The one’s the righteous stewards affected. Those like the tax collectors, the sinners, once people like us, who were formerly unrighteous stewards who were transformed to be righteous stewards who showed others what it was to serve our heavenly Master faithfully, wisely, proudly.

The righteous stewards, hopefully us, who had a positive impact in their salvation, or helped them, or encouraged them in their pilgrimage. So if they should depart this world before us when we depart this earth and enter into glory, they will be there waiting, ready to welcome you and me into “the eternal dwellings.” Thankful for the part you played in their lives, in their salvation, and in their walk.

The Lord has entrusted much to us. Therefore, let us do our best to become the righteous stewards the Lord desires us to be. So that it would be beneficial for the debtor, good for us, and well pleasing to our Master. All for His glory and the expansion of His kingdom! Ω

Lou Pressman

Missions Musings

Pray for Ric Vargas and Lou Pressman in Bolivia July 13-28.

“Dear Brethren,

I trust this email finds you well and prospering in the Lord. Brother Ric Vargas and I have been asked to return to Bolivia. Great changes have been happening within that country, some for the better, some not as good. Through the years we have found an openness and receptivity within the leadership to the cities we have been to. I am thankful to say they and we have great expectations for we serve a great God. Our first meeting is Saturday morning with one of the Pastor’s associations of Santa Cruz. Pray there is a release of the Holy Spirit that impacts each of their ministries. Your prayers are important for our safety and success.

Thanks and blessings,

Bro. Lou”

Report from the Mission Trip to Costa Rica: COSTA RICA: CHAPTER 16

We remember with gratefulness Ronald and Sadie for opening their home and their hearts to us; Ronald coordinating meetings, driving us, and translating messages; Sadie making sure we were fed and comfortable. Moses and Cathryn for their care of us; Moses for helping with translation. We rejoice for Victor of Cartago who received us and our word with gladness; who has also committed himself to working with us in future trips.

We were encouraged by Ángel of Cariari who labored to bring us to strengthen the brethren there; whose work among the world’s outcasts is a true example of Christ’s love. We are grateful for Miguel, though we have yet to meet him face to face, for the door that he opened and for his burden for the pastors of San Jose. Pastor Luis of Cartago who graciously opened his church and also felt joined to the work of the future. Young Samuel who gladly gave up his room so that I might have a place to lay my head and who also sacrificially gave of his goods (his favorite red die-cast car) to bless me; may it be the beginning of a life of service and sacrifice. Two brothers in the natural and in Christ, Christian and Francisco, who are laboring together on a work their father started in Alajuela.

Of course Scott, who many years after first visiting Costa Rica, was used to join us with Pastor Ronald and Miguel; and was also a source of supply, both in the spirit and in resources. To all the many other names that gave sacrificially and offered up prayers on our behalf, may each one of you be remembered on that day. We greet you and thankfully praise God for each one of you. All glory to Him Who is faithful. Ric

There is an Esther Company arising in the Body of Christ!

~~The Annual CMF Women's Retreat~~



Lots of King Xerxes and Queen Esthers; Morecais and Hamans! That is what we experienced during the "For Such a Time as This" 10th Anniversary Women's Retreat on June 2 and 3 at Bethany Christian Fellowship in Athens, PA. Our assignment this weekend was to read and study the entire Book of Esther.



Through narration, listening to messages and by acting out portions of scriptures



the truths of God's eternal purpose to bring salvation, deliverance and the preservation of God's testimony, despite the intentions of satan to destroy God's people before they could fulfill all of His plan, were studied, discussed, and understood.

Over the past 10 years the women of the CMF churches and their friends from many expressions of the Body of Christ have



grown to know one another and love one another. There has taken place a unique joining in the Spirit amongst us through these retreats that is real and lasting. Many thanks to Pastor Mark Waters, Sandy Keeney, Tony & Jean Papandrea, Kristan Wales and members of the local churches who work hard to bring expertise and warm-hearted hospitality to every retreat. Let's do it again **next year: June 7 & 8, 2024.** Sincerely, Arlene Ghilardi



Prayer Requests

For healing:

1. Joe and Gloria Nieves and Jeff Fair of Emmanuel Fellowship of Allentown
2. Chuck and Stephanie Parrish-Dublin, OH
3. Joe and AnnMarie Faillace of Salt and Light Community Church in Montague, NJ

For Lou Pressman and Ric Vargas in Bolivia until July 30.

For provision:

Bethany Christian Fellowship's church building is in need of a roof. BCF was ordained in 1985 and purchased the current church building in the mid-1990s. The church was built in 1888 and has suffered through two significant flooding events, the last in 2011. Our congregation, with God's grace and many hands, was able to repair the majority of the Church after the flood of 2011. The Church has been a host for multiple retreats for Men, Women, and the Ministerial Fellowship. We are seeking donations to replace the flat roof over the fellowship hall area, repair the stained-glass window in the sanctuary, and do some needed work in the bell tower.

To help please send your check made out to Bethany Christian Fellowship, with "Building Repair" in the memo. The address is Pastor Mark Waters: 25 Warren Street, Sayre, PA 18840.

SAVE THE DATE!

Christ Ministerial Fellowship

Fall Conference

October 25-27, 2023

Bethany Christian Fellowship, Athens, PA

The registration is \$50 for the whole retreat or \$15/meal for part of the retreat. We have a block of rooms booked off for our group at the Comfort Inn, Sayre, PA at a rate of \$89/night. The hotel cost is the responsibility of the registrant. Please put this on your calendar for this Fall.

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[www.christianmaturity.com](http://www.christianmaturity.com)

invites you to listen to messages from past retreats, download books and see current announcements.

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The Valori Family has released a link to family photos and Sergio Valori's Sunday messages given at Emmanuel Fellowship Church in Mohrsville, PA

[\(441\) Sergio Valori Ministries - YouTube](#)