

Ordinary 25C 2016
Being Faithful

I wonder when it all began. How did it all start? I am talking about the dishonest behavior of man in today's gospel. When did he begin to steal and pilfer from his employer? When did he cross the line from being faithful to being unfaithful? I imagine that it began in small ways that no one noticed. In the beginning, he simply cut corners. He stole a small amount that nobody noticed. And slowly, almost unknown to the man himself, he found himself stealing larger and larger amounts until it was too late. He could not change his ways without being caught, and so he continued. And then one day everything was revealed, everything came crashing down.

We have heard the story before, haven't we? We hear it over and over again in the news: the story of the employee who embezzles the employer, the story of the chief executive who runs a Ponzi scheme. It always begins in small ways—little things that no one notices. But one day, it gets out of hand, and before we know it we find ourselves in a web of lies and deceit of our own making from which we cannot escape.

At the end of this parable, Jesus draws a lesson for us: "The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones." You see, honesty and trust begin with little things like telling the truth, respecting the property of others, being careful not to cut corners. For when we are trustworthy in the ordinary affairs of life, we are trustworthy in the important affairs of life. But, if we lie in small matters when it is

convenient, if we steal in small ways that no one notices, we will not be honest and faithful when we have to make important decisions.

We don't suddenly become unfaithful or untrustworthy. It begins in small and insignificant ways. We cut corners; we take the short cut. And then one day we find we are living unfaithfully. It is the same with being faithful. We don't suddenly become faithful. We become faithful by being trustworthy and true in small and seemingly insignificant ways.

And so it is with our faith. If we faithfully practice our faith in small ways, every day, we become faithful followers of Christ. If we practice our faith in small ways, the big things are easy. But if we are unfaithful in small ways, we soon become unfaithful in big ways. If we stop praying, if we stop worshipping regularly with the community of faith, if we no longer participate in the sacraments, if we no longer do acts of charity and penance in small ways, we soon find ourselves being unfaithful in big ways.

Jesus' words are filled with wisdom: If we pay attention to the small things of life, the big things take care of themselves. If we are faithful to Christ and each other in small ways, we will be faithful to Christ and each other great ways. I don't know when the man of today's gospel began to steal and pilfer, but I am sure of this: it began in a small and insignificant way. And so it is with us. If we are faithful in small things, we can be trusted in greater things. But if we are unfaithful in small matters, how can we possibly be faithful in greater matters?