

Reflection for the Twenty Fifth Sunday of the Church's Year

Trust is very much at the heart of the gospel today. The rich man has put his trust in a steward who proves himself unworthy of that trust. He has given his steward a great deal of latitude to oversee his considerable wealth and assets including his oil and his wheat. However, he proves *“wasteful with his property”* and *“dishonest”*. Money and wealth can be corrosive and corrupting influences and they test a person's character and integrity. The *“dishonest steward”* had certainly been led astray by wealth and had been wasteful for his own benefit with his master's assets. In our first reading today Amos the prophet denounces those who stop at nothing for their own gain. Their love of money causes them *“to trample on the needy”*, to *“suppress the poor people of the country”*, to tamper with the weights and measures by *“lowering the bushel, raising the shekel, swindling and tampering with the scales”*. They have no respect for religious observance or the sabbath which they see as unnecessary hindrances to their commerce and greed and appear even to engage in the trading of slaves for their profit.

Trust is very much at the heart of this. Whether a person proves trustworthy with wealth and riches is an insight into whether they will be found worthy of the kingdom of God. Jesus asserts that *“the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great.”* He describes money as a *“tainted thing”* and he reflects that *“if you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches?”* He sees love of money and love of God as polar opposites and incompatible activities and those who love God cannot also love money and all that goes with it.

Today's scriptures call upon us to examine our relationship with money and riches, material wealth and comfort and to examine ourselves honestly with respect to whether greed and avarice have any hold over us.