

## LESSON

## “TAMING OF THE SHREWD”

Rev. Ned Alderman

### RESPONSE TO THE WORD – PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Holy One, you are beyond our imagining, beyond our control, beyond our comfort. You will not be bound by our schemes.

Even so we maintain appearances, and we jockey with our neighbors, even as we make idols from our fears. But your ways are not our ways. You are not a god of tidy balance sheets or weekly appointments; your love is too deep, your claim too pervasive.

You are there when tempers fray and anger erupts. You are there when anxiety overwhelms and we withdraw. You are here in every bruised heart, every calloused hand, every tangled dream.

Move among us now. Receive our broken spirits as the offerings we bring this day. Merciful God, breathe deeply into this room your reconciling love, your holy expectation. Allow us now to see the faces of those we have harmed, those we have kept at a distance....[silence]

Work in us, Lord, until our hearts are softened and we dare to seek our neighbor’s good. Teach us to pray with our hands and our feet and our voices. We lift to you now all that seems irreconcilable in our families, in our schools and workplaces....[silence]

in our nation....[silence]

in your church....[silence]

in your world....[silence]

We pray for those we identify as leaders in every sphere of life....[silence]

We pray for our president, and for all whose decisions weigh heavily on others....[silence]

Even so, Lord, give us the courage to name ourselves as those whose responsibility is great. Teach us to tend the world you love: to sow more than we reap, to heal more than we wound, to make room for others as you made room for us.

We pray with hearts both eager and reluctant, trusting that you will meet us - and call to us – just where we are, in the name of the Christ. **Amen.**

### INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

God longs for us to bring everything that we are, everything that we have, to this relationship; God loves us that much. May the offerings we bring this day be tokens of our reciprocal desire.

*Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 2 © 2012 Westminster John Knox Press*

### OFFERING PRAYER

**Unshakable and merciful God, you meet us in the ruins just as surely as in times of rejoicing. When all feels lost, you are not. When we stumble for answers, you remain our refuge. Receive these gifts, given not from abundance alone but from hearts that still dare to trust. Let them be signs of your presence in broken places, tools of healing, hope, and grace in a hurting world. Help us live our praise, even in lament, as your people who believe in your goodness – still. Amen.**



***Oaklette United Methodist Church***

***"God's Body in this Community"***

*"Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people."*

***September 21 2025***

***Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost***



*Welcome in the name of our Lord. A nurturing and well-supervised nursery is available for infants and young children. A Cry Room is also available. Please ask the greeter for further assistance and directions to these rooms. [†] = Invites persons to stand as they are able.*

### GREETING

### JOYS AND CONCERNS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

**Loving, sustaining God, like the mighty oak, may our branches at Oaklette church embrace those around us in this community. Use us as an instrument to welcome and shelter your people. Deepen our roots so that our branches are strong. Let the Holy Spirit flow like a river through our church, so that we may do your will. In Jesus’ holy name, Amen.**

### FIRST GOSPEL READING

**Luke 15:11-24 {NRSV}**

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.”

PRELUDE“Softly and Tenderly”DANA MOODY

PASSING OF THE PEACE

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Lay Reader: Come to knowledge of the truth. Come to Jesus, the Christ.

People: There is one God, and there is one Son, Jesus, the Christ!

Lay Reader: Come to the knowledge of the way. Come to Jesus, the Christ.

People: There is one God, and there is one Son, Jesus, the Christ!

Lay Reader: Come to the knowledge of the savior of the world. Come to Jesus, the Christ.

People: There is one God, and there is one Son, Jesus, the Christ!

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OPENING PRAYER (ALL)

O God, you call us to embrace both you and the children of this world with unconditional love. Give us grace to discern what your love demands of us, that, being faithful in things both great and small, we may serve you with an undivided heart. Amen.

HYMNI“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”#206

1. I want to walk as a child of the light.  
I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world.  
The star of my life is Jesus.  
*Refrain*  
In him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2 I want to see the brightness of God.  
I want to look at Jesus.  
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,  
And show me the way to the Father.  
*Refrain*

3. I’m looking for the coming of Christ.  
I want to be with Jesus.  
When we have run with patience the race,  
We shall know the joy of Jesus.  
*Refrain*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God, we spend so much time and energy climbing up the ladder, and then you send Jesus into our midst, turning our lives upside down. We ask you for glory, and you ask us

simply to follow.

Forgiving God, sometimes we are so caught up in doing and being the best that we forget you have called us to be the least. It is only in serving others that we will know the glory of your kingdom here on earth. It is only in offering our lives to you that we receive the gift of new life.

O God, we pray for those who are hurting. Enable us to offer a healing touch. We pray for those who have their way. Empower us to guide them on Jesus’ path. We pray for the leaders of the world and for our church. Inspire us to model true leadership through humble service.

We pray all in Jesus’ name. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

ANTHEM“This Little Light of Mine”CHANCEL CHOIR  
Soloist Monica Whitehurst

SECOND GOSPEL READINGLuke 16:1-13 [NRSV]

Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.'

Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.'

“So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

“He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'

“Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?

No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

**DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

**HYMN**

**“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus:**

**#2129**

1. I have decided to follow Jesus,  
I have decided to follow Jesus,  
I have decided to follow Jesus,  
no turning back, no turning back.
2. The world behind me, the cross before me,  
the world behind me, the cross before me,  
the world behind me, the cross before me,  
no turning back, no turning back.
3. Though none go with me, still I will follow,  
though none go with me, still I will follow,  
though none go with me, still I will follow,  
no turning back, no turning back.

**BENEDICTION**

Go now, in the blessing of God who covers you, protects you, delivers you, and helps you that you might reflect God’s glory as you love and serve others. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, April 2025.

**POSTLUDE**

**“Behold the Great Redeemer**

**DANA MOODY**

*Today’s service is being broadcast on Facebook Live at 11:00 am. You can access the service through the Oaklette Church Group on Facebook. You can also access the sermon through the Oaklette UMC Facebook page. If you are unable to use Facebook Live a link can be sent to you by email after the Facebook Live Worship has been recorded, but we will need your email address to do this. The Facebook Live service will also be downloaded to our website on Monday morning.*

*The flowers on the altar today are presented to the glory of God.  
The Food Basket on the altar is presented to the glory of God.*



**PARTNERS IN MINISTRY TODAY**

- Members of the Church
- Prayer Partner: Brenda Swoope
- Lay Reader – Kelly Castellow
- Audio-Visual Operator – Rob Castellow
- Greeter: Joanne Rooks
- Pastor: Rev. Ned Alderman
- Administrative Assistant: Eileen Ballance
- Financial Secretary: Edna Bess
- Coastal Virginia Dist. Superintendent: Rev. Beth Givens
- Resident Bishop, Richmond Area: Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson