

**What gives us our Christian identity?**

**Is it only trying to avoid actual sin?**

**Sins of commission**

**Or is there more?**

**Do we ever think of sins of omission?**

**Not doing things we ought to do**

**Our readings continue the theme of stewardship from last week**

**But today's also have a special challenge for us**

**We are called to find an honest balance**

**This balance is seen in the virtue of temperance**

**Not the idea of temperance from the days of prohibition**

**A total rejection of this or that**

**But the virtue of temperance**

**A virtue of moderation**

**This is our guide for our role of steward**

**As stewards, we are here to care for creation**

**To care for ourselves**

**And to care for those that cannot care for themselves**

**Amos describes what not to do in our 1<sup>st</sup> reading**

**Remember from last week**

**He is a successful businessman from the south**

**Sent to prophesize to the north**

**Woe to the complacent in Zion**

**This is one of the gravest warnings in the Old Testament**

**Basically he is saying**

**Damned be the complacent**

**Lying on beds of ivory**

**Eating calves and lambs**

**At a time when these were valuable commodities**

**Lambs were used for their wool**

**Calves to add to a herd**

**So rather than sacrificing today for future generations**

**So they were sacrificing tomorrow's wealth**

**For today's comfort and leisure**

**Drinking from bowls**

**Not sipping from cups**

**Using the best oils to anoint and perfume themselves**

**They are ignoring the condition of their brothers and sisters**

**While they gorge themselves**

**There was no limit to their spending on their luxuries**

**But they wouldn't lift a finger to help those in need**

**Amos warns them**

**They will be conquered by their enemies**

**Driven into exile for their sins**

**Our rich man in the Gospel is complacent as well**

**He is unnamed**

**But the poor man is identified**

**Jesus gives a description of both men's lifestyle**

**The rich man**

**Fine purple garments**

**To color clothing purple was very expensive in those days**

**Dining sumptuously each day**

**This man was not living temperance**

**He was not enjoying fine food and drink occasionally**

**This was his everyday life**

**Lazarus**

**Lying at his door**

**Covered with sores**

**Not a leper; or he would not have been allowed to be near another**

**Wanting nothing more than the scraps that fell to the floor**

**Dogs would come and lick his sores**

**And more than likely they would get those scraps**

**Eventually both men die**

**The rich man sees and recognizes Lazarus next to Abraham**

***Send Lazarus to me to cool my tongue***

**Although he had ignored Lazarus in his sufferings**

**Now he asks Lazarus to come to his aid**

**For the rich man, everything is about himself**

**When he asks to have Lazarus go to his brothers**

**We discover they are both Abraham's children**

**The rich man was not ignoring a pagan foreigner**

**He was ignoring one of his own**

**Just as he had ignored Moses and the teaching of the prophets**

**Even if someone came back from the dead**

**He would ignore that person as well**

**This parable is not that wealth is evil**

**It does not praise poverty for poverty's sake**

**It is about what we do with our wealth**

**All our wealth**

**Time, talent and treasure**

**It is about how we live our poverty**

**Whether it is poverty of body**

**Poverty of spirit**

**Poverty of soul**

**In whatever form it may take**

**We will be judged on account of our actions in this life**

**In the letter to the Hebrews**

**We are told that it is appointed for every person to die but once**

**There is no going back**

**The rich man could not go back**

**But neither could Lazarus**

**Only one would ever go back**

**That one is Jesus Christ**

**While we walk this earth**

**We are the rich man's brothers and sisters**

**One has risen from the dead**

**Do we listen to him?**

**Last week we were told we cannot have 2 masters**

**We cannot serve both God and mammon**

**This week we see what happens when we try**

**The rich man was not evil**

**He did not do bad things**

**He wasn't a thief**

**He wasn't a murderer**

**He didn't slander**

**For him, it was not about sins of commission**

**But sins of omission**

**He had opportunities every day to do something**

**Anything --- to help the poor man at his step**

**Yet he refused**

**He was indifferent to the suffering of his brother**

**Because of his wealth, he was complacent**

**St Paul gives us the antidote to a life of complacency**

**Pursue righteousness and justice**

**Practice devotion, faith, love**

**Patience and gentleness**

**These are the key ingredients of a healthy, vibrant spiritual life**

**If our spiritual life seems to be kind of stagnant**

**If we think of ourselves as a good person**

**But realize something is missing**

**Maybe it is time to start looking not at what we have done**

**Sins of commission**

**But look at what we don't do**

**Sins of omission**

**First we have to identify the Lazarus in our life**

**We have to see him**

**And ask: why has God placed this person ---**

**These people in my life?**

**It is far too easy to keep them anonymous**

**But they are not anonymous**

**And when we have identified them**

**Then decide on a course of action**

**There are three classic Christian responses**

**1<sup>st</sup> – to help one to one**

**2<sup>nd</sup> – combine our efforts with others**

**To help many Lazarus's**

**3<sup>rd</sup> – to ask why this condition exists in our world today**

**And what can we do about it?**

**The challenge is laid out**

**We are here not only for ourselves**

**Do I practice temperance?**

**Or is it all about number one?**

**We are called to live in a covenantal relationship**

**It is a covenant we live in our families**

**It is a covenant we share with our faith community**

**It is a covenant we share with all human beings**

**A covenant with God and ourselves**

**If I were called home today**

**Despite my words**

**Do my actions stand with the rich man?**

**Or with Lazarus?**