



October 14, 2018 Mk. 10: 17-31 & Wis. 7: 7-11

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [Love Hears Our Cries](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [The Way of Surrender](#)

[New Melleray Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

[Fr. Rolheiser](#) says; "For the first forty or so years of our lives ... we are still seeking to come to bloom. We are young and looking to grow and thus are like a flower that still needs to take in things in order to bloom and come to seed. There is then more place for assertion, ambition, achievement, for accumulating. The rich young man was still young. His case would be infinitely more tragic had he been an old rich man who declined Jesus' offer.

In the ideal order of things, surrender is for the mature, for the flower that has come to bloom and needs to give off its seed. That is less true of us during the first half of our lives, for we are still building, but it becomes the deepest truth of the second half of life. After forty, understood religiously, life is not about claiming worthiness, or about building things, especially our own egos, but about getting in touch with helplessness." How old am I in this frame of reference?

Mark 10: 17-31

17 As Jesus started on his **journey**, a man ran up to him and **knelt** on his knees before him. "**Good teacher**," he asked, "what must I do to **inherit everlasting life**?" 18 Why do you call me **good**?" Jesus answered. "No one is **good**--except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" 20 Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since my **childhood**." 21 Jesus **looked** at him and **loved** him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, **sell** everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have **treasure** in heaven. Then come, **follow me**." 22 At this the man's face **fell**. He went away sad, because he had many **possessions**. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the **rich** to enter the **kingdom of God!**" 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the **kingdom of God!** 25 It is easier for a **camel** to go through the **eye of a needle** than for a **rich** man to enter the **kingdom of God**." 26 The disciples were even more **overwhelmed**, and **exclaimed**, "Who then can be **saved**?" 27 Jesus **looked** at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." 28 Peter said to him, "We have left everything to **follow** you!" 29 I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left **home** or **brothers** or **sisters** or **mother** or **father** or **children** or **fields** for me and the **gospel** 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (**homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--** and with them, **persecutions**) and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are **first** will be **last**, and the **last first**."

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Do I think the rich young man will eventually understand Jesus and sell everything to follow Jesus when he is 65?

PRAYER: Lord, so often it isn't material things that make me "rich" but my ideas. Ideas that seem so rich in understanding but fail me when it comes to the hard questions of what life is all about. A paradox often slams me into the wall of reality when things are going "well" but I don't feel well. Like the man in this gospel, I come to you over and over with the same question; "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Thank you for liberating me from a doing way of being, to a being way of living. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

JOURNEY: Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place that was supposed to have the answers to the man's question, yet he brings his question to Jesus.

Why do I think that the man came to Jesus with his question instead of going to Jerusalem for the answer? Do I think he was part of the effort to discount Jesus? If so, why? If not, why?

KNELT: To kneel before someone implies deference or a great need in the one who is kneeling.

Is the man showing respect and need? What helps me answer this question? How do I feel about the man?

GOOD: In the scriptures the word good was reserved for God. No one was thought to be totally good but God.
Do I think that the man was setting Jesus up, or really expressing honest feelings? Is there anything in the text that helps me answer this question?

TEACHER: A teacher is one who is recognized as one having expertise in an area that you lack.
What is the man saying when he calls Jesus teacher?

INHERIT: To inherit something from someone is to be given a gift that one did not earn after the giver dies.
What is Jesus teaching the young man and the disciples here?

EVERLASTING LIFE: The Sadducees (the priests of the temple) did not believe in a personal existence beyond space and time.
This man has everything this life could offer. He came up against the reality that there must be more. What motivates the desire for everlasting life?

CHILDHOOD: Childhood is when one is dependent on others for existence, and it is the period of rapid growth. Jesus often uses this image for the proper understanding of a believer.
This man has been on the search for the more of life since childhood. He sees in Jesus someone who seems to have that which he lacks. In what ways am I like him?

LOOKED: Jesus looked on the man with love. This love enabled the man to press on with his search.
How does love enable me to press on with my search? Has anyone looked me you with love and enabled me to grow into more maturity? Can a look stop my search? Why?

