

- Jesus' message in this parable is quite clear: Quit thinking of yourself, and look around at the plight of those around you...helping those in need...
- ...because what is given us is not given to us alone, but rather for us to go out and aid the needy...because, as Jesus says in Matthew 25: *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."* (Matthew 25:40 RSV)...just as He also warns: *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."* (Matthew 25:45 RSV)
- ...and "...[these deficient in charity] *will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*" (Matthew 25:46 RSV)
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- Complacency is our great danger...perpetually seeking comforts and entertainment in our easily-spun cocoons of self-absorption.
- This is also what the prophet Amos speaks of today.
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- A bit of historical review:
- After King Solomon in the 900s BC, Israel split into two kingdoms—the northern kingdom of 10 tribes, which continued to be called "Israel"...and the southern kingdom of Judah, which consisted only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
- Amos lived in the 700s BC, when the northern kingdom was under the power of Assyria to the north.
- The people in the northern kingdom had abandoned proper worship of God, and were disobedient to God's law...and Amos condemns its leaders for this.
- But in this reading, Amos also excoriates Judah for being so complacent and living luxuriously...caring little for the moral collapse of their northern brethren:

- *Woe to the complacent in Zion! / Lying upon beds of ivory, stretched comfortably on their couches, ...They drink wine from bowls [another translation is “they drink bowlfuls of wine”] and anoint themselves with the best oils; yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph! (meaning Israel).*
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- And yet...what Amos condemns in the large scale, Jesus shows us applies to every person...reminding us that many live in luxury, and yet with little—or at least insufficient—consideration for their fellow man in need...their neighbor.
- Amos preached in a time of prosperity, sort of like our own... because despite the concerns of our day, who cannot say that we--in “first-world” countries especially--live in historically unparalleled comfort and luxury.
- After all, just take away a teenager’s cellphone for a day and hear the wails of misery.
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- But...like the Israelites in Amos’ time, we, too, become o’er comfortable ...forgetting that God has given all to us.
- As we hear in the book of Sirach: *“In the day of prosperity, adversity is forgotten, and in the day of adversity, prosperity is not remembered.”* (Sirach 11:25)...and, in our prosperity and complacency, God Himself is often forgotten.
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- This is why Christ—and the Church, as His prophet—remind us continually that we are simply stewards of the blessings we receive, and, as Jesus tells us: *“Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required...”* (Luke 12:48)...and what we spend in self-absorption is essentially wasted: *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”* (Matthew 6:19-20 RSV)

- Well...Death is the insatiable consumer...the inescapable thief...of all material things we accumulate...and if we have not charity, we have nothing. We are nothing.
 - Thus we ought rejoice at opportunities given us to serve God and one another...because by them we prove ourselves worthy of the stewardship with which He entrusts us.
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- Note that Amos didn't accuse his fellow Israelites of explicit sinfulness, and neither does Jesus accuse the rich man of such...but rather, their crimes are in simply ignoring God, who provided them all their good things...and yet being unconcerned with their neighbor in desperate need.
 - Thus Jesus warns in the Gospel of Luke: “...*woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.*” (Luke 6:24-25 RSV)
 - And the apostle John writes: “...*if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*” (1 John 3:16-17)
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- The rich...the poor...equal in God's eyes. Each made in His image. Each His child.
- And so who dares call himself “better” in God's eyes simply because he is richer, or smarter, or more beautiful? These are not God's standards, but ours. Charity is God's standard.
- Upon whom, then, will God's greater compassion fall—the rich, or the poor?...and the rich who gives to the poor.
- We love and admire St. Francis in his charity to the point of poverty...and yet, how few seek to imitate him?
- But isn't that which is admirable worth imitating?...St. Francis, who himself imitated Christ...who had no place to even lay His head?
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- And so...the brother/sister with much must assist the brother/sister without...just as you would expect your own children to care for one another.
- How ashamed will we be if the angels testify about us at judgment: “Well...he made sure he had the nicest car, the biggest house, lots of expensive vacations, plenty of fine food and drink...but did relatively little for those in need.”
- And God might say to us: “On that weekend in September 2016, why did you not heed the words of my prophet Amos...or even the words of my Son?”
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- Simplicity, not opulence, ought be our watchword for living...for there is great wisdom in the book of Proverbs when the author requests of God: “...*give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me [only] with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ ...*” (Proverbs 30:8-9 RSV)
- ...paralleling St. Paul, who writes famously: “...*if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils...*” (1Tim 6:7-10 RSV)
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- So...as Jesus fed the hungry, healed and visited the sick, had compassion on those in misery, forgave others, and loved God before all else...so will His true disciples also do.

Reading 1

[Am 6:1a, 4-7](#)

Thus says the LORD the God of hosts:

Woe to the complacent in Zion!

Lying upon beds of ivory,
stretched comfortably on their couches,

they eat lambs taken from the flock,
and calves from the stall!

Improvising to the music of the harp,
like David, they devise their own accompaniment.

They drink wine from bowls
and anoint themselves with the best oils;
yet they are not made ill by the collapse of Joseph!
Therefore, now they shall be the first to go into exile,
and their wanton revelry shall be done away with.

[Ps 146:7, 8-9, 9-10](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (1b) Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. Alleluia.

Blessed he who keeps faith forever,
secures justice for the oppressed,
gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets captives free.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. Alleluia.

The LORD gives sight to the blind.

The LORD raises up those who were bowed down;
the LORD loves the just.

The LORD protects strangers.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. Alleluia.

The fatherless and the widow he sustains,
but the way of the wicked he thwarts.

The LORD shall reign forever;
your God, O Zion, through all generations. Alleluia.

R. Praise the Lord, my soul!

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

[1 Tm 6:11-16](#)

Reading 2

But you, man of God, pursue righteousness,
devotion, faith, love, patience, and gentleness.
Compete well for the faith.
Lay hold of eternal life, to which you were called
when you made the noble confession in the presence of many witnesses.
I charge you before God, who gives life to all things,
and before Christ Jesus,
who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate for the noble confession,
to keep the commandment without stain or reproach
until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ
that the blessed and only ruler
will make manifest at the proper time,
the King of kings and Lord of lords,
who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light,
and whom no human being has seen or can see.
To him be honor and eternal power. Amen.

[Lk 16:19-31](#)

Gospel

Jesus said to the Pharisees:

"There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen
and dined sumptuously each day.

And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,
who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps
that fell from the rich man's table.

Dogs even used to come and lick his sores.

When the poor man died,
he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham.

The rich man also died and was buried,
and from the netherworld, where he was in torment,
he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off
and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me.
Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue,
for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

Abraham replied,

'My child, remember that you received
what was good during your lifetime
while Lazarus likewise received what was bad;

but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.
Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established
to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go
from our side to yours or from your side to ours.'
He said, 'Then I beg you, father,
send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers,
so that he may warn them,
lest they too come to this place of torment.'
But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets.
Let them listen to them.'
He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham,
but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'
Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets,
neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'"