

Mine

28th Week of Ordinary Time-Mark 10: 17-30

Every one of my children, at an early age, expressed their territorial right over others with the short but direct commentary, “MINE!” In other words, they were saying that this toy, this cookie, this book, belongs to me not you. It takes a long time to unlearn this behavior. Some of us never do. This is the lesson for the week. None of it belongs to us. None of it is “mine”!

This week a rich young man, who prides himself in being sincere and true to the commandments, asks Jesus a very interesting question. **“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** Affirming the importance of the Law, Jesus recites the commandments. To this, the young man affirms his faithfulness to the Law. However, Jesus does not let him off the hook. **“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.”** To this challenge the young man went away very sad because he was living with the belief that his material wealth, and even his fidelity to the Law, were his.

The lesson here is the basic lesson of stewardship. Nothing on this planet belongs to us. Everything is on loan. We might have the privilege of wealth or the comfort of nice things but we don't really own them. We might believe that we are self-made men and women who have worked hard for everything that is ours. This is a very American, rugged individualist understanding of ownership. However, it is not the Christian understanding of the true relationship between us and the created world. It is not a Christian response to the generosity of God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to see and to embrace the belief that everything belongs to God. We do not truly own anything in this life. We are entrusted to share our bounty with others for the betterment of the world. We are being asked by Jesus this week to surrender the beliefs, possessions, habits, or attitudes that stand in the way of our relationship with God. This is such a difficult challenge that the disciples question, **“Who can be saved?”**

Again, Jesus' response is grounded in the understanding of being a steward of God. Salvation is not to be earned. Rather, salvation is another one of God's free gifts, given to all. It is only through God that salvation can be attained. Material wealth and security is more of a hindrance to those seeking salvation.

Jesus wants us to understand that when we wake up each day with a mindset that everything in our life is first and foremost God's, we have a true opportunity to be free to work in collaboration with God. When we finally accept that we could leave everything behind for the sake of the Kingdom, then our hearts are open to conversion.

Blessings!

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