LOVE: Love is what Jesus knew that God had for him. Love seems to be the energy that brings everything and everyone into being and holds them in being.
Love calls forth. Jesus was calling forth the man into complete dependence on God. His wealth fooled him into thinking that it was necessary for his well-being. How did this stop the man's growth in faith?

SELL: To sell means to divest oneself of something and to receive something in return. The man could not see how selling everything and giving the profit away could benefit him.
What ideas about God did the man have that were keeping him from understanding? Do I have any ideas about God that get in my way of understanding Jesus' invitation? What do I have to sell and give away?

TREASURE: A treasure is something we value highly or that others would pay dearly to have.
What treasure did the man need to sell? What treasure do I need to sell? Do others see in me a faith that they would pay dearly to have?

FOLLOW: Jesus is always inviting people to follow him. They long for the kind of knowledge of God that he has, yet are puzzled and put off by his teachings on how to achieve this knowledge.
What 'wealth' do I have that gets in the way of following Jesus? What teaching puzzles me or puts me off?

FELL: To fall means to drop. The man's face dropped when he heard Jesus' answer. The light in his eyes dimmed. He begins to move away from Jesus at this point.
Can I imagine the look on the man's face when this happens? Can I also imagine the look on Jesus' face? If I would have been there that day, what might I have thought? If I were Peter, what do I think this would have meant for me?

SAD: The man went away sad. He was presented with an answer he had never imagined to his question. He now had a choice to make. All along he thought his riches were a reward for his good life, and now Jesus was asking him to give it away and enter into a deeper understanding of God.
It is a sad moment when someone realizes that they are limited. What began, as a reaching out for more now becomes a retreat to less. Do I think the man ever went the whole way and eventually did as Jesus instructed?

POSSESSIONS: Possessions are things we think are ours and things we value. We spend energy gaining and keeping them. It is often hard to tell if we own them or they own us.
Did the man's possessions own him or did he own them? Does the word, sad, answer the question? What owns me that have the potential to sadden me?

RICH: To be rich is to have more than is necessary for survival or comfort.

How can riches be a source of joy for all? How can they be a source of anxiety for all? Compare the riches of the man with Jesus' riches.

KINGDOM-OF-GOD: The kingdom of God is the condition where God's will is done. The man's understanding of God and his self-sufficiency were getting in the way of his following Jesus' understanding of God's kingdom.

What gets in my way of understanding God in the same way of Jesus? Is some form of riches or self-sufficiency the problem? What stands in the way of God's kingdom today?



CAMEL: The camel was a large beast of burden in Jesus' world. It carried loads of stuff across long distances. *What 'camels' exist in our days? What 'stuff' do I carry long distances that might impede my journey toward God?*

NEEDLE'S EYE: A needle's eye is a very small opening in a tool that enables us to stitch something together. *What small openings do I need to go through in order to stitch me to God? What stuff do I need to give away in order to do this?*

OVERWHELMED: To be overwhelmed is to be stretched beyond our perceived limits. *What about this scripture passage overwhelms me? What could help me stretch enough to begin to understand it?*

EXCLAIMED: To exclaim is to cry out loudly, often in protest of something. The disciples were certainly protesting the impossibility of the situation. *This passage often finds people calling out, "Yes but!" Do I sympathize with them? Why?*

SAVED: To save is to keep or rescue something that one values. *Jesus just escalated the price making the disciples hopes impossible to realize. Does the gospel seem to do that to me also? How?*

FIXED: Jesus fixed his gaze (looked) now on the disciples (probably with the same love that he had for the man) and reassured them that with God it was possible.

Peter recounts that they have left all to follow him whereas the man could not. Does the witness of Jesus' life in the gospels enable me to respond like Peter?

