

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, May 28th 2018

There is very little wiggle room in today's Gospel. Jesus is clear – too clear for my comfort. When the rich young man asks what more he must do to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus says it simply: Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor.

Great, Jesus. You have my attention now. But come on, you don't really mean that. Not quite that strongly. Sell what I have and give to the poor? I don't think you want me to move out of my house and spend my life caring for the poor. I have a job! I give to the poor now, not only money but all my leftover things.

I go to church every week and I listen to the Gospels. Jesus, your words are really inspiring. Really though, they are adapted from another culture and translated from a foreign language written centuries ago. I am pretty sure that the exact words would make sense for the culture of your time - not my time. If I lived two thousand years ago in an adobe hut in a town like Nazareth, this would probably be for me, wouldn't it? But right now, today in my life, we need to adapt your words. I think you want me to be generous to the poor – not sell everything I have and give it to them.

At that statement, the young man's face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

I am ashamed. In my rush to cling to what I have, I am ignoring what you ask. I am not very free, Jesus. I am surrounded by things, people, situations and a job that let me pretend that I am in control of my life. I hear what you say next in the Gospel and my face falls. “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God.” I almost despair.

Help me, Jesus, to understand how to live out this message in my own life, the way you really want me to. What are you calling me to, Jesus? Where will I get the courage to answer?

Then I re-read this Gospel and it is there: For us it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible with God.

And the young man who asked first started this discussion? I think of what a failure he must be in your eyes - and what a failure I must be. Yet instead of disappointment in the young man, "Jesus, looking at him, loved him." I quiet myself and feel the same warm gaze, and the same love for me. I am grateful and pray for a more generous heart.

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