

So it's the 28th Sunday in Ordinary time. Does that mean this Sunday is just ordinary? Sundays in the church are never just ordinary. Sunday is the sabbath day. Remember the 3rd Commandment. Keep holy the sabbath day. Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday nearly 2000 years ago. While we celebrate that very essence of Christianity on Easter Sunday, every Sunday celebrates Jesus' resurrection. We are commanded by God to make it a very holy day. The term Ordinary time comes from the Latin word *ordinalis*, which means numbered. So those Sundays in Ordinary time, which are not during the festive Christmas or Easter seasons or during the penance seasons of Advent or Lent or not special feast days, are simply numbered as Sundays of the Church year during which time we should certainly be in prayerful worship of Jesus.

But sometimes Jesus winds up taking a back seat to more worldly things, like sports or vacations or other activities. Sometimes we prefer *stuff* to Jesus. You know what *stuff* is, right? You know, like toys or clothes or games or money or phones or things we do outside of church. We can get pretty preoccupied with and distracted by this *stuff*, and we might not pay the attention that we should pay to Jesus.

A big vocabulary word from today's readings is *wisdom*. Wisdom has something to do with the word *wise*. You should have an idea about what wisdom is. Wisdom is the knowledge of what is right and true. When you have wisdom, you know the right thing to do. You know, for example, when you should go to church or when you should help one another. You know the answer to the question, what would Jesus do?

Today's first reading comes from the book of Wisdom, which is in the Old Testament. Remember that the Old Testament took place before Jesus was born. The book of Wisdom is about the wisdom of Israel's King Solomon. Solomon was known for his great wisdom.

A reading from the book of Wisdom (Wisdom 7:7-11)

I prayed for understanding, and it was given to me. I asked God for Wisdom, and it came to me. ¶ I valued Wisdom more than power and kingdoms. Riches were nothing compared to Wisdom. I considered her more valuable than priceless jewels. Gold was nothing but sand, and silver was merely mud, when compared with Wisdom. ¶ I loved her more than good health and beauty. I preferred Wisdom to light, because she is much brighter. Wisdom has countless treasures, and everything good is mine because of her. ¶ The Word of the Lord.

So Solomon really thinks wisdom is pretty special. How does he compare wisdom to gold or silver, jewels, health, beauty, even light? Compared to all these fancy earthly things he thinks wisdom is more important. That's right, it is more important than all of that other *stuff*.

The story of Solomon is told to us in the book of Kings. In it he prayed to God asking not for riches or a long life, but for wisdom. Because he asked God for wisdom instead of all that other *stuff*, God answered his prayer and granted him a whole lot of wisdom *plus* all the other *stuff* he didn't even ask for. That goes to show you that when you pray to God for the right things, God takes care of all of your needs.

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 90:12 & 14, 16-17)

Fill us with Your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

Fill us with Your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

Teach us to use wisely all the time we have. When morning comes, let your love satisfy all our needs. Then we can celebrate and be glad for all the time we have left.

Fill us with Your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

Do wonderful things for us, your servants, and show your mighty power to our children. Our Lord and our God, treat us with kindness and let all go well for us.

Fill us with Your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy.

About half of the psalms were written by King David, King Solomon's father. But this psalm is the only one written by Moses. He wrote, "Fill us with Your love, and we will sing for joy." All we need is the love of God instead of worldly *stuff*, and we will sing for joy. It sounds like Solomon could have written this wise psalm. (He did write two of the psalms, but not this one.)

Today's second reading comes from the letter to the Hebrews.

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Sisters and brothers: What God has said is not only alive and active! It is sharper than any double edged sword. His word can cut through our spirit and souls and through our joints and marrow, until it discovers the desires and thoughts of our hearts. ¶ Nothing is hidden from God! He sees through everything, and we will have to tell Him the truth. ¶ The Word of the Lord.

