

MORTALLY WOUNDED

Matins Homily: written in oral form

Job 23:16,17; Mark 10:17-27; Hebrews 4:12,13
Proper 23, Year B

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As Jesus was setting out on his journey, a presumptuous man ran up to the front of the group,.... got in front of Jesus,.... and knelt down, blocking his way – blocking THE WAY.

In Mark's narrative, anything that disrupts Jesus' progress is significant.

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The man quickly asked, “**Good Teacher**, what must **I** do to **inherit** eternal life?”  
Notice the big assuming.....“I” ..... I can control my destiny..... I can get immortality.

– Inherit..... suggests a family entitlement ...and something that is NOT earned.

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Obviously, Jesus is not impressed by this brash, achievement oriented man, and replies in a confrontational manner.

Jesus responds, “Why do you call me good? NO ONE is good but God alone. No ONE but God.....
There is a coded message there.

Jesus continues, You know the commandments...:”

Nearly all Jews knew the commandments.

Jesus begins listing them, but again is interrupted by the man.

“Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth”.

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This is very revealing because it's a pompous lie. NO Human has obeyed all the commandments!

Jesus looked at him. Jesus looked at him, and maybe with pity.

Jesus looked at him,.....AND LOVED HIM!

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Arrogant, Confidence that is so far off the mark, often draws sympathy, pity and even a concerned love.

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We can only guess what Jesus was thinking.

Perhaps, he was thinking, “I hate to pop his bubble, his illusions. I’d rather Not cut him to the core, ..... but ....it is the truth he needs to hear.

And Jesus said, “You lack one thing– [there is only “one” thing missing]; Go Sell what you own, and give it all to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven,..... THEN, .....THEN, come FOLLOW ME.

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The man was SHOCKED!terrified and..... **mortally stricken.**

Job 23:16 –

“God has made my heart faint; The Almighty has terrified me....”

Hebrews 4: 12 – “Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow.....”

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The man heard the word of God, and it hit him hard!

The word / the call ...is to let go/ to surrender.. and follow Jesus, .. and the word for this man meant letting go of **all his possessions**, and he was a very rich man,....**and** Then to give it to those who DO NOT deserve it/ to those who do NOT inherit from their parents / to those who were NOT born lucky.

The word from Christ—the message that cut this man to the core— presented a complete opposite perspective to the man’s philosophy of life and his religion.

He likely believed he had money because he deserved it by his hard work and intelligence; however this is a common misconception.... made by those who are rich.

Malcolm Gladwell in his book, *Outliers*, pops that myth by proving the rich and famous were mostly lucky. They worked hard, but the poor work hard, very hard indeed.

We the affluent desperately want to believe that we earned our lot in life, and that we tend to think that we can earn God’s blessings too, including a place in heaven— **immortality**. And,..... such a pitiful and arrogant assumption is also a cruel condemnation to those who were not born into such good families, who were not so lucky, and who struggle just to get through the day.

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To face and contend with our sense of entitlement and privilege is shocking, just as it was to the rich man.

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This episode exposes the irony of entitlement.

I dare say, most of us here live in an entitlement reality. I include myself in this. We expect the rules to be followed, and if when we follow them, all will work out just fine. Such as good retirement plans will reward us.

When something doesn't go as planned, then we tend to feel sorry for ourselves, as if we are the victim of an indignity. And, we see obstacles as threats to our destiny and power.

Entitlement is possessing the belief that we deserve / we have the right to what we invest in or pay for. We expect a good result for our desires.

Moreover, too often a sense of entitlement leads to bullying and the lust for admiration and adoration.

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Mark's narrative seems to suggest that the rich man wanted a degree of praise from Jesus for being so faithfully religious and committed to the laws. He definitely thought he was entitled to stop Jesus in his tracks and insert his selfish interests upon Jesus.

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The kingdom of God is not full of those who “STOP” Jesus on his journey and audaciously bow down in front of Christ and proclaim their virtues and holiness.

NO, the kingdom is found by letting go and following Christ!

The rich man had to sell everything he had and he was very rich, .....and he was very rich for a reason – he couldn’t let go of it.

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And, Jesus’ demand shocked him. God’s call shocked him, but he rejected the call and chose to go away grieving! grieving,grieving.

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Here we have the Image of HELL.

Toss away Dante’s image of Hell as a fiery Inferno.

This is a better image for Hell. It is the picture of a man refusing to follow Christ and.....choosing to walk away from his salvation.

He possessed Not his wealth, but the flames of frustration, grief and regret as he continued, ,,,,,,continued to walk away.

He is mortally wounded and knows it,... and he accepts it even though the answer and his redemption is before him.

He is lost–doomed.

Christ is before him, and he walks another way.

\*That is Hell, knowing you could have, should have and still won’t.

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It is very difficult to be affluent without a sense of entitlement.

It is truly difficult to have wealth and not hold tightly on to it.

Letting go of our accumulated power and money is much like a camel going through the eye of a needle.

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We must learn to regard ourselves merely as someone loved by God, who is trying to follow Jesus. We must release our power, except our power of love. When we do, we will see all others as equals, ..... and we’ll understand the kingdom of God.

May we come to the point where God is enough, and all is well with our soul.