

Mark 10:17-27

Jesus was setting out on a journey when a man ran up, knelt before him and put this question to him, 'Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: You must not kill; You must not commit adultery; You must not steal; You must not bring false witness; You must not defraud; Honour your father and mother.' And he said to him, 'Master, I have kept all these from my earliest days.' Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and he said, 'There is one thing you lack. Go and sell everything you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were astounded by these words, but Jesus insisted, 'My children,' he said to them 'how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' They were more astonished than ever. 'In that case' they said to one another 'who can be saved?' Jesus gazed at them. 'For men' he said 'it is impossible, but not for God: because everything is possible for God.'

In our Gospel passage this week, we read of an encounter between Jesus and a rich man; we are given an insight into the reaction of the human heart when we deny ourselves a deeper, closer relationship with Jesus. The man asks Jesus what he has to do to gain eternal life – an eternity with God. St. Mark tells us this was a person who practiced his religion, but only to a certain point; Jesus tells him to keep the commandments. What happens next is crucial to understanding just what kind of exchange is happening here between Jesus and the man. Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said, 'You lack one thing.' That phrase is very important – Jesus, looking at him, loved him... *(continued overleaf)*

TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

Year B

10th October 2021



***"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle
than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."***

In today's readings the Word of God challenges us as we are asked: In what do you put your heart? Where is your security? What makes your life valuable and worthwhile? The advice of God's word and wisdom is seen in the first reading. Then in the Gospel we hear the warning: Do not put your heart in possessions for they become your masters. Let God be your Lord. Let it be Jesus whom we follow.

Today's readings invite us to encounter Jesus on a deeper and personal level beyond the ordinariness of everyday life; be it in prayer, in listening to the Word of God or in admiring the beauty of His creation. When we encounter Jesus we are invited to change. We are invited to follow Him more radically. If we refuse this invitation to change, we say no to the new life and hope which is being offered to each one of us today.

Opening Prayer

May your grace, O Lord, we pray, at all times go before us and follow after and make us always determined to carry out good works.

Wisdom 7:7-11

I prayed, and understanding was given me; I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came to me. I esteemed her more than sceptres and thrones; compared with her, I held riches as nothing. I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer, for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of sand, and beside her silver ranks as mud. I loved her more than health or beauty, preferred her to the light, since her radiance never sleeps. In her company all good things came to me, at her hands riches not to be numbered.

More precious than power, riches, health and beauty is the wisdom that comes from God. It invites us to live in God's love. The author of the Book of Wisdom is on a quest, a quest for God. Such a search for God alters our whole outlook on life. While we actively seek God, we are listening and looking attentively. This moves us to question our own motives for doing things and the way in which we behave. We cannot seek God if we are crushing all that is right and good, despising those who are truthful and those who respect the poor. If we are honest and serious in our search, the very act of seeking will change us by simply changing our attitudes, our behaviour and our hearts.

In my quest for God what am I being called to change?

Psalm 89(90):12-17

Make us know the shortness of our life that we may gain wisdom of heart. Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever? Show pity to your servants.

In the morning, fill us with your love; we shall exult and rejoice all our days. Give us joy to balance our affliction for the years when we knew misfortune.

Show forth your work to your servants; let your glory shine on their children. Let the favour of the Lord be upon us: give success to the work of our hands.

Hebrews 4:12-13

The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword but more finely: it can slip through the place where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow; it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts. No created thing can hide from him; everything is uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to whom we must give account of ourselves.

God's Word is upsetting. It forces us to face ourselves and to make a choice, for or against God. It is vital for the outcome of our lives. The writer of the Hebrews knows that, when we are open to a change of attitude, behaviour and heart, we open our lives to His strength, power and grace. The Author likens the power of the Word of God to a two edged sword. Once our thoughts and the attitudes of our hearts are transformed, through God's power, then the impossible business of conquering sin and evil becomes possible, hope is in sight!

- Rooted in the love of God how do I open my life to a change of attitude, behaviour and heart?

Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children. Alleluia!

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful with the sacrificial offerings, that, through these acts of devotedness, we may pass over to the glory of heaven.

Prayer after Communion

We entreat your majesty most humbly, O Lord, that, as you feed us with the nourishment which comes from the most holy Body and Blood of your Son, so you may make us sharers of his divine nature.

(Gospel reflection continued)

... It suggests to us that something deeply personal and intimate is happening here; Jesus is telling the rich man to go beyond a simple observance of 'major' commandments. Jesus is inviting him, in love, to move even closer – Jesus knows that the rich man has potential, the young man is being called in love to detach himself from his wealth, his prestige, his privileged position, anything that keeps him from entering more deeply into relationship with Christ. The depth of that relationship is reflected in Jesus' instruction to sell what he owns, give the money to the poor, and come follow Him. It isn't sufficient to give away some of his belongings, or to make a small donation etc., and assume that's enough. Jesus invites the rich man and each one of us, to put Him first – to stop placing priority on power, property and privilege ahead of our love of God and love of neighbour. If we truly want to gain eternal life, then that is the path we must follow, the gate through which we have to enter; it's not a popular gate, it's not an easy gate – but it is the gate that Christ Himself invites us to enter.

- Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him-today I take time to stop and allow Jesus to look steadily at me and to love me....



St Wilfrid (634 – 709)

The feast of St Wilfrid is celebrated this Tuesday.

Wilfrid was born in Northumbria in 634. As a boy he was educated in the monastery of Lindisfarne. Later he travelled to Rome in the company of Benet Biscop, spending a considerable time at Lyons on the way. This wider, continental experience had a profound effect upon the young man

and, on his return, he showed himself to have become a keen supporter of the traditions of the Roman Church as against the prevailing 'Celtic' customs introduced by the Irish missionaries from Iona under St Aidan. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Abbot of Ripon, and sometime later he was ordained priest.

After the death of Aidan, the differing customs of the Romans and the Celts became the cause of bitter dispute. In 664 a Synod was held in Whitby, in the famous monastery of St Hilda, to settle the question and Wilfrid took a leading part in the debate, successfully arguing for the abolition of the Celtic traditions and the imposition of the church discipline of Rome.

Within twelve months he had been appointed Bishop of Lindisfarne. He chose to be consecrated in Paris, and was absent in France for so long that St Chad, one of Aidan's pupils, was consecrated bishop in his place. Wilfrid had to appeal to St Theodore of Canterbury, his metropolitan, before he was able to take possession of his diocese. He established himself at York, but encountered much hostility being opposed at various times not only by some of the secular rulers of his day but even by men of great sanctity like St John of Beverley. A particular dispute arose in 678 when Theodore made an attempt to divide the large, unwieldy diocese of Lindisfarne/York into two parts. Wilfrid objected to the division and made an appeal to Rome against his archbishop. Not only was he successful, but in doing so he became the first Englishman to take a law suit to the Roman courts.

In spite of this, his return to Northumberland was much less successful. For a while he was imprisoned by the King of Northumbria and eventually escaped to Sussex. It is a tribute to his courage and dedication that he was able to use this time well, carrying on an energetic mission to the South Saxons and also for a brief period among the people of Friesland, so beginning the great English mission to the Germanic people that was to be continued by his pupil, St Willibrord.

Wilfrid returned to Northumbria in 686, but was not allowed to remain long in the area. Once again he appealed in person to Rome. But in the end he accepted a compromise solution under which he became Bishop of Hexham while retaining his monastery at Ripon. There he introduced many additional Roman customs and reorganised the monastery under the rule of St Benedict. He died in 709.

