

Sunday, September 22, 2024 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

「[The Unjust manager](#)」 Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Psalm 90:3~12, Luke 16:1~9

❶ **【We are the managers】** In this parable, "a rich man" is God, and "a certain manager" is us. It came to the master's ear that this caretaker was wasting his master's property. The master called the manager and said, "I have something to ask about you, but please give me an accounting report, I can't leave you in charge anymore." (16:2). This may mean the final judgment at the end of the world. God entrusted the world He created to Adam and said, "Let Him rule over all things" (Genesis 1:26). Humans have only been entrusted with management. But what do you think of the world today? Do you rule and manage the world correctly? Human beings dominate the world and nature with their desires, and repeatedly wage war and oppression. If God saw it, he would think, "It was a mistake to entrust the world to humans." Management can be taken away at any time. It's the same when you look at an individual's life. We have wasted the life, the life, the time, the youth, the health, and we have used it for the sake of not bearing fruit, and we cannot stop doing it now.

❷ **【Actions taken by the dishonest manager】**The manager thought. "What should I do, my husband is trying to take the administrative job away from me. I don't have the strength to dig in the soil, and I'm embarrassed to beg. Yes, let's do this. Even if you are forced to quit your administrative job, you can create people who will welcome you into your home." He admitted that he was powerless and decided to prepare for the future seriously. It says, "Yes, I will do this," but in the Nicholas translation, it is "I know what I should do." His idea was to sell his favor to others for the future. The caretaker had the master call the people who were in debt and have them rewrite the debt certificate by halving or reducing the amount of the debt. It means that I forgave him while I was still able to work, while I still had the authority. This is clearly a crime of embezzlement, forgery of documents, and fraudulent acts.

❸ **【What the master praised】** However, "the master praised the shrewd ways of this unjust steward" (verse 8). The Nicholas translation says, "The Lord praises the unrighteous administrators, for he is skillful in his works." It has become. In English, "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly." It is. Dishonest means "dishonest, dishonest, sloppy" and "shrewd, clever, insightful." God praised not his injustice, but his shrewd way of life. He didn't live a throwaway life, saying, "I don't care what happens anymore," but quickly acknowledged his helplessness, determined what he

needed to do to live, and put it into action. The Lord said, "The children of this world behave wiser than the children of light to their fellows" (verse 8). The people of this world are indeed eager to obtain this world, and they have the power to take action. Are Christians so zealous in their quest to obtain the kingdom of God? We must imitate it.

④ **【There is no one who is right】** And Jesus said, "Make friends with your unrighteous riches" (verse 9). The riches of this world are not evil, but they are easily tainted by human evil and sin. We are told to do good even with the tainted riches of this world. Some of you may be angry when you read this, wondering if God allows injustice, so let's think about "injustice." The word "injustice" appears three times here. Christians hate "injustice." Always try to seek justice. But as a pastor, I feel like a hypocrite. Hypocrite is a Greek word that means "one with two masks." It is the face of a good man called a Christian and the face of a bad person. Not very, but you can't be a good person. I've been baptized for 40 years, but I'm not good enough. The second half of Paul's epistle tells us to live righteously and do good. But there is a biblical contradiction that we must speak good even though we are not good people, and that we must do good when we cannot be good. It is very painful because it is living in a false way. Since Christ is the only righteous and God is the only good, to speak of goodness is to really speak of Christ.

● The other day, I talked to Mr. S, who is homeless. He occasionally participates in Friday morning prayers and then helps clean up the church. I am a professional in pruning plants. He was originally an office worker, but became homeless. The first person to become homeless was Hiroshima, where he slept in a gutter to keep out the cold. At that time, she couldn't stop crying. When I was sleeping in the harbor, a homeless man who had slept in front of me was wearing tattered clothes. During the homeless hunt, he was beaten and dragged around by his younger brothers. Mr. S felt sorry for him and gave him all the "money he had earned" from his sweat and labor the day before. One day, when he was sleeping on the riverbank, an elderly lady approached him and said, "I don't have anything, but I have my leftover bread, so you can eat it," and gave me the leftover bread. Not very, but he couldn't eat it. If you think about it, when you were sleeping on the street and woke up in the morning, there was an envelope by your bedside, and inside it was 50,000 yen and a letter saying, "I can't do anything, but please eat something warm." When I mentioned it to my fellow homeless people, they replied, "Yes, I've had that experience." Mr. S tells me. "Teacher, those who do good are hiding, they don't put themselves out."

As I listened, I thought about what it means to be a Christian. Have you ever

given all your little money to someone like him? There is no such thing as a good person when you say Christian. "There is no one who is right, there is no one. ... There is no one who does good. Not a single one." (Romans 3:10, 12). As I get older, this phrase seems more and more certain. Before God, our guilt is confirmed. You can't live righteously, and you can't do good. Still, they tell us to be hypocritical. That's all you can do. The janitor used his position to commit hypocrisy. I didn't really think about people who were in debt. It's about your own interests. He pretended to have pity on them, reduced their debts, and sold them favors. That's okay, says the Lord.

●Ayako Sono, a Catholic Christian writer, wrote the following in her book.

"In Japan, living is a choice, but as I walked around developing countries, I learned that there are many cases where there is no choice in living. ... In many lands, you have no choice but to stop living as a good person and live what you can."

"The realization of living in harmony with moderate evil is of great significance to me, and if I did not have the awareness of moderate evil in me, I would lose my humanity instantly. If you think you're quite a humanitarian, that's when everybody starts to stink."

God, I can't be good, and I can't be a good person. All you can do is hypocrisy. That's why I need your salvation. If you could only put the righteous into heaven, I wouldn't. Injustice is me. You accept this unrighteous me, and you accept the hypocrisy that I do on earth. Forgiveness is yours and salvation comes only from you. There is no other good person like you. I can only be hypocritical, but my longing for goodness does not disappear. Because you have planted that heart in me. Let me always be by your side. I can't be a good person myself, but I pray that you will make me good someday.