

**25TH SUNDAY ORD. (C)**  
**YOU CANNOT SERVE BOTH GOD AND MAMMON (MONEY)**

When God created the world, He entrusted everything to us for our use and benefit. But the acquisition and use of the things in the world have led human beings away from God and made the rich to treat the poor and needy as objects. Because of money, fellow human beings are not regarded as people with dignity. The have-not are trampled upon by those who have.

This has been the practice even before the coming of Christ. In the first reading, the prophet Amos was sent to the Northern Kingdom to preach to the leaders and the rich who were cheating the poor. They even despised the observance of the new moon and the Sabbath, celebrations to honour God. The poor were made to offer more goods for very little money because the scales were adjusted to favour the rich. But Amos reminded them that their misdeeds were before the Lord.

The steward we heard about in the gospel was also cheating his master to enrich himself, but his misdeeds were also exposed. He used a shrewd way to correct his mistakes. Even the intention was not a good one. He wanted to be accepted in the homes of the debtors in case he lost his job. He had a selfish and greedy intention, but he was praised by his master. He thought about the future of his life. How many Christians are concerned about the future of their spiritual lives?

It is true that we cannot serve two masters, we shall love one and hate the other. This can be seen in all aspects of the society we live. Manufacturers of many goods have made life easy, but at the same time the motive behind what they produce is to maximize profit and sometimes do not regard the negative effects on consumers.

Christians are also occupied with various activities to the extent that going to Church is a part-time business. We are not different from the people at the time of Amos. Spiritual matters are relegated to the background. We worship and pray at will, and at our convenience; there is little or no commitment.

Leaders of nations and governments, and those in opposition all over the world are most of the time interested in gaining power and so whatever they can do to achieve that is what they pursue. Very few have the interest of the common people at heart. Pleasing God is not factored into their plans.

St. Paul tells us, as he told Timothy, that God wants everybody to be saved. Therefore “supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving be offered for everyone, for kings and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all devotion and dignity”. It is very important to pray for those in authority and the wealthy, because they have great influence in the society. It is of no use to complain; prayer pierces the clouds and the sky.

Again, St. Paul urges that “in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or argument”. Lifting up hands in prayer is to surrender to God. This was demonstrated at the time the Amalekites engaged the Israelites in battle; “whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed; and whenever he lowered his hand Amalek prevailed,” so his hands were supported by Aaron and Hur, in prayer and Israel won the battle;(Ex.17:8-13).

We too must realize, as the steward did, that whatever we have and possess is not honestly ours, but in truth belongs to God, our Master. Money is not ours; time is not for us; power and authority belong to Him. We are caretakers of all that we possess. Every day the worship of God and prayer should be first on our agenda. We should also consider how our trade and the work we do will be pleasing to God and benefit the poor, the needy, and the marginalized. Each Christian is called to be honest and trustworthy in things of this world in order to be given something great, that is, the salvation of his or her soul.