

In and Out
#4: In the Mall, But Not of It
May 19-21, 2007

¹Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ²So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ ³The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— ⁴I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ ⁵So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶‘Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ ⁷Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied. He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’ ⁸“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. ¹⁰Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? ¹³No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” ¹⁴The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. ¹⁵He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.

Luke 16:1-14 TNIV

Introduction: Perhaps the most pressing issue facing believers who live in our culture is how to live “in the world, but not of it.” This is especially true for a church like Columbia in a place like Washington. Our region is among the wealthiest

in the nation and the world, and it is particularly difficult to be “in the mall, but not of it.” This is a test!

- I. The Confounding Parable (vv.1-9)
 - A. This parable about an inept manager of a rich man’s possessions has puzzled Biblical scholars for years.
 - B. The key to unraveling the mystery is to understand the central point Jesus was seeking to convey: God makes us managers of temporal things for eternal purposes, and He expects us to be savvy stewards.
 - C. Our goal is to be as intentional in translating temporal wealth into things eternal as unbelievers are in translating temporal wealth into things worldly.
- II. The Convicting Truth
 - A. Untrustworthy stewards are always dishonest, while honest stewards can always be trusted. (v.10)
 - B. The person who can not be trusted with proper stewardship of material things cannot be trusted with spiritual things. (v.11)
 - C. Stewardship of material things is the litmus test of true belief. (v.12)
 - D. It is fundamentally impossible to serve both God and material things, or for the true believer to be “in the mall and of it.” (v.13)
 - E. Since God judges the heart, and His values are completely different than those of the secular culture, our efforts to impress the culture are “highly detestable” to Him. (vv.14-15)
- III. The Converted Life
 - A. The converted life is a God-owned enterprise.
 - B. The converted manager is a savvy steward.
 - C. The converted person is trustworthy in all things great and small.
 - D. The converted servant loves one master.
 - E. The converted actor performs for an audience of one.

Conclusion: Whether we can be “in the mall, but not of it” may be the ultimate test of our legitimacy as followers of Jesus Christ. Our culture offers us many comforts, so our testing is intense. “To whom much is given, much is required.”