GAZE: To gaze is to look at someone or something intently and often with prolonged intensity. *How does scripture study enable me to feel the gaze of Jesus? Is it a look of love?*

HOME-BROTHER-SISTER-MOTHER-FATHER-CHILDREN-PROPERTY: All these represent affirmation, security, a sense of belonging. At one level they give us our being and our place in the world. *How can these realities be given up and yet restored by following Jesus' invitation? Have I ever experienced giving up someone/thing in order to follow the gospel; only to find that same someone/thing restored many times?*

GOSPEL: The gospel is literally 'the good news'. It lets us in on God's understanding on how things should be. *Has this text been good news for me? Can I understand God's ways a little better now that I have studied this passage of scripture? What still is hard for me to grasp?*

PERSECUTIONS: To be persecuted is to be harmed for doing or believing someone/thing. The disciples saw Jesus persecuted and killed for believing the way he did. *Any time someone goes against the accepted ways of believing or doing they are open to resistance. What about this scripture could cause me to be persecuted today? In what way?*

FIRST / LAST: First and last imply a process. *What does Jesus do to my process of growth in faith in this text?*

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mk. 10:31 // Mt. 19:16-30; Lk. 18: 18-30; Mk. 10: 19 // Ex. 20: 12-16; Dt. 5: 16-21; Mk. 10:23 // Prov. 11:28; Mk. 10:31 // Mt. 19:30; Lk. 13:30;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Wis. 7:7-11; [Ps. 90: 12-17](#); Heb. 4:12-13; Mk. 10: 17-30; Revised Common Lectionary: Job 23: 1-9, 16-17; [Ps. 22: 1-15](#); Heb. 4: 12-16; Mk. 10: 17-31;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Mk. 10.17–31: Riches and entering the kingdom of God (Mt 19.16–30; Lk 18.18–30). 17: Eternal life, life with God (the only eternal being); here treated as synonymous with entering the kingdom of God (v. 24). 18: Why do you call me good? Jesus' reply is going to be based on the Torah that the young man has known all his life; he does not need a new teaching from Jesus, but rather the old teaching from the God who is good. 19–20: The commandments here are from the second half of the Ten Commandments (Ex 20.1–17), those concerning relations among people, but the man's performance of deeds for others has fallen short of the care of the poor (cf. Deut 24.17–22; Am 2.6 and many other passages in the Hebrew Bible; 2 Cor 8,9; Jas 2.1–7; Acts 2.43–47; 4.32–5.11). 21: Loved him, perhaps meaning "wished for his good." 25: Contrary to a commonly cited medieval legend, there is no narrow "Eye of the Needle" gate in Jerusalem. A Talmudic parallel (b. Ber. 55b) uses a needle's eye and an elephant to make the same point. Pg. 81. Levine, Amy-Jill & Brettler, Marc Zvi. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#). NY: Oxford Univ. Press. 2011

The soul that waits upon the Lord is the soul that is entirely surrendered to Him, and that trusts Him perfectly. Therefore we might name our wings the wings of Surrender and of Trust. If we will only surrender ourselves utterly to the Lord, and will trust Him perfectly, we shall find our souls "mounting up with wings as eagles" to the "heavenly places" in Christ Jesus, where earthly annoyances or sorrows have no power to disturb us. - Hannah Whitall Smith

The evil of riches, then, for institutions, for nations, for individuals, is that those who possess or seek to possess almost invariably overvalue possessions and so cease to live creatively. They stop loving God with all the heart and all the soul and all the strength and all the mind. They stop loving their neighbors, too. When you find a person of means who is not either a self-centered bore or a low creature, you may know that God has worked a miracle.- Bernard Iddings Bell (1886-1958), *God is Not*

We can have democracy in this country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we cannot have both." - Louis Brandeis

To be wealthy and honored in an unjust society is a disgrace. - Confucius

When Christianity aligns itself with power (and the mindset of power, which is the need to be right and certain one is right) there's simply very little room for the darkness of faith; that spacious place where God is actually able to form us. So when we speak of paradox, I'm trying to open up that space where you can "fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31), because YOU are not in control and only God is right. That is always the space of powerlessness, vulnerability, and letting go. Faith happens in that wonderful place, and hardly ever when we have all the power and can hold no paradoxes. Thus you see why faith will invariably be a minority and suspect position. Richard Rohr