The reading talks about God's Word as sharper than any two-edged sword, able to cut right through us between our soul and spirit. St. John always talks about the Word of God being made flesh and dwelling among us. Jesus is that Word of God made flesh. Jesus penetrates our hearts. Jesus knows our very thoughts and feelings. So Jesus knows when you are preoccupied with worldly *stuff* and not thinking about Him and His commandments. That's right, He knows.

Alleluia, Alleluia. *Alleluia, Alleluia.*

Blessed are the poor in spirit; the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

Alleluia, Alleluia.

A reading from the holy gospel according to St. Mark (Mark 10:17-27)

Glory to You, O Lord.

As Jesus was walking down the road, a man ran up to Him. He knelt down and asked, "Good teacher, what can I do to have eternal life?" ¶ Jesus replied, "Why do you call Me good? Only God is good. You know the commandments. 'Do not murder. Be faithful in marriage. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about others. Do not cheat. Respect your father and mother.'" ¶ The man answered, "Teacher, I have obeyed all these commandments since I was a young man." ¶ Jesus looked closely at the man. He liked him and said, "There's one thing you still need to do. Go sell everything you own. Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come with me." ¶ When the man heard Jesus say this, he went away gloomy and sad because he was very rich. ¶ Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "It's hard for rich people to get into God's kingdom!" The disciples were shocked to hear this. So Jesus told them again, "It's terribly hard to get into God's kingdom! In fact, it's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." ¶ Jesus' disciples were even more amazed. They asked each other, "How can anyone be saved?" ¶ Jesus looked at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but nothing is impossible for God." ¶ The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

So in this gospel a rich man came up to Jesus and asked Him how can he get into heaven. And Jesus told him to follow the commandments. And the rich man said that he did follow the

commandments. So Jesus told him to sell everything he owns and give the money to the poor. Get rid of his *stuff*, then he could come and follow Jesus. And the rich man went away sad. Why? Because he had a lot of *stuff*. Jesus turned to his followers and said that it is so hard to get into the kingdom of heaven, harder than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. For anyone who is not familiar with sewing, the eye of a needle is what you place the thread through so you can pull the thread through material and attach pieces of material together to make or repair clothing. A needle is very small, so it does no damage when it passes through the material. Therefore, the eye of a needle is even smaller. Also, one of the gates into Jerusalem during the Time of Jesus was a small gate called the Eye of the Needle. It was so small that camels had to get down on their knees to pass through it. How do you put a big camel through the eye of a needle—either eye of the needle? It's difficult, even impossible, right? Ah, but Jesus says nothing is impossible for God.

How does this gospel reading concern those of us who may not be rich like this rich man? Perhaps this rich man was not being as generous with his time or possessions, his *stuff*, to his neighbors, especially the poor ones. Well, we all have time. We all have *stuff*. Do we use it in the best way to show we love Jesus? Do we share toys with friends or brothers and sisters? Do we stop watching TV or videos to help Mom and Dad? Are we lazy sometimes and not really interested in going to church on Sunday? We all should think of other ways we could share our time and *stuff* to show we love Jesus. You don't have to be rich to *not* follow Jesus in our day to day living. To follow Jesus is to imitate Him. And He *knows* when we are following Him. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, the two-edged sword that penetrates our hearts and knows our thoughts and feelings, He knows when we are preoccupied with the *stuff* of this world instead of being wise and loving one another and following the Word of God.

So let's summarize, which means let's put it all together. In order to follow Jesus, He tells us that instead of messing around so much with the *stuff* of this world, we should be wise, like King Solomon, and love

one another. And He tells us if we follow Him, our reward will be the kingdom of heaven. And He knows when we are dealing with our *stuff* and not with Him. And He knows how impossible it would be to get our reward without His help. But if we are wise like King Solomon would be, and we will follow Jesus, the Word made flesh, our reward *will be* the kingdom of heaven.

And that, girls and boys, is the lesson in today's readings.

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