



# Come and See!

October 14, 2018

## The Word...

"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good?

No one is good but God alone.

You know the commandments: *You shall not kill;*

*you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother."*

He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth."

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him,

"You are lacking in one thing.

Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor

and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

*(from Mk 10:17-27)*

## Pondering the Word...

There is such depth, so many messages in the story of the rich man. I especially like Mark's version-- "*Jesus, looking at him, loved him.*" Jesus saw in this young man real desire and he loved him for that desire. As we hear in the reading from Hebrews, God's Word is able to discern the reflections of the heart. Nothing is hidden from the Word. Jesus sees into the rich man's heart, but he, like we, is blessed with the freedom to make a choice. And the man does choose, although he does so with sadness. I like to think he is just not ready yet and will come around in time.

The readings today address the subject of choice. In Wisdom, the author, giving voice to Solomon, lists all the things he is willing to forego just so he can attain wisdom. He acknowledges all the good things that come to him from that one choice. In essence, Jesus invites the rich man to do the same thing: 'you lack one thing; forego your riches here on earth by giving to the poor to attain the riches waiting for you in heaven.'

Notice Jesus tells him by doing this one thing, he will have treasure in heaven. Jesus adds the part about following him almost as an afterthought. Jesus knows the good things that will come to this man when he surrenders the one thing--the false idol of wealth--that keeps him from God. Jesus knows once the man frees himself to and for love, he will already be following him on the path to heaven.

## Living the Word...

It's a bit early to mention the holidays, but there's a lovely little book called, *The Fourth Wiseman*, by Henry van Dyke. The story goes that there is a fourth Magi who gets separated from the other three and winds up searching for the King all his life. Along the way, he spends all the treasures and riches he had brought to give the King by doing wonderful things for God's poor and oppressed. He is miserable that he has never meets the King, and laments his lot. He finally encounters Jesus and...well, I not going to spoil it for you, but the message has a familiar ring and lesson about what it really means to follow Jesus. It's a great book to read to and with children.

Personal Reflections and Ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

**Oct 15:** *"We are children not of the slave woman but of the freeborn woman. For freedom Christ set us free; so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery."*(Gal 4:22-24, 26-27, 31-5:1)

The Galatians, pagan converts, encounter other Jewish Christian missionaries who try to get them to submit to Jewish law as well. Paul gets frustrated trying to convince them it is not through the law that they are saved. You have to feel for the Galatians—maybe they are sincere and want to make sure to check all the boxes. Or maybe they think their actions can improve their chances for salvation. We too can be sincere but get caught up in checking boxes; or, we may feel that by doing so, we will improve our lot somehow. Christ sets us free through unearned, unmerited grace. It is the acceptance of that grace and the joy and gratitude we feel at being so loved that is the sign of a true Christian. Give praise and thanks today for the one who sets us free!

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**Oct 16:** *"For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love."*(Gal 5:1-6)

This is one of the best explanations of the debate (if there is still one) about whether we are justified through grace or through works. Pope Francis discusses this in his recent exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*; he refers to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "The gift of grace 'surpasses the power of human intellect and will.'...God's friendship infinitely transcends us; we cannot buy it with our works, it can only be a gift born of his loving initiative." (54) One translation of the last phrase of this passage is "faithfulness made actual through love." How will you make actual the awesome gifts of grace and faith through acts of love today?

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**Oct 17:** *For the LORD watches over the way of the just, but the way of the wicked vanishes.* (Ps 1)

I don't know...it seems to me the way of the wicked doesn't vanish at all, but instead is dug wider and deeper every day. The barrage of anger and violence we hear nonstop can cause us to lose hope. It's hard for me to keep a "God's eye" view of things. Historians remind us human history goes in cycles, and that this too shall pass. Truth will ultimately triumph, and the ways of the just will remain under God's loving care. Pray today God will grant you the vision to see past the hypocrisy and lies, and the strength to move forward in hope.

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**Oct 18:** *"Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit."* (Lk 10: 1-12)

Imagine what it must have felt like to be one of Jesus' "advance staff!" They are told to take nothing with them and that they are being sent as "lambs among wolves." It is one thing to be amid the big crowds following Jesus, watching him preach and heal; it is quite another to strike out to do the same on your own. We know the world can be a hostile place. Jesus' messengers are not always welcome. It's good advice to have others with you to support your efforts and help you process your experiences in light of the Gospel.

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**Oct 19:** *"Nothing concealed will not be revealed, nor secret not be known. Whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed on the housetops."*(Lk 12:1-7)

I have heard this passage cited recently (and inaccurately) in reference to the hierarchy about the scandals and secrecy in the Roman Church. Jesus is speaking here, not to the leaders but to his followers, about the cost of discipleship. Being willing to speak the truth aloud in the face of power can get you into hot water fast. It can seem like a lost cause. "The way of the wicked" we discussed on Wednesday does not leave much room for those willing to call out hypocrisy, lies, and evil. How are you called to be a disciple, both in your church and in your civic community? At what cost are you willing to speak the truth aloud?

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**Oct 20:** *"(May) the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call..."* (Eph 1:15-23)

Another good book-end to the week, and a great intercession for all of us to recite. Paul prays the Ephesians—and we--will be granted wisdom; that we may come to know in some small way the works of God, particularly in trying times. Paul tells us hope "belongs to God's call." It is in God's call--to faith, to love, and to serve...not in a call to this principality or that government—that we ultimately find real hope, the hope that will see us through to support one another when our human institutions fail. May the eyes of our hearts be enlightened and may we come to understand how God calls each one of us to be a beacon of hope in a darkened world.