Wisdom doesn't just "know"; it savors what it distinguishes, it savors the taste thus making it an experience taken into the heart. Wisdom's goal is interior peace through loving possession of the truth. [Fr. Jonah Wharff](#) 9/2/18

The great paradox of life is that those who lose their lives will gain them. This paradox becomes visible in very ordinary situations. If we cling to our friends, we may lose them, but when we are nonpossessive in our relationships, we will make many friends. When fame is what we seek and desire, it often vanishes as soon as we acquire it, but when we have no need to be known, we might be remembered long after our deaths. When we want to be in the center, we easily end up on the margins, but when we are free enough to be wherever we must be, we find ourselves often in the center. Giving away our lives for others is the greatest of all human arts. This will gain us our lives. Henri Nouwen

Obedience is the personal response to an imperative made within the context of a social system. The authority represents the collective good or the shared goals which embrace both the "superior" and the "subject." Participation and sharing in the group is made possible only by an enacted commitment to its life which becomes real and concrete in trusting investment in the embodied expressions and symbols of the group or community. The autonomy and freedom of the person is expressed in the gift of self which is offered in the act of obedience. The person is changed and transformed in this exchange to the depth and extent that the desire or will of another has been integrated and assimilated with one's own will. Fr. David Bock O.C.S.O. Talk on obedience given to the AIC on 8/11/12

The demand issuing from personally experienced moments of truth is the new world we have inherited. The eye of the needle. If threaded, it will sew. Pg.81. Fuller, Ross: *The Eye of the Needle*. Parabola 12/07

In the family of Jesus, God is the father. In Jesus' definition of his true family in Mark 3:35, there is no mention of a father. Likewise, in Jesus' promise of rewards for those who have left everything to follow him, there is mention of "houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields" (Mark 10:30). But there is no mention of fathers. The fatherhood of God the true father, the social values of patriarchy, hierarchy, and class consciousness are made relative at best. Pg. 143. Harrington, Daniel –Keenan, James [Jesus and Virtue Ethics](#). NY. Sheed & Ward Book. 2002.

Truth revealed must enter into the fires of testing; this is the only way that truth can be confirmed in the soul. Anonymous

Truth is not something external to which we need only assent; rather, it is something in which we participate and for which we must take responsibility. Luke Timothy Johnson. *How is the bible True?* Commonweal, 5/22/09 Pg. 15.

Gospel according to the Hebrews: The second of the rich men said to him, "Teacher, what good thing can I do and live?" He said to him, "Sir, fulfill the law and the prophets." He answered, "I have." Jesus said, "Go, sell all that you have and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me." But the rich man began to scratch his head, for it did not please him. And the Lord said to him, "How can you say, I have fulfilled the law and the prophets, when it is written in the law: You shall love your neighbor as yourself; and lo, many of your brothers, sons of Abraham, are clothed in filth, dying of hunger, and your house is full of many good things, none of which goes out to them?" And he turned and said to Simon, his disciple, who was sitting by him, "Simon, son of Jonah, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Gospel of the Naassenes V.7.26.

"Why do you call me good? One there is who is good - my Father who is in heaven - who makes his sun to rise on the just and on the unjust and sends rain on the pure and on sinners."

Throckmorton, Burton, Jr. Ed. *Gospel Parallels*. NY. Thomas Nelson Pub. 1949.

Rabbi Lewis Solomon authors a chapter called "Jesus: A Prophet of Universalistic Judaism" in the book edited by Bruteau, Beatrice. *Jesus Through Jewish Eyes*. Maryknoll, NY. Orbis Books. 2001. Rabbi Solomon discusses Luke 10: 23-25 on page 162. This book is a good way to see Jesus through contemporary Jewish eyes.

Another book edited by Le, Beau, Brian F. et al ed. *The Historical Jesus Through Catholic and Jewish Eyes..* Harrisburg, PA. Trinity Press International. 2000, will expand your understanding of this text on pages 116-153.

