

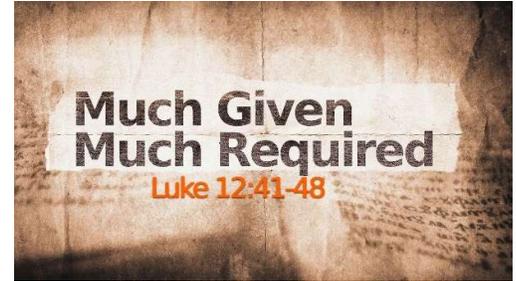


## ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH

AUGUST 13<sup>TH</sup> 2025

PRAYERS AND REFLECTION

BASED ON LUKE 12:41-48



<sup>41</sup> Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”

<sup>42</sup> The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? <sup>43</sup> It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. <sup>44</sup> Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. <sup>45</sup> But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. <sup>46</sup> The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

<sup>47</sup> “The servant who knows the master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. <sup>48</sup> But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

### CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

Gracious Lord, I sit here with you today not to ‘do’ but to ‘be’ in a moment of contemplation, ready to reflect on the call to faithful stewardship as Luke is focused on today. Help me to be a vigilant and wise servant of your Kingdom, always aware of my part to play, and my responsibilities. May I not grow complacent or careless but instead act with integrity and love. May my enlightened heart recognise the needs of those around me as I willingly serve with humility. Prepare me your return, that I may enter into the joy of Christ as a faithful steward of your grace and truth. Amen

### PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS

God, today I thank you for:

- The gifts and skills of those around me who willingly give of themselves each week to make sure all is well in my life
- The Farmers, the shopkeepers, educators, police, nurses, community volunteers and electricity linesmen and women who keep us all powered up to live our lives
- Places of worship where we can gather safely and harmoniously

## **PRAYER POINTS OF PRAISE**

Lord, I praise you for:

- The promise of hope, grace, joy and love with Christ's return
- Hands and hearts willing to share their talents for the benefit of others
- People who are seeking more in their lives than the fleeting moment material wealth brings them.

## **PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION**

Lord, I bring you my confession .....

## **WORDS OF GRACE**

You are forgiven. Your past doesn't define you, God's mercy and unconditional love has washed your wrongs away. You are a beloved child of God, your identity is founded in God's love and purpose for you. In and through Christ your sins are forgiven. Thanks be to God amen.

## **REFLECTION**

This is a timely reading as we're all living in a difficult economic time. Jesus is teaching us about the nature of stewardship through the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servant. He not only highlights our responsibilities, he also tells us about the expectations that come with those responsibilities. As Christ's followers, we must grapple with what it means to be effective stewards of the many gifts – be they time, resources, or talents – that we have happily and hopefully received.

Jesus begins by asking a rhetorical question about who the faithful and wise manager is, indicating to us the responsibility of leadership and service. The emphasis here is on trust and accountability. The faithful servant is one who diligently prepares for the Master's return, ensuring that the household runs smoothly and that others are cared for – not left behind to suffer any form of harm or indignity. This diligent preparation is rewarded, demonstrating a core principle of our Christian faith: faithfulness in the small things leads to greater responsibilities and blessings.

From the other perspective, the unfaithful servant, who misuses his authority and takes advantage of the grace extended to him, faces dire consequences. He represents those who, despite being entrusted with so much, act irresponsibly, indulgently, and selfishly. This warning is quite sobering for those who choose to act in this way – and there are many who act in this way – particularly for those in leadership roles in various spheres of life, such as family, church, various layers of elected governments, and community. It serves as a reminder that we will be held accountable for our actions and choices, especially when entrusted with the well-being of others.

Luke's story calls us to reflect deeply on our own stewardship. Each of us has been given unique gifts and opportunities – whether in our time, finances, talents, or relationships. The question we have to ask ourselves is: How are we using these gifts? Are we being diligent and responsible, or are we letting complacency and self-interest guide our actions? Good stewardship requires active engagement with our resources, encouraging us to make intentional choices that align with the values of love, grace, service and witness.

Stewardship is more than managing our assets; it involves nurturing our relationships with others and cultivating a community spirit. In this sense, being a good steward means extending our care beyond ourselves – supporting those in need, advocating for justice, and working towards the common good. Our communities depend on the active participation of individuals who are willing to stand up and take responsibility for the welfare of others.

Jesus invites us to think theologically about anticipation. The idea of the Master's return reminds us that our lives aren't lived in a vacuum; they are part of a larger narrative of God's kingdom. Living in anticipation of Christ's return should compel us towards a sense of urgency in our stewardship. This means being proactive in our faith – actively seeking ways to serve, love and share the resources we have been blessed with while supporting justice and mercy in a very divided world.

Ultimately, Jesus' teachings in this passage call us to a greater understanding of our accountability and responsibility. Good stewardship is about taking seriously and living out the faith values of the kingdom of God in our everyday day interactions and decisions we make. It's a call to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God, reflecting God's character to those around us. as we engage in this holy task, we do so with the knowledge that we are empowered by grace and supported by the community of faith, moving forward together as stewards of what has been entrusted to us.

### **PRAYER FOR OTHERS**

Generous Lord, I have come to the end of this time of reflection, but not with an empty or ungrateful heart. I am grateful for the many gifts and resources you have entrusted to those around me. In your wisdom, you have called us all to be good stewards of all that we possess, and I acknowledge that with this responsibility comes a great calling to serve others.

In my prayer for others, I ask that you lift up those in our community who are burdened, struggling, or in need. May we all, as your faithful servants, respond to their needs with compassion and generosity. Help us to recognise the ways in which we can use our time, talents, and treasures to uplift all the people around us. Grant us the wisdom to act justly and the courage to advocate for those who feel voiceless.

Lord, I pray for leaders in our families, churches, governments, and communities. Inspire them to lead with integrity and compassion, always remembering the weight of their responsibility. May they reflect your honesty, grace and love in all their decisions and actions. Help them to nurture an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

I also pray for those who may feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities. Remind them that they're not alone and that together we share in the journey of stewardship. Pour out your peace upon them and guide them to seek help when needed, fostering a spirit of collaboration and mutual support.

Spirit of Christ, empower me to reflect on my life as a steward of your grace. Let me be vigilant in my commitments, seeking constantly to be prepared for your return and to live out my faith in tangible ways. May my actions testify to your love and inspire others to join all of those who have placed their hopes and faith in you on a journey of faith and service.

Through the guidance of your Holy Spirit, lead me to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, so that I may reflect your light in a world that so desperately needs it.

Amen.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfLGfulNnG4&list=RDcfLGfulNnG4&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cfLGfulNnG4&list=RDcfLGfulNnG4&start_radio=1)

