

- Imagine the irony of the scene just narrated: a rich young man in fine clothes throwing himself at the feet of a wandering preacher... obviously having heard of, or witnessed, Jesus' teaching and miracles.
- Full of enthusiasm, he calls out: "*Good teacher!*"...but Jesus replies: "*Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.*"
- Jesus does this, I think, so the lad doesn't get caught up in hero-worship, as so many do with charismatic leaders. Jesus is telling him: Rely on God's Word alone!
- ...which Jesus then proceeds to expound upon: to inherit eternal life, "*Follow the commandments!*"
- In other words: "*You already know much of what to do. Follow God's Word.*" This excerpt is one of many which affirms that the moral law of God remains our obligation.
  
- "*I have done these things*", the young man replies.
- "*But you **lack** one thing. Go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven.*"
- Jesus thereby emphasizes the insufficiency of simply not sinning; one must give of oneself and help the needy.
- This is what He affirms also in Matthew's Gospel (chap 25) with the sheep and the goat parable—the sheep blessed for helping the needy, and the goats condemned for heartless selfishness.
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- Our young man became sad, and went away, because he treasured his wealth and possessions—that which was worthless in itself. He was comfortable and complacent where he was...but now an unexpected and uncomfortable requirement was laid upon him.
- What did he finally do? Which will he treasure most: eternal life, or his temporal stuff, which he'll lose at death anyway?
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- You'd think it would be an easy choice...but we know by our own lives and experiences that it is not. So often the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

- Because, as he did in Eve’s ear, the Tempter continually whispers into our ear...always lying about what will make us happy...which always involves abandonment of God in some way.
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  - Will the young man be too attached to the world to obey Christ?
  - Will WE? In this Gospel we view ourselves.
  - Am I a liar and a hypocrite when I say I love God and Jesus and follow His Word?
  - Receiving so many blessings, I give back so very little.
  - Being loved totally, yet will I hate? Forgiven so much, yet I do forgive? Hearing the Word of God, do I listen?
  - As for treasure in Heaven...do we remember the widow’s mite? She gave even her last two almost worthless coins, and yet Jesus says that she gave more than all the wealthy because of the greater sacrifice it was compared to their own.
  - So...in my heart I cry out with St. Paul: *“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...the evil I do not want is what I do...I delight in the law of God, in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”* (Romans 7:15-24)
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  - Who will deliver me, indeed? Who will help me? None other than He whom I offend...as Paul continues: *“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”* (Romans 7:25)
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  - As we heard in our first reading: *“I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.”*
  - How much this sounds like Jesus when He says: *“If you...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (Luke 11:13)
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- But...what. IS. wisdom?

- Wisdom is seeking eternal truth...the good...that which benefits us and others most deeply and eternally?
- Wisdom is given us IF we ardently ask for it and seek it...in the scriptures and in the teaching of the Church, which is itself guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Simple wisdom is what Jesus offered to the young man: 1) Avoid evil; and, 2) Do good with what you have been given...including forgiveness of others.
- What is that wisdom worth? Our first reading: *“I preferred her [wisdom] to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her...because all gold, [compared to her] is [nothing but] sand...Beyond [even] health and beauty I loved wisdom...all good things came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands.”*

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- A very wealthy man took a cruise: John Astor IV, who lived in absolute luxury...a cruise on the Titanic.
  - As the icy grip of the North Atlantic drained his life, what good were his riches? What would he not have given even for a tiny lifeboat?
  - Well...our earthly lives ARE Titanic...sinking slowly, but inexorably. And wisdom—Christ—is our lifeboat...to save us and to bring us home.

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- Physical pleasures? Fame, wealth, power? All gone in that last moment. And yet, as Paul tells us today: *“...[our lives are] naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.”*
  - But the lifeboat ever at hand is the forgiveness of God, and the true wisdom that He gives to those who seek Him...wisdom found in those two simple phrases: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and love your neighbor as yourself.
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- We will not find true happiness in seeking ourselves; we only find eternal joy and happiness in serving others: God first, and then our neighbor.
- Need we fear loss? No...for He who tells us to give freely of ourselves also assures us today: *“Amen, I say to you, there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the gospel who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age...and eternal life in the age to come.”*

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- So... “Lord...what must **I** do to inherit eternal life?”

Reading I [Wis 7:7-11](#)

I prayed, and prudence was given me;  
I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.  
I preferred her to scepter and throne,  
and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her,  
nor did I liken any priceless gem to her;  
because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand,  
and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.  
Beyond health and comeliness I loved her,  
and I chose to have her rather than the light,  
because the splendor of her never yields to sleep.  
Yet all good things together came to me in her company,  
and countless riches at her hands.

Responsorial Psalm [Ps 90:12-13, 14-15, 16-17](#)

**R. (14) Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!**

Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

Return, O LORD! How long?

Have pity on your servants!

**R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!**

Fill us at daybreak with your kindness,  
that we may shout for joy and gladness all our days.

Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us,  
for the years when we saw evil.

**R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!**

Let your work be seen by your servants  
and your glory by their children;  
and may the gracious care of the LORD our God be ours;  
prosper the work of our hands for us!

Prosper the work of our hands!

**R. Fill us with your love, O Lord, and we will sing for joy!**

Reading II [Heb 4:12-13](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Indeed the word of God is living and effective,  
sharper than any two-edged sword,  
penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow,  
and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.

No creature is concealed from him,  
but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him  
to whom we must render an account.

Gospel [Mk 10:17-30](#) or [10:17-27](#)

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up,  
knelt down before him, and asked him,

"Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good?

No one is good but God alone.

You know the commandments: *You shall not kill;*

*you shall not commit adultery;*

*you shall not steal;*

*you shall not bear false witness;*

*you shall not defraud;*

*honor your father and your mother."*

He replied and said to him,

"Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth."

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him,

"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."

At that statement his face fell,

and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples,

"How hard it is for those who have wealth

to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his words.

So Jesus again said to them in reply,

"Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle

than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves,

"Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said,

"For human beings it is impossible, but not for God.

All things are possible for God."

Peter began to say to him,

"We have given up everything and followed you."

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you,

there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters

or mother or father or children or lands

for my sake and for the sake of the gospel

who will not receive a hundred times more now in this present age:

houses and brothers and sisters

and mothers and children and lands,

with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come."

**or**

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