

The Thirty Second Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 18:18-27

And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. (KJV)

The Lord Jesus Christ reaffirmed the value of God's commandments in the present Gospel. Furthermore, Jesus showed compassion to the poor. Jesus told the rich man to sell his goods and distribute the funds to the poor.

When the rich man had sold his possessions and gave the funds to the poor, he was to follow the Lord. The rich man's initial interest was to experience eternal life. Achieving eternal life was the basis for the question the man posed to Jesus.

The rich man followed God's commandments during the course of his life. His commitment to God was not complete. The rich man had a firm attachment to his material possessions. Jesus wanted a complete commitment from the man.

The man's material goods had a stronger grip on his life than his interest in following Jesus and seeking eternal life. Each person hearing this Gospel benefits by evaluating the strength of his or her personal interest in eternal life.

Hearing the present Gospel is a basis for believers to assess whether the commandments of God are followed. If a person does not follow the commandments, he or she can begin immediately to follow them.

The present Gospel inspires attentive believers to examine the personal attitude to the poor and unfortunate people in this world. Aiding the poor and unfortunate is a way to lay up treasure in heaven.

Pursuing eternal life is measured by the willingness to completely commit to following Christ. When material interests keep a person from following Jesus Christ, the path to eternal life is in jeopardy.

The Lord Jesus Christ made clear the value of the soul exceeds the value of the whole world. Jesus said: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mk. 8:36)

Contemporary society is very consumer oriented. Gathering material wealth is widely encouraged. Great wealth abounds in parts of the present world while many suffer in great poverty and hardship.

The way a person manages material possessions will show the degree Jesus Christ governs the heart, mind and soul. The use of personal wealth and possessions managed with the love of Christ makes a decided difference in life.

The Lord is clear that a rich person with God's help can enter the Kingdom. The determining factors for entering the Kingdom and experiencing eternal life rests with the person's relationship with Christ and the use of personal wealth.

God's Church proclaims the present Gospel reading each year for believers to look carefully at personal values and commitment to the Lord. Believers can easily be corrupted by material interests.

Interest in accruing personal wealth can blind individuals to suffering neighbors nearby. Devoting sufficient time to raising children can be neglected because parents are seeking greater material wealth.

The hunger in the soul requires Jesus Christ to be the primary interest and goal of life. When interest in material wealth exceeds interest in Christ, experiencing salvation of the soul and eternal life are in jeopardy.

Believers have the opportunity to correct the path of life by repenting and turning to the Lord for assistance. The Lord Jesus Christ welcomes persons seeking to repent and follow Him.

The rich man in the present Gospel made a good beginning in life by following the commandments. The man's ending in life was not as good as it could be because of his strong connection to his material goods.

The rich man was not willing to commit completely to following Jesus Christ. The whole person is committed to Jesus Christ at Baptism. All of life's efforts and possessions are to be managed in a God-pleasing manner.

The Church educates and instructs believers of the actions to take to experience eternal life. The Church nourishes and strengthens believers to ward off the evils that arise in life and put the soul in peril.

Attentive believers take each Gospel lesson to heart and apply the Gospel to daily life. Repentance, confession and communion keep the believer united with Jesus Christ and on the path to eternal life.

Prudent management of material wealth in a God-pleasing manner facilitates the person traveling the path to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. Jesus Christ shines the light on the path to follow and reaffirms reason to hope.

With sincere repentance and commitment to following Christ, eternal life and experiencing the Heavenly Kingdom are possible. The present Gospel reading is a valuable lesson for sober thought and meaningful direction in daily life.

The Thirty Second Sunday after Pentecost. January 17/30, 2022. Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic