

22 S. after Pentecost 10/20/24
 Mark 10:23-31 24B

“FOR ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD!”

I'll buy you a diamond ring, my friend
 If it makes you feel alright
 I'll get you anything, my friend
 If it makes you feel alright
 'Cause I don't care too much for money
 Money can't buy me love

You are going to reveal your age if you recognize those lyrics as being from the Beatles song, “Can’t Buy Me Love.” {{Yes, it’s also an ode to how many sermons I have written that I am now relegated to quoting the Beatles}}.

You don’t have to be a Beatles fan to see the truth of those words. In the folly of our sinful thinking, we care a whole, whole lot for money because we think that money will buy anything our heart desires – health, peace of mind, happiness; even that we can buy our way into heaven. If only we had more money, we tell ourselves. But JESUS TEACHES US THIS MORNING THAT MONEY CANNOT BUY OUR WAY INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I. Our *Small Catechism* teaches us says that we break the 1st Commandment when we “fear, love, or trust in any person or thing as they should fear, love, and trust in God alone.” Wealth, daily bread, our stuff are from the hand of God. But, we forget the source. We think we’ve earned it. We deserve it. That it’s really, truly ours to the point that we fear, love, and trust in our material stuff as we should fear, love, and trust in God alone.

We forget “All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee” [LSB 781:1]. We stand before our closets and drawers overflowing

with clothes and say, “I have nothing to wear.” We have refrigerators and pantries filled with food and we lament, “There is nothing to eat around here.” Instead of loving and cherishing the spouse God has given us, we look with lust at others, dreaming about how wonderful life would be if only he/she were my spouse. Rather than looking at the blessings we have, we see our neighbor’s new toys and we are filled with jealousy and envy.

You will recall our Gospel reading from last Sunday. A rich young man came to Jesus and asked, *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* He boasts that he has kept the law – perfectly – from his youth. So Jesus tells him, *“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor.”* And that rich young man went away from Jesus sad, disheartened, because his gold was his god (cf. Mk 10:17-21).

Our Gospel reading today begins exactly where last Sunday’s leaves off. The rich young man disheartened by the words of Jesus, prompts Jesus to exclaim to his disciples, *“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God (v. 23)!”*

These words of Jesus were **shocking** to the disciples. Notice their amazement, *And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, “Then who can be saved (v. 26)?”* It was the common belief and thinking of their day – much as it still is today – that those who had wealth were considered greatly favored by God. So, the disciples’ thinking was if those who were highly favored by God – the rich – could not get into heaven, then who had any chance of getting into heaven?

Again, let me make something perfectly clear – it is not a sin to have wealth or mutual funds or savings in the bank. The problem is when we love them more than Jesus. We cannot buy our way into heaven. In other words, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God by our own works, our efforts,

our good intentions. In the words of Jesus, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for us poor sinners to save ourselves.

But, here is the Good News we rejoice in: *“With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God (v. 27).”* It is impossible for us to save ourselves. But with God, it is possible for poor miserable sinners to be saved. God loves us dearly. You can’t buy that love. That is just the very nature of God. That love led Him to do this: When we could not save ourselves from sin, death, and the devil, God took it upon Himself to save us. And, here’s how He did it: *“He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him (Jn 3:16-17).”*

The Son of God humbled Himself to be born of human mother and became a man among us. He even humbled Himself to death on the cross. He carried all of our sin against the 1st Commandment, all the other 9, all of our sin to the death of that cross. His death on that cross forgives all of our sin. Jesus did for us what it is impossible for us to do for ourselves – He reconciled us to God and won eternal life in heaven for us.

In the water and Word of our baptism, God the Holy Spirit brings us into the Kingdom of God by bringing us to faith in Christ, so that Christ lives in us and we live in Christ. The Holy Spirit continues to use the Word of God to increase our faith and make us daily more like Jesus, renewing us in our spirit, will, attitude, desires, so that we strive to overcome sin and do good works which glorify God and serve our neighbor. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to do that when we read it at home, when we study it, when we teach it to our children, when we hear it in the Divine Service and when we

taste it as Christ gives us His true Body and Blood in, with, and under the bread and wine of His holy supper.

This is how the Holy Spirit works in us. He gives us the faith that believes, trust, and finds comfort that the suffering and death of Jesus Christ takes away all our sins. Through that faith, the impossible becomes the possible -- the camel passes through the needle's eye – that is, we poor sinners enter the Kingdom of God.

But, we dare not forget that the old, evil foe will use every lie at his disposal to separate us from Jesus. He tempts us to take our eyes off Jesus to focus and fixate, covet and crave money and earthly stuff, thinking money really can buy us love.

There is a common thought in the world and, even among Christians, that the Bible says, "Money is the root of all evil." Know what? I hate to be the pothole in the yellow brick road, but the Bible does **not** say that! In fact, what the Scripture says is this, *The **love** of money is a root of all kinds of evils (1 Tm 6:10)*. It's that love of money that says "It's mine," forgetting that all we have comes from the hand of God. It's that love of money that says "I've earned it," forgetting that God has given us the ability and the opportunity to work. It's that love of money that says, "If only I had more, than I could buy...," forgetting the words of Jesus, "*Fool. This night your soul is required of you (Lk 12:20)*."

My Dear Friends in Christ, on this side of heaven, we walk by faith, not by sight. In faith, we trust in the words of the Psalmist,

The eyes of all look to You,
and You give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand;
You satisfy the desire of every living thing (Ps 145:15).

We are, Dear Saints of God, strangers here; heaven is our home. All the things that we need for our bodies and lives today...all the things that we worry and stew about...all the things that we hoard in the weakness of our faith...all those things that we just can't live without ... will be forgotten and we will have no need of them in heaven. We have this confidence and hope because *All things are possible with God.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.