



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 13th 2024**

Theme: "All things are possible with God."

Gathering Prayer

All: 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. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:17-30

¹⁷ And as he 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?" ¹⁸ And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰ And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth." ²¹ And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." ²² At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." ²⁸ Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹ Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

Gospel Focus

This can be disheartening reading. All of us have things we do not strictly need and most of us would struggle to let go of certain comforts. The idea of selling everything to follow Christ seems foolish-where would we find food and shelter? Moreover, without our most basic needs tended to, how would we possibly grow in the virtue and love that Christ calls us to? However, in the end, this is not a reading about what we do (or do

not do). Jesus acknowledges that this is impossible for human beings. This is instead a reading about what God does. God can loosen the grasp of these things on our heart; God can move those attachments that are getting between God and us. We need to offer willing cooperation with God, but this is ultimately not our work.

Gospel Reflection

In today's gospel, a rich young man asks Jesus a question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He seems to be looking for a formula. Though he has kept all the commandments since his youth, the young man lacks something. He looks to Jesus as the "good teacher" to tell him what it is. Jesus answer seems strange at first. He does not tell him right away he must do to inherit eternal life but focuses instead on the man's use of the word "good." In this way Jesus points the young man toward God's unique goodness, which is the one thing" at the center of all.

Jesus invites the rich man to step across a threshold, to leave behind the spirituality of his youth, and to take on another spirituality that abandons all for the sake of love. It is the gaze of love that Jesus casts on each of us that enables us to abandon everything else. This love cannot be earned with actions but it is sheer gift from God, who embodies the "one thing" that surpasses all else. The only condition for attaining the one thing is this: a person must be willing to let go of everything else.

Of course, that is easy to say. The young man's many possessions seem an in surmountable obstacle. For a rich person to enter the realm of God is like a heavily laden camel struggling to wriggle through a tiny opening with all its cargo intact. To hold on to power, control, and security that abundant possessions bring is antithetical to the vulnerability, receptivity, and risk that abandoning oneself to the One Love requires. It is not impossible for people with riches to do so. However, it is exceedingly difficult. As other gospel passages illustrate, it is not having riches that poses an obstacle; rather, it is what one does with one's possessions that is definitive. Total self-surrender to the Divine is the one thing that brings abundance of life to all.

There is a similar theme in the first reading, where Wisdom is the one thing sought. The king prays for and is granted the grace to choose Wisdom alone, over scepter and throne, riches and gems. Ironically, just as the disciples gained back a hundredfold all the family relations and land they relinquished, so the king's choice of Wisdom over all else brought him all good things and countless riches. The idea is not to guess the one thing that will bring abundant riches. Rather, the choice of the One Love, Wisdom incarnate in Christ, prompts one to let go of all else, only to receive in return all that the Beloved lavishes on us without reserve.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Wisdom 7:7-11

⁷ Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. ⁸ I preferred her to scepters and thrones, and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her. ⁹ Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all gold is but a little sand in her sight, and silver will be accounted as clay before her. ¹⁰ I loved her more than health and beauty, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her radiance never ceases. ¹¹ All good things came to me along with her, and in her hands uncounted wealth.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 90:12-17

R: Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants! **(R)**

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness, that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days. Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us, for the years when we saw evil. **(R)**

Let your work be seen by your servants and your glory by their children; and may the gracious care of the Lord our God be ours; prosper the work of our hands for us! Prosper the work of our hands! **(R)**

Second Reading — Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

1618. Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.(Cf. Lk 14:26; Mk 10:28-31) From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.(Cf. Rev 14:4; 1 Cor 7:32; Mt 2:56) Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."(Mt 19:12)

1858. *Grave matter* is specified by the Ten Commandments, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother."(Mk 10:19) The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger.

2728. Finally, our battle has to confront what we experience as *failure in prayer*: discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have "great possessions,"(Cf. Mk 10:22) we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift; and so forth. The conclusion is always the same: what good does it do to pray? To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance.

Sharing and Discussion

1. What makes it difficult or challenging for someone to let go of the "riches" they possess? What would it take to let them go?
2. How can someone develop a deeper awareness of his or her dependence on God?

3. What does living a life of sacrifice mean in any terms?

Closing Prayer

All: Spirit of Wisdom, by your grace we will one day come to see good triumph over evil. Hear our prayers that as we move toward such a time, our hearts might expand in love of you and neighbor. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

**Living The Gospel bible study/sharing via Zoom.
Every Wednesday
Time: 8 – 9.30 pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2760073734?pwd=cDRZR2JQMGRobVkwY3ZVF5L1BwZz09>

**Meeting ID: 276 007 3734
Passcode: 1WordOfGod**

All are welcome!

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References:

- (1) Gospel Notes are taken from The Navarre Bible
- (2) Gospel Reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sundays and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Ministry, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota
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- (3) CCC references are taken from Catechism of The Catholic Church