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| 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| Wisdom 7:7-11 |
| Hebrews 4:12-13 |
| Mark 10:17-30 |

**A. Text/Context**

* The gospel tells us today of a beautiful story about the rich man. Mark calls him simply as the rich man but in the gospel of Matthew, he is described as the rich young man
* I have read from some documents that this young man is one of the peers or playmates of Jesus during his childhood. This young man was also together with the groom who was married in Cana where Jesus first instituted the sacrament of marriage
* So here comes this rich young man who approaches Jesus and says Good Teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life? This man, young as he is, already aims towards entering the kingdom. He must be the envy of every man in his time, an upright, rich, and eligible bachelor, who then would not like to love him?
* And Jesus repudiates the word good accorded to him. He does not want to appropriate the word good for himself but directs it to God who is the source of all goodness
* Jesus makes this remark so that they will understand that the fountain of good is God himself. Jesus starts to inculcate on the minds of the people that there is somebody who is the source of all goodness and that is the Father in heaven
* So Jesus enumerated the commandments to make the young man recall what are his violations or infractions made
* And to his surprise the young man answered: I have done all this since my youth
* So we see here a young man so faithful and true, obedient to the commandments from the very beginning and because of that Jesus looked at him with love and said to the man You lack one thing: Go sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come follow me
* With these words, his face fell and went away very sad because he had so many possessions. Imagine the frustration and the displeasure of the young man, he must be thinking that after all and everything he did, to be true to the Law of Moses, they are never enough. He must have thought that the God he has is a very demanding God who wants to deprive him all the material joys of living!
* How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of heaven. 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
* The background of this is that there is a place in Palestine where the pathway is so narrow and it looks exactly like an eye of a needle and only people could pass through so that they have to leave their camels behind
* Now Jesus is saying that it is easier for a camel to pass through this path (which is physically impossible) than the rich to enter the kingdom
* The disciples who heard this were very much astonished and surprised because they knew very well that in Judaism material prosperity, wealth, goods are signs of God’s favor to the lives of the people and they now see a contradiction of what Jesus is now teaching them
* And with that they think nobody could be saved
* The disciples thought of so many people who have plenty of possessions in their life but lived a life of charity and so faithful to the laws but Jesus told them, for human beings it is impossible but for God everything is possible
* There it is, the meaning of Jesus words is that one should not be enslaved to the glitters of his riches so that the wealth that the person possesses becomes a burden to him and it hinders one to reach eternal life
* Following Jesus entails a tremendous grace especially in giving up earthly treasures, plans, and ambitions. For human beings, it’s impossible but with the grace of God it becomes possible

**B. Human Situation**

* When Jesus knew that this young man has been faithful to the commandments from the very beginning, he looked at him with love
* Why? Because this young man is already pleasing in the eyes of God as he has already fulfilled the minimum requirement in entering the kingdom, and God is happy with him. But discipleship, serving him means doing more than the minimum
* If we are required to attend mass every Sunday, but we want to do more so we attend mass everyday. If confession is only required once a year but we want to do more so we confess every time we feel the guilty
* For the young man, a total renunciation of his possessions is not his calling, it is meant for those who are given with such gift
* The context of Jesus words is on discipleship and that is the total following of Jesus just like what his disciples did when they leave everything behind in order to follow him
* And Jesus promised a reward of a hundred fold to those who do it
* Certainly, not all of us are called to this kind of life. What Jesus means is for us who are not called to become priests, nuns, religious, monks, and all those who made public vows cannot really abandon material possessions because we also need them in this world
* Rather, it means that we must not be enslaved by our wealth, riches, possessions, the investments we have, be it big or small
* People rich or poor alike have the tendency to hoard money because it really glitters and very tempting and irresistible because with all the money, you can buy all the pleasures of the world
* Giving in to the temptations of quick money has ruined the lives of many people. They do have the money, but they do not have interior peace
* This is the reason why people who are already filthy rich still continue to corrupt themselves because hunger for money is really insatiable. They want more money no matter what the means will be. These people are already slaves to their own wealth
* Once we become a slave to it that is the time that it becomes a burden that will hinder us to enter heaven. Indeed, if a man is like that, what Jesus said in the gospel now holds true, the camel goes ahead without the man riding on its back
* The man will be left behind and can hardly walk because of the burden of his treasures
* Money is not evil in itself. Our wealth, possessions are blessings from God if we obtain them with clean hands and with a clear conscience
* Our first reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon. We remember King Solomon, the richest man ever alive in his time. He did not even ask for treasures, only wisdom, God gave him more
* Money becomes evil when we become attached to it, a slave to it when we begin to neglect the needs of others

**C. Challenge**

* This is the challenge that the gospel brings us today. Whatever riches we have be they large or small should not hinder us to follow the teachings of Jesus. Riches should not blind us to the needs of others. We use money instead to glorify God by helping those who have very little in life
* On one hand Jesus rejects money because it gives us a false sense of security, but on the other hand, it is the same Jesus who gives us material prosperity if we work with clean hands because God pours down blessings upon us without measure for our honest endeavors
* The gospel challenges us to work honestly through the sweat of our brows. Aside from the merits of material rewards through honest work we also gain at the same time the merits of treasures that will never be rotten which the 2nd reading in Hebrews is telling us that we must render into account