

## The Thirty Fourth 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)

God's love, mercy and goodness are necessary for believers to enter His Kingdom and experience eternal life. Even the most faithful followers of God commit sins that require God's forgiveness and mercy.

The present Gospel speaks about the rich man giving up his possessions for the benefit of the poor. He then was to follow Jesus Christ. Every person is rich in blessings from God in some way,

Each person is challenged to give up his or her riches for the benefit of the poor and to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ established the supreme example when while remaining Divine He took on human flesh.

Each person is constantly faced with the choice of become more Christ-like. Daily believers make decisions whether to retain personal riches or to give them away for the benefit of others and to follow Christ.

The battle goes on within the believer's heart, mind and soul as to whether to be imprisoned with personal riches or to be free to follow Christ. Growth in Christ involves being free of impeding restraints.

Growth in Christ requires constant sacrifice. Disposing of personal wealth for the benefit of the poor is a way to lay up treasures in heaven. Being obsessed with retaining personal wealth can be a barrier to unity with Christ.

The Church proclaims the present Gospel lesson for believers to engage in personal self-assessment and examination. Each person answers whether he or she is a prisoner of personal wealth and how this affects the soul.

God's Kingdom and eternal life are the primary goals set forth for Christian believers. Serious believers seek to remove the limits in daily life which impede being fully united with Jesus Christ.

The wisdom and action of Christ unveil in the heart, mind and soul the steps for believers to take for full unity. Complete love of Christ and devotion to Christ are necessary to discern and heed Christ's wisdom

Christ's forgiveness of sins makes unity possible. Repentance is required for forgiveness to take place. Being imprisoned and limited by personal wealth leads to sorrow and barriers to unity with Christ.

True freedom is experienced in Christ. (John 8:26) True peace is found in Christ. (John 14:27) True treasures are in heaven where moth and rust do not consume and thieves do not break in and steal. (Mt. 6:20)

Believers learn in the Church the path to follow to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life. The Church guides, instructs and offers the nourishment for life's journey.

Seriousness is required to follow Jesus Christ. Attentiveness is always necessary. Being alert to the manifestations of Christ in earthly life enables believers to discern the paths to take and the sound decisions to make.

Believers' eyes need to be looking for Christ in daily life. (Rev. 3:18) Believers' ears need to listen for guidance from Christ. (Luke 8:8) At times God will speak in the quiet moments of life. (1 Kings 19:12)

Hunger in the soul exists in each person. God's Church is where to address the hunger. Jesus Christ nourishes believers in the Church. Believers learn the path to freedom in the Church.

The present Gospel offers timeless wisdom for attentive believers. Wise believers take the Gospel to heart. The present Gospel is to be actively applied to daily life.

Following Christ is not the path of sorrow. Following Christ is the path of joy and peace. Placing confidence and faith in Jesus Christ enables the peace and joy to occur. (Matthew 28:20)

The Gospel penetrates the centuries with timeless wisdom. The Gospel shines light on the dark roads of life. The Gospel illumines the heart, mind and soul. Being attentive to the Gospel opens the paths to God's Kingdom and life eternal.

The Serbian St. Sava heeded the Gospel and followed Christ. He gave up the opportunity for earthly riches to seek the heavenly. The Light of Christ shines through St. Sava to the present day.

St. Sava is an enduring example of the wisdom to follow Christ. Present day believers are enriched by St. Sava's example. Today is the opportunity to heed the wisdom to follow Jesus Christ.

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The Thirty Fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Venerable Paul of Thebes. Venerable Gabriel of Lesnovo. January 15/28, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.

Father Rodney Torbic