

**SCREEN: All aboard!**

I recently took a train trip to NYC.

Raise your hand if you've ever been to Penn Station in New York?

For everyone else, let me set the scene for you.

Passengers stand around waiting for their track number to be announced, which usually happens about ten minutes before the train departs.

When it's announced there's a mad dash to the escalators down to the platform.

My track was announced so I hurried over and got in line with everyone else.

Well, almost everyone.

One man decided to just duck under the rope rather than wait in line.

And he did this right in front of me.

He must have seen me glare at him because he said:

*"Hey, you gotta do what you gotta do!"*

And I thought, do what in particular?

**SCREEN: cheaters never prosper**

And then a saying I was taught as a kid came to mind:

cheaters never prosper.

*Cheaters never prosper.*

Did you ever hear that phrase?

We all have.

It basically means that when people cheat, eventually it catches up with them.

Probably not in the moment but some time, some how.

Let's be honest, it's very easy to spot when other people are cheating, it can be harder to see it in oneself.

In fact, when people do cheat at something -

like cutting in line, or cheating on a test, or fudging on their taxes -

they tend to minimize it as no big deal.

But is that true, or can cheating on the little things become a slippery slope?

And what about the spiritual harm inflicted when we cheat at things in life?

## **SCREEN: Small Matters main screen**

This is Week Three of our message series titled,  
Small Matters.

The title of this series comes from today's gospel.

Jesus told 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.*

And to catch you up on the last two weeks,

Week One I made the point that what people will remember most  
about you won't be your worldly accomplishments  
but the small choices you make every day.

And I encouraged you to put God and others first.

Last week's message was about complaining.

And I said that practicing gratitude can help us overcome it.

And I want to thank those of you who took to social media  
to share what you're grateful for.

Today Jesus gave us a parable about the importance  
of not cheating God or others.

So, let's dive in.

## **SCREEN: blank red background**

By this point in Jesus' ministry,  
he's become wildly popular.

Everywhere he went, huge crowds followed him.

One reason for this is that they think he's going to  
overthrow the Romans and declare himself king.

And they'll finally have the power and riches they deserve.

This is what they expected from the Messiah.

Jesus' story about the dishonest steward  
clued them in on what following him entails.

The steward worked for a rich man -

he managed the staff and paid the bills.

In other words, he had great responsibilities.

But Jesus said that this steward was squandering his owner's money.

That's a fancy way of saying he was a cheater.

When the owner caught on he decided to fire him.

And then things got interesting.

The steward who was incompetent and reckless in

looking out for his boss, suddenly became

an expert in looking out for himself.

Knowing that he's about to be out of job

and unwilling to dig ditches for a living,

the steward came up with a bold but risky plan.

He called in each of his boss' debtors and slashed what they owed.

Why?

The steward hoped that they'd remember how he helped them

and someday return the favor.

Hey, *a guy's gotta do what a guy's gotta do*, right?

And the owner commended his actions,

not his dishonesty, but his ingenuity.

Many scripture scholars believe that this is

the hardest parable to understand.

But let's not over complicate it.

Jesus is warning his followers - and us -

to not be like the steward who cheated,

fudged the figures and was dishonest.

Instead he needs us to be faithful in small matters so that we grow in faith.

Which means seeing our faith as a 24/7 commitment that is all encompassing.

So every single area of your daily life -

every decision, every choice, each action, and every relationship -

affects your faith.

Nothing is exempt.

Jesus wants us to be faithful stewards with the gifts, talents, and resources he has given us.

So let me ask you,  
are you being wise, ingenious, and prudent with God's gifts  
or are you squandering them?

Here's a definition of the word squander:

**SCREEN:** to waste money or time in a reckless and foolish manner.

*To waste money or time in a reckless and foolish manner.*

Now, I could preach an entire series on money,  
but for this series, I want to focus on time.

Because for so many people nowadays,  
time is their greatest commodity.

Do you use your time wisely or do you squander it?

Let's get into the nitty gritty about time management.

Do you ever cheat your employer by spending  
too much time on your devices or on personal business or idle conversations?

Do you ever cheat your family by not giving them  
the time they deserve or need

because you've chosen other distractions or pursuits?

How about your friends?

Do you put time and effort into your relationships?

And how about your faith life?

Beyond Mass attendance, how much time do you give to God?

Do you make time for daily prayer?

Are you involved in any parish ministries or mission activities?

These are all essential ways to help you grow as a disciple.

Here at St. Pius, we struggle to get parishioners to commit  
to volunteering for just 15 minutes before or after Mass,  
or to participate in something during the week to grow their faith.

The most common excuse we hear is:

*"I just don't have the time!"*

But is that really true?

Is there no time, or is it that time is being wasted or even squandered on other pursuits that lead away from God?

**SCREEN: Small Group announcement screen**

Right now we're recruiting new members for our adult small groups.

When we launched small groups twelve years ago, like many of you my first thought was, *I don't have the time*.

After all, I'm pastor for 2800 people.

I have a parish to run, homilies to prepare, Masses to celebrate, meetings to attend, budgets to oversee.

I had a built in excuse that no one would argue with.

But I knew I couldn't ask you to join a small group if I wasn't willing to commit.

So I gave it a try.

Twelve years later I'm still in a group and look forward to it each week.

The sharing that takes place and the insights I gain are true gifts.

The members of my men's group keep me balanced and focused.

And they help me appreciate my life and my faith.

I'm asking you to give small groups a try.

Our Fall groups will go for 8 weeks.

They'll begin next week and go until Thanksgiving.

If you make the time you'll be amazed at how your faith grows.

**SCREEN: Winter Coat Drive announcement screen**

Our Winter Coat Drive is another way for you to grow your faith and all it takes is a small commitment of your time.

All you have to do is go through your closet, find a gently used coat, clean it up and bring it to church.

Imagine the difference you can make in someone's life by this simple act of generosity.

When we give our time to God and others

we are being wise with the blessings we've been given.

In today's Gospel we heard Jesus say this:

**SCREEN: You cannot serve both God and mammon.**

Mammon is defined as money, wealth or anything we treasure.

Decide today to be a faithful steward with all you have been given  
so that you can help to build Christ's Kingdom.

Amen. +