

SERMON - CREATIONTIDE - 21 SEPTEMBER

Sermon: Power and Faithful Stewardship in a Troubled World

Readings: 1 Timothy 2:1–7; Luke 16:1–13

Introduction

Creationtide reminds us that all creation belongs to God. We are not owners, but stewards, entrusted with responsibility and purpose. Over the past weeks, we have reflected on discipleship, wealth, and our relationship with God and his Word.

Today, I want us to focus on the power God entrusts to each one of us. Every life is given influence, authority, and responsibility in some measure—whether as parents or children, neighbours or citizens, colleagues or leaders. The question is: *how do we use this God-given power to discover the true purpose of our lives?*

In Luke 16, we hear the parable of the shrewd manager. Jesus teaches that worldly people are often more shrewd with their affairs than the children of light. Yet his deeper message is about purpose: wealth and power are not to be hoarded but invested in relationships, service, and stewardship. And he reminds us with the enduring principle: *“Whoever is faithful in little will be faithful in much... you cannot serve both God and money.”*

A Story of Perspective

I’m reminded of the story of an elderly woman who prayed daily for her needs. One day, with no money left, she prayed for her groceries. An atheist neighbour, tired of her prayers, bought her groceries to mock her faith. When she discovered them, she praised God even more loudly, saying, “Not only did you provide my food, Lord, but you even made an atheist pay for it!”

This story, like the parable, reveals something vital: power and resources, whether held by the faithful or the sceptical, still serve God’s purposes when used for love and provision. Our task is not to deny power but to steward it faithfully.

1. How do we handle power—use or abuse?

The shrewd manager reminds us that power is temporary. He chose to use his fleeting authority to build relationships. Jesus is not praising dishonesty but highlighting creativity and purpose.

Power handled with self-interest divides and destroys. Power handled with love heals, builds trust, and reconciles. Imagine if nations used their wealth not for weapons but for rebuilding Gaza, nurturing peace in Ukraine, or giving dignity. That is what faithful stewardship looks like: power becoming love in action.

2. How do we respect and care for those in power?

Paul urges Timothy to pray for rulers and those in authority so that peace may prevail. Prayer is not blind loyalty, but an act of both care and accountability. Leaders need wisdom, courage, and discernment.

To respect power is to hold leaders with compassion while also speaking truth when their actions exploit the vulnerable or damage creation. Silence in the face of injustice is not respect; prophetic honesty is. We honour leaders best by calling them toward God's justice, peace, and truth.

3. How do we reimagine power in public spaces?

Jesus says plainly: *"You cannot serve two masters."* Earthly power often clings to self-preservation, nationalism, or greed. God's power, however, is about inclusion, restoration, and shared responsibility.

Faithfulness with small things—our wealth, our homes, our environment—trains us for greater gifts of mercy, justice, and peace. When power is shared, when it empowers the weak and restores the broken, it becomes a glimpse of God's kingdom.

Conclusion: Power in Families, Neighbourhoods, and Nations

So what does this mean for us today?

- In our families: Power is the ability to shape one another's lives. Parents, siblings, children—every word, every act of care or neglect has power. When power is used with love, truth, and peace, families become schools of grace where trust is built, forgiveness is practiced, and dignity is affirmed.
- In our neighbourhoods: Power is the influence of kindness, fairness, and presence. A neighbour who listens, helps, or simply shows respect transforms the street into a place of belonging. Communities flourish when power is shared in hospitality and cooperation.
- In our nations: Power is political, economic, and cultural influence. Leaders face the temptation to wield it for domination or self-interest. But when nations exercise power with justice, peace, and compassion—investing in the poor, protecting creation, and seeking reconciliation—they become signs of God's kingdom on earth. Sharon Haughey 14 year old wrote a letter to Hilary Clinton in 1995.

The question, then, is not whether we have power—it is how we will use it. Will it be a tool of fear, greed, and control? Or will it be a gift exercised with love, truth, and peace?

Creationtide calls us back to faithful stewardship: of the earth, of our resources, and of our relationships. And Jesus calls us to reimagine power not as domination, but as service, not as possession, but as stewardship, not as control, but as love in action.

May we, in our families, our neighbourhoods, and our nations, be found faithful in small things—so that God may entrust us with the greater riches of justice, mercy, and peace.

Amen.