

Pentecost 20 10/11/15  
 Mark 10:17-22 23B

“YOU LACK ONE THING; GO, SELL ALL THAT YOU HAVE AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND YOU WILL HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; AND COME, FOLLOW ME.”

“Money is the root of all evil.” That’s what the Bible says, right? I hate to be the pothole in the yellow brick road, but that’s not what the Bible says. The Bible says, in 1 Timothy 6:10, in case you want to look it up for yourself, “the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil.”

I call that to your attention in light of Jesus’ words in our lesson this morning. A well-known TV evangelist once said that no millionaire would ever get into heaven. That was a genuine misunderstanding of the words of Jesus. Jesus is not condemning money or riches or having stuff. Jesus is condemning the attitude of the heart that loves and trusts in anything more than Him. TODAY JESUS CALLS UPON YOU TO “SELL ALL THAT YOU HAVE ... AND COME, FOLLOW ME.”

I. Jesus wants us to inherit eternal life. But, the attitude of our sinful heart stands in the way.

The Evangelist St. Mark begins by telling us that as Jesus “was setting out on His journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’” Notice his words. He wants to do something. He wants to earn eternal life. He is under the mistaken lie of the devil that he can save himself by his works.

Jesus holds before him the Commandments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Table, those Commandments which direct us in our love towards our neighbor: “Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother.” Jesus does this to show him that he has not been the kind of neighbor God demands that he be.

Jesus preaches the law to him so show him his sin. Seeing his sin, he would know he could not get into heaven by his works.

But, it didn't work. Instead of seeing his sin, the man boasted that he had fulfilled what God demanded of him.

So Jesus continued: "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." The problem of this rich young man was that the attitude of his heart was all wrong. In the First Commandment, God demands of us that we fear, love, and trust in Him above all else. This rich young man did not do this. He loved the things of this world more than Jesus. He trusted in his earthly goods, rather than trust Jesus.

In what do you fear, love, and trust above all things? Does the attitude of your heart stand in the way of following Jesus? Trusting in our material things, the works of our hands, we are left as troubled as this young man. The young man went away from Christ, and we separate ourselves from God when we trust in anything more than we trust in Jesus Christ.

The Law of God is a mirror. As a mirror shows us what we look like, the mirror of the Law shows us our sin. The Law shows us that we are not good and righteous people by nature, but poor, miserable sinners who cannot please God in our thoughts, words, or deeds. This is why the Apostle St. Paul writes, "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Ro 3).

God demanded of us in the Law that we love Him with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind, and that we love our neighbors as we love ourselves. But, dead in sin and trespasses, we could not.

II. If we were to have the treasure of heaven, we needed someone to

fulfill the Law for us. That someone was Jesus Christ.

Jesus was born of Virgin mother and circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of His earthly life. His circumcision meant that He willingly placed Himself under the Law. Jesus, not being dead in sin as you and I, lived a perfect life, never breaking God's law even once. This He did for us, so that His righteousness would become our righteousness. St. Paul says it this way, "Just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous" (Ro 5).

Jesus called to the rich young man: "Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." Today, Jesus calls you. He calls you to trust in His works, not yours, and follow Him.

III. Martin Luther defined the church as sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd. Hearing our Shepherd's voice, we follow Him.

That is what God did in our Baptism. Through that blessing washing of regeneration, Jesus forgives us all of our sin, clothes us with His righteousness, and raises us to a new life in Him. We could not make ourselves alive from the death of sin, so God raised us from the death of sin to eternal life in Jesus Christ.

Living in Christ, we are sheep who hear our Shepherd's voice and follow Him. But, in the darkness of this valley of the shadow of death, we are daily confronted with many dangers, toils, and snares. The devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh lead us to daily fear, love, and trust in the things of this creation rather than our Creator.

What are the barriers in your life which beckon to you to place your trust in them? Pride, which closes our eyes and fixes our attention on self.

Possessions, which keep us from true worship of God. The cost of discipleship itself leaves us sad and crushed, focusing the attention of our flesh not on what we gain in Christ, but rather what we must give up for Christ.

In your Confirmation vows, you were asked,

"Do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the divine Word, to be faithful in the use of God's Word and Sacraments, which are his means of grace, and in faith, word, and action to remain true to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?"

When we recall those vows, we see that we have sinned. We have not feared, loved, and trusted in God above all things. But, to sinners crushed by the guilt of our sin comes the Good News of the saving Gospel:

"[Whenever] we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn 1:9). God is faithful and forgives us for the sake of Christ.

As God forgives us with His Word and as we eat and drink His life-giving Body Blood, He strengthens us to be faithful. We can fear, love, and trust in Him above all things, which is why we pray this day, "Lord Jesus Christ, whose grace always precedes and follows us, help us to forsake all trust in earthly gain and to find in You our heavenly treasure."

We find in Christ our heavenly treasure. And today, we can live as God wants us to live.

In the Garden, God gave Adam the command to "subdue" creation. All that God created was there to serve Adam. In keeping God's command to subdue creation, we show our mastery over creation by ruling over our possessions, not allowing them to rule over us. We do not fear, love, and trust in them above Jesus Christ. We enjoy the financial security and the material things God in His love has so richly blessed us with. God wants

us to enjoy life and as the wise and faithful stewards we are in Christ, we use the blessings of body and soul God has given us to enjoy life. The attitude of our hearts is to fear, love, and trust in God above all things, and we do all to the glory of God.