

Mark 10:17-27
To the One Who Has Everything
WRCoB 2.18.24

The Rev. Vincent Gardner tells this story.

'I was in Hollywood, Florida
On the so-called "gold coast".

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.'

~~

These folks had arrived at America's dream destination
Only to discover it wasn't all that.

In our story today, we also find
Someone suffering from "destination sickness."

Luke calls this someone a rich, young, ruler
Mark simply identifies him as a man.

This man approached Jesus with a question.

It was a sincere question
And he appeared quite anxious
To get an answer.

For the text says, he **ran** up to Jesus and **fell** to his knees.

He addressed Jesus as **good teacher**
And earnestly asked
What must I "**DO**" to inherit eternal life.

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

Well, he said to Jesus, he'd been doing just that.

~~

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 **did** everything required of him.

And yet . . .

When he saw Jesus, he thought to himself
Here is my chance to ask the Master
Why am I not happy?

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

~~

Verse 21 says, that Jesus looked at him and loved him.

There was something about him that touched Jesus
A spiritual yearning within his soul

A quest to find **the** answer
To life's most important question

What does the most fulfilling and meaningful life look like?

And Jesus told him

1

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.”

You lack one thing, Jesus tells him.
Seriously, did he lack anything?

He had **everything** anyone would have wanted.

A fantastic career! Good health!
A wonderful wife, four lovely children!
And a home in the suburbs.

He had reached his dream destination.

~~

But Jesus saw something missing in the man's life.

And so, Jesus offered him something
That would lack nothing
But to get it, he'd have to give up everything.

2

GO, SELL, GIVE, COME and FOLLOW.

Mark says the man's face fell and he turned away
And walked down the path from whence he came
Never to be heard from again.

~~

The rich man had two things in life.

He had EVERYTHING!
And he had NOTHING!

The passage says he had many possessions.

But nothing that brought meaning and purpose.

His pursuit of wealth became a dangerous enterprise.

3

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 the rich, young ruler
Couldn't "**DO**" what Jesus asked of him.

~~

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

I imagine as he prepared for his retirement in Palm Beach
He looked back over his life
With one regret.

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

~~

Or not.

Maybe Jesus' challenge was too unrealistic.

No one in their right mind
Would have taken him up on it.
Right?

Well, no one, except for Peter and Andrew
James and John, and the others

Except maybe for Mary, the mother of Jesus
Mary Magdalene, and Salome and the other women.

Well, except for the Apostle Paul
Martin Luther
Alexander Mack, Sr
Mother Teresa
Martin Luther King, Jr.
And countless others

In the final analysis, who had the better life?

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

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

You have to wonder.

~~

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

He let him go.

He didn't warn him that he was making a big mistake
By turning his back on Jesus and walking away.

He let him go.

Nor did Jesus offer more reasonable terms.

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

Nope. He let him go.

~~

You want eternal life? You want treasures in heaven?

"You want the richness and fullness of life
That has eluded you up to now?"

"You want what's "missing" in your life?"

Jesus says, "here it is right here in front of you, **"ME"**

"Go, sell, give, come and follow, me.."

And he couldn't do it!

And to be truthful, could we?.

Is 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?

I remember when we first went to Nigeria in 1990.

People told us
“You can’t just up and go
Leaving everything behind?”

You can’t take young children into such a harsh environment

“That’s irresponsible.”

How about you?
Could you up and go?

~~

In a sermon, entitled
The Sermon on the Amount

Heidi Husted writes that recently
Workers unearthed the corpse of a woman.

Frozen in time by the rain of ash
From Mt Vesuvius in Pompeii.

She was cast in a running for her life position

She just didn’t make it out alive.

In her hand, preserved in excellent condition
She clutched jewels

But too late.

She had her jewels
But death had taken them all away.

Jim Elliot, the martyred missionary
Killed by an indigenous tribe in SA wrote in his journal

*A person is no fool to give up what he cannot keep
In order to gain what he cannot lose.*

~~

After the rich, young man's departure
Jesus sat his disciples down.

"It is so hard for those with wealth
To enter the kingdom of God."

The disciples looked at Jesus
As if he was speaking a different language.

"Children," he said to the disciples
"It is easier for a camel to go through
The eye of a needle

They looked at each other and asked
"Then who can be saved?"

"With God," Jesus answered, "all things are possible."

~~

Jesus challenged his disciples to consider
What it takes to live a life reconciled to God.

It's the same challenge Jesus presents us with today.

Do we lack the one thing

That would bring meaning and purpose to our lives?

If so, then we need to do something about it.

We should go and do something for Jesus.

It may not be to sell everything we own.

But do something that is outside of ourselves.

Take some of that hard-earned money and vacation time
You've been saving

And go do a disaster ministry week somewhere
Helping someone less fortunate than you.

Or following high school or college,
Or in your retirement years
Spend a year or two in BVS.

Or, just as important but less commitment
Volunteer a day a week at the local elementary school
As a reading buddy

Or help prepare a meal
For the Liberation Veteran's Services

Or help out at the Community Kitchen.

If you're feeling something missing in your life

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

~~

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

That up to now has eluded you?

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

Jesus is the answer to the big question in life

He is the way, the truth, and the life.

There's a reason Jesus says that he is the way!

Because Jesus is more than just a set of beliefs.

Jesus is a way **of** life

A way **to** life

And a way **for** life!

And so, you who have everything

if you want to know the way

To a life of spiritual abundance

Now and in the world here after

Give yourself to Jesus

Sell your possessions, even if it's just a portion

And go and follow Jesus

And see if your life will ever be the same again