

Mark 10:17-27  
To the One Who Has Everything  
WRCoB 3.1.20

The Rev. Vincent Gardner relates the following story:

*I was in Hollywood, Florida  
On the so-called “gold coast” of Florida.*

*Every morning I taught the Scriptures  
To a crowd of five hundred or more.*

*These people, I was told  
Represented well over a billion dollars’  
Worth of accumulated wealth.*

*I had the opportunity to talk  
With many of them individually.*

*I found that most of them by their own testimony  
Though they had all the money  
To buy anything they wanted*

*Had arrived at the place where they were suffering  
From what someone has so aptly called  
“Destination sickness”*

*The malady of having everything that you want  
But not wanting anything you have  
And being sick and empty.’*

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These people had arrived at America’s dream destination  
Only to discover they were still miserable.

In today’s encounter with Jesus  
We also find someone suffering “destination sickness.”

Unlike other questions posed to Jesus  
By those who were skeptical  
Or judgmental or seeking to trap Jesus

This man's question was sincere  
And he appeared quite anxious to receive an answer.

He **ran** up and **fell** on his knees in front of Jesus.

He addressed Jesus as "good teacher"  
And earnestly wanted to know  
What to "**DO**" to inherit eternal life.

Jesus responded by stating what any good Jew already knew  
"**DO** what the Law of Moses requires."

The man replied he'd been doing just that since like forever.  
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By anyone's standards  
This man was a moral and upright citizen  
A person who tried to be and to do good.

From an Old Testament perspective  
He **had done** what was required of him.

Yet . . . there was something missing.

When he chanced upon Jesus he thought  
Here is that opportunity  
To ask that nagging question  
Was this all there was to life?

And so rather impulsively and somewhat awkwardly  
He ran to Jesus and fell at his feet.

~~

Scripture says, that immediately Jesus loved him.

I mean, you can sense it too . . .

This refreshing sincerity and honesty  
To the man's simple question

A spiritual yearning in the man's soul that touched Jesus.

It is a question, I suppose,

We have all asked at one time or another

What would the most fulfilling and meaningful life look like?

And Jesus told him

**Mark 10:21 (NRSV)**

**“You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”**

Now excuse me!

How could Jesus say this man lacked something?

Did he lack for anything?

He had everything anyone could have wanted.

A fantastic career!  
    Good health  
        A beautiful wife and four lovely children!  
            A super home in Glen Allen.

And membership in the Mar-a-Largo Golf Club  
    That he occasioned a couple of times per year.

Prosperity, prestige, and privilege!

He had it all!

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And yet . . . Jesus saw it.

Something substantial was missing in his life.

Jesus offered him a life  
    That would have lacked nothing  
        But would have entailed giving up everything.

**GO, SELL, GIVE, COME and FOLLOW.**

His face fell and he turned away  
    And the rich, young ruler walked down the path  
        From whence he came  
            And was never heard from again.

~~

The rich man had two things in life.

He had EVERYTHING!  
    And he had NOTHING!

He had everything anybody could ask for  
Every treasure on earth money could buy.

But ultimately he had nothing  
That brought true meaning and purpose in life.

Jesus said earlier

**Mark 8:36 (NRSV) For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?**

He came to Jesus eager and earnest  
With a burning question in his heart  
Looking to find answers for the emptiness he felt

And Jesus told him what it would take  
And he couldn't **"DO"** what Jesus asked of him.

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We don't know what happened to the rich, young, ruler.

I imagine as he look forward to his retirement in Palm Beach  
He looked back over his life  
With perhaps one regret . . .

To have done something really crazy  
And given it all to follow Jesus.

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Well, maybe not.

Maybe Jesus' challenge was so unrealistic  
That no one in his right mind  
Would have taken him up on it.

Right?

Well, except for Peter and Andrew  
James and John, Thomas and Simon the Zealot  
And the others

Except maybe for Mary, the mother of Jesus  
Mary Magdalene, and Salome and all the others.

Well, except maybe for the Apostle Paul  
Martin Luther  
Mother Teresa  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Or the Rev. Andimi.

In the final analysis, just who had the better life?

The one who went back to his riches  
To spend his final days on the golf course

Hanging with the powerful  
The prestigious and privileged?

Or the ones who followed Jesus to the cross of Calvary?

You wonder.

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You know, Jesus didn't call the rich, young, ruler back.

He let him go.

He didn't tell him he was making a big mistake.

Nor did Jesus negotiate more reasonable terms.

Ok, ok, go and sell only half of your possessions  
And come, follow me on Sunday mornings.

No. He let him go.

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“You want eternal life? You want treasures in heaven?

“You want the richness and fullness of life this very moment  
That up to now has eluded you?

“You want what’s “missing” in your life?

Jesus says, “here it is, “**ME**”

“Go, sell, give, come and follow, me, Jesus Christ.”

And he couldn’t do it!

And to be truthful . . . neither can we.

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Are any of us willing to sell everything we have  
And give it all to the poor

And then, go and follow Jesus to the streets of Calcutta  
Or the slums of Nairobi  
Or to Boko Haram infested Nigeria?

No!

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Sometimes we misplace ourselves in a story.

Perhaps, we placed ourselves in this story  
Along with the disciples  
Who dropped **everything** to follow Jesus.

We see ourselves as the ones listening in over Jesus' shoulder  
Viewing the rich man's reluctance somewhat smugly

When we should have placed ourselves  
Listening in over the shoulder of the rich, young ruler.  
Aghast at what Jesus was saying.

But really, who are we more like?

We, here in the States, are more like the rich young ruler.

We can't sell everything we own  
Give it all to the poor  
And go and follow Jesus.

That's irresponsible.

We can't just up and go!

But Jesus knows this too.

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Remember the beginning of this Scripture Lesson.

The rich man runs to Jesus and asks  
What must he do to inherit eternal life.

And what does Jesus answer?

You know the commandments.  
Do what they say.

Right?

If the rich, young ruler would have been satisfied  
The I think Jesus would have been too.

The rich man felt something was missing.

It was the man's dissatisfaction in life  
That prompted Jesus to challenge him as he did.

I believe the challenge before us this morning is the same.

Do we have a gnawing feeling inside  
That we are lacking the one thing  
That would bring meaning and purpose  
Then we need to do something about it.

We should go and do something crazy for Jesus.

It may not be to sell everything we own.

But do something that is outside of ourselves.

Maybe, take some of that hard-earned money and vacation  
And go do a disaster ministry week somewhere  
Helping someone less fortunate than you.

Or maybe, after high school or college, or in your retirement  
Spend a year in Brethren Volunteer Service.

Or on a lesser note

Volunteer a day a week at the local elementary school  
As a mystery reader

Or help to prepare the meal

For the Hull St. Homeless Veterans Shelter.

Or help out at the Community Kitchen.

If you're feeling something missing in your life

Maybe Jesus is calling you to go, sell, give, come and follow.

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So to the one who has everything.

Have you arrived at America's dream destination

Only to encounter "destination sickness"?

Is there something lacking in your own life?

Do you want eternal life?

Do you want treasures in heaven?

Do you want the full measure of life this very moment,

That up to now has eluded you?

You want the something that's missing in your life?

The something that fills the emptiness

That gives meaning and purpose?

You lack one thing . . . **Jesus**

Jesus says in John 14 that he is the way, the truth, the life.

And so if you want to know the way  
If you want to know the truth  
If you want to know the life

Of spiritual abundance, now and in the world here after

Even if it just a portion  
Give it up  
Sell it  
Go and follow Jesus

And see if your life will ever be the same.

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