EMPOWERMENT: The alignment of our will with God's must happen at a heart level, through authentic choices of faith that are empowered by God. We cannot make this empowerment happen. But, as I have said, we can pray for it, seek it actively, open our hands for it, and try our best to live it. We can confront our addictions as honestly as possible; we can claim responsibility for the choices we make, and we can turn to God. It is the best way we can reach out for God with humble dignity, the most effective means by which we can nourish our receptivity and responsiveness to grace.

May, Gerald G. M.D. *Addiction and Grace*. N.Y. Harper & Row, 1988, Page 140.

Pursuing happiness in contemporary America is an expensive undertaking. Money is the key that opens the doors to earthly delights. Whatever else one may mean by the American Dream, financial independence offers the conditions that make for sweet sleep. Ghetto youths fantasizing athletic scholarships or a spot on the charts of the Top Twenty Hits all understand that the payoffs come in multimillion-dollar contracts. When age dims the capitalist dream and harsh reality crushes ambitions, still nobody is deprived of the illusions. Even welfare recipients are able, with a mere few dollars to imagine themselves winning the constantly multiplying lotteries. Pursuing happiness has grave international implications as well. Americans are not content to let happiness come to them; we move about desperately seeking fun and action. That takes not only time and human energy, but natural resources. In principle, we consider ourselves peacemakers, pledging ourselves to programs designed to quell hostilities. When our way of life is threatened, as was the case with the invasion of Kuwait's oil fields, our leaders rally others of like mind in a belated crusade, not designed to liberate temples, but oil fields. Economy, not theology is our most vital interest.

Berzonsky., Vladimir *An Orthodox Christian View of American Values*. Chicago Studies, Vol. 30. August 1991. Pages 196-7.

Much more positively, Jesus wanted to go well beyond the limited reciprocation one finds characteristic of Jewish law—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—and (particularly as expressed in the Sermon *on* the Mount) wanted to extend moral behavior out beyond the hitherto marked outer bounds. One should not simply be restrained in the face of violence and unfair treatment; one should return hate with love. One should not simply give alms to the needy (the widows and orphans); one should give and give and give, until one has no more to give. One should not simply keep one's hands off the wives of others; one should not even lust after them in one's heart. One should not simply help those in one's own group; one should (as is shown by the parable of the Good Samaritan) extend one's aid to all people. One should not simply worship God; one should give up everything and follow him. Question: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17) Answer: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mark 10:21).

This is radical stuff indeed and, as scholars point out, must be framed in the context in which Jesus thought and lived and spoke (Ramsey 1950) His was an apocalyptic age, one that expected the Messiah and the coming judgment of God, and Jesus himself preached in this context. His human nature (as opposed to his divine nature) limited his understanding of God's plans, for clearly Jesus himself expected the end to come soon—within his own lifetime or at least that of his followers. Realization of his limited perspective may finally have come to him on the cross, but his commands were directed toward hearers whom Jesus expected would soon be facing the end of time. For this reason, we do not find Jesus offering either a system directly equivalent to the Jewish law or a philosophical system as one finds in the writings of the great Greek philosophers. It is true that there are some dicta of practical importance—about divorce, for instance, and his evading the trap of sedition by advising his followers to render unto Caesar those things that are Caesar's. Generally

speaking, however, in the preaching of Jesus we do not find an articulated moral system for ongoing societies—not even for those of yesterday, let alone for the technology-fueled mega-groups within which we live today.

Ruse, Michael. Can a Darwinian be a Christian? Ethical Issues. Zygon. June 2000. Pages 289-90.

In the first half of Mark, Jesus travels almost aimlessly in and around Galilee. But after Peter recognizes that Jesus is the Christ, near the villages of Caesarea Philippi (Mk. 8: 27-30), Jesus begins to journey purposefully to Jerusalem, keeping close to the Jordan River. In Mark 10 he travels from Galilee to northern Judea, crosses the Jordan eastward into Peraea (present-day Jordan) and continues heading southward on his way to Jerusalem (Mark 10: 1, 17, 32).

Brown, Scott. The Secret Gospel of Mark. Biblical Archaeology Review. 1-2