

**Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry of New Jersey**  
**Weekly Witness | November 17, 2017**

A piece from the forum Political Theology Today reimagines the text we are facing this week, “this story is a descriptive parable of how the system works when absentee landlords ‘give’ money to servants, only to demand back a healthy return.” The author, Mark Davis, [continues](#),

It is a descriptive parable of someone who refused to participate in that process, in a situation where absentee landowners and their lackeys were the primary interface between Jewish peasantry and the Roman Empire. That servant—deemed “lazy” and unfaithful by the Empire—pays an awful price for refusing to play along. A grim interpretation, perhaps, but no more grim than the words at the beginning of this corpus in Matthew 24: “Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name.”

In the news this week we have been confronted by the power imbalances that lead to sexual assault and pedophilia, and which have been rationalized by scriptural interpretations. We heard again of death by guns, this time by a heavily-armed mentally ill man shooting throughout his community. We see the United States moving further from the Paris Climate Agreement. And our own Congress is choosing to loosen the safety net for low and moderate income families in favor of tax cuts to corporations.

These reports are enraging. The systems, decisions, and practices are troubling. It is becoming difficult to handle news story after news story, trying to act on the most urgent issue as they are all urgent.

In this week’s parable we witness a servant who analyzed a situation and chose not to accommodate himself to a corrupt system. The “lazy servant” calls attention to the power imbalance, refuses to just go along with the practice, and teaches us about the importance of following our conscience when confronting evil.

In his sermon at [Temple Israel of Hollywood](#), Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said,

There are some things in our nation to which I’m proud to be maladjusted, to which I call upon all men (and women) of goodwill to be maladjusted until the good society is realized. . . . I never intend to adjust myself to segregation and discrimination. I never intend to become adjusted to religious bigotry. I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few. I never intend to adjust myself to the madness of militarism and the self-defeating effects of physical violence.

Even as we grow weary, commit yourself again this week to be maladjusted to the evils of our day. Share your disquiet—tell your [elected officials](#), your friends, your community members and family that you cannot adjust your moral compass to injustice. Pray, Speak Up, and Act!

For more resources, visit our [website](#).