

**MARK 10:17-27
OCTOBER 14, '18**

“ONE THING”

**THIS IS OUR LECTIONARY GOSPEL READING FOR
TODAY.**

**AS FAR AS I KNOW, IT WASN'T CHOSEN BY THOSE
CREATING THE LECTIONARY BECAUSE THIS IS THE TIME OF
YEAR WHEN MOST CHURCHES ARE IN THE MIDST OF THE
SEASON WE CALL “STEWARDSHIP.”**

**NO, THIS PASSAGE JUST HAPPENS TO FALL ON THIS
SUNDAY AS THE LECTIONARY IS MOVING THROUGH THE
GOSPEL OF MARK.**

**IT SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISING, THOUGH, THAT A
GOSPEL PASSAGE DEALING WITH MONEY & WEALTH WOULD
FALL ON A SUNDAY DURING THE STEWARDSHIP TIME OF
YEAR.**

**IT'S NOT AS IF IT'S UNUSUAL TO HEAR JESUS TALKING
ABOUT SUCH THINGS.**

**BY SOME ESTIMATIONS, OTHER THAN THE KINGDOM OF
GOD, JESUS TALKED ABOUT MONEY & WEALTH MORE THAN
ANYTHING ELSE.**

**IN FACT, IT SEEMS AS IF HE'S CONSTANTLY TELLING US
THAT THE ONE THING THAT CAN BE A BARRIER TO THE
KINGDOM OF GOD MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IS OUR
MONEY & OUR WEALTH.**

IT DOESN'T *HAVE* TO BE, BUT BECAUSE OF OUR NATURE, IT IS.

I READ SOMETHING RECENTLY THAT I DON'T RECALL EVER HEARING BEFORE.

SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT THIS IS THE ONLY TIME IN ALL 4 GOSPELS WHERE JESUS SAYS TO SOMEONE "FOLLOW ME," AND THEY DON'T DO IT.

I FOUND THAT SURPRISING & SO I DID A QUICK EXAMINATION OF THE GOSPELS AND DISCOVERED – SURE ENOUGH - IT'S TRUE.

IN NO OTHER CASE, DOES JESUS EXTEND THE INVITATION TO "FOLLOW ME" AND FIND THAT INVITATION REJECTED.

WE CALL THIS MAN "THE RICH, YOUNG RULER."

WE DON'T GET THOSE DESCRIPTIONS FROM MARK.

MARK JUST LABELS THE INDIVIDUAL AS A "MAN."

MATTHEW CALLS HIM "YOUNG" & LUKE SAYS HE WAS A "RULER."

BUT MARK JUST CALLS HIM A "MAN" – A PERSON – SOMEONE LIKE YOU OR ME – SOMEONE VERY MUCH LIKE ANY ONE OF US.

AND THIS PERSON WHO IS SO VERY MUCH LIKE ANY ONE OF US IS BEING INVITED TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS, AND HE WALKS IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.

AND LET US NOT OVERLOOK THE REASON.

THE REASON THAT THE ONE & ONLY PERSON IN ALL THE BIBLE WHO RECEIVED AN INVITATION FROM JESUS TO “FOLLOW ME” AND REJECTED IT – WAS MONEY.

I THINK THERE IS A PROFOUND LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THAT REJECTION – A REJECTION THAT WAS MADE BY SOMEONE VERY MUCH LIKE ALL OF US.

I CAN’T READ THIS PASSAGE WITHOUT THINKING OF THE PAINTING BY GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS.

WE, AS THE VIEWER, ARE LOOKING AT A MAN FROM BEHIND & SLIGHTLY TO THE RIGHT OF HIM.

HE WEARS A LONG, BEAUTIFUL, FLOWING ROBE.

HIS HEAD IS BOWED LOW IN SADNESS & DEJECTION.

HIS RIGHT ARM HANGS AT HIS SIDE, THE FINGERS THAT ARE ADORNED WITH GLOWING JEWEL-FILLED RINGS ARE CLUTCHED TOGETHER IN A PRECARIOUS GRIP.

WATTS ENTITLED THE PAINTING “*FOR HE HAD MANY POSSESSIONS.*”

HERE IS A PICTURE OF THIS MAN & THE TRAGEDY OF A LIFE THAT COULDN’T LET GO OF THE ONE THING THAT KEPT HIM FROM FOLLOWING JESUS – THE ONE THING THAT KEPT HIM FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

WE DON’T KNOW ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THIS MAN.

WE DON’T KNOW HIS NAME.

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT BECAME OF HIM AFTER HE WALKED AWAY FROM JESUS.

THINGS COULD HAVE BEEN QUITE DIFFERENT FOR HIM. IF HE HAD BEEN WILLING TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION & THE CHALLENGE OF JESUS, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN THERE ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST TO STAND WITH PETER WHEN 3,000 SOULS WERE SAVED.

HE MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN A GOSPEL LIKE MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE OR JOHN.

HE MIGHT HAVE BECOME AN EVANGELIST LIKE ANDREW OR A MISSIONARY LIKE PAUL.

BUT, INSTEAD, HE FADED INTO HISTORY BECAUSE HE COULDN'T TAKE THAT FINAL STEP.

JESUS SAID TO HIM, “*YOU LACK ONE THING.*”

FOR THIS MAN, IT WAS THE FACT THAT HE WAS POSSESSED BY HIS POSSESSIONS.

I THINK WE ARE ALL VERY MUCH LIKE THIS MAN.

WE RECEIVE AN INVITATION FROM JESUS.

HE SAYS TO EACH ONE OF US - “*FOLLOW ME.*”

HE PRESENTS US WITH A CHALLENGE – “*YOU LACK ONE THING.*”

IT MAY BE DIFFERENT FOR EACH ONE OF US.

THERE MAY BE ONE THING THAT YOU NEED TO DO OR ONE THING YOU NEED TO LET GO OF.

THINK ABOUT IT – YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS.

LIKE THIS MAN, IT MAY BE YOUR ENSLAVEMENT TO YOUR MONEY, YOUR WEALTH, YOUR POSSESSIONS, YOUR STUFF.

BUT MAYBE IT’S SOMETHING ELSE.

YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS & YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO ACCEPT THAT CHALLENGE FROM JESUS BECAUSE OF THAT ONE THING THAT KEEPS YOU FROM FOLLOWING HIM COMPLETELY.

BUT HERE’S THE THING – IN THE SAME WAY THAT MATTHEW & LUKE INCLUDE SOMETHING THAT MARK *DOESN’T*, MARK INCLUDES SOMETHING THAT BOTH OF THEM *OMIT*.

MARK SAYS, “*JESUS, LOOKING AT HIM, LOVED HIM...*”

HE LOVED HIM.

HE LOVES YOU.

EVEN THOUGH THERE IS ONE THING THAT KEEPS YOU FROM FOLLOWING HIM COMPLETELY, HE LOVES YOU.

IN FACT, IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU THAT HE WANTS YOU TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACT ON THAT ONE THING.

HE WANTS YOU TO BE HIS FOLLOWER & HE WANTS YOU TO EXPERIENCE LIFE IN ALL OF ITS ABUNDANCE & HE

**KNOWS THAT YOU CAN DO SO ONLY BY ACTING ON THAT
ONE THING.**

WHAT IS IT FOR YOU?

**JESUS CALLS YOU TO FOLLOW HIM & HE EXTENDS A
CHALLENGE TO DO WHAT IT IS YOU NEED TO DO TO
EXPERIENCE LIFE IN ALL OF ITS ABUNDANCE. AMEN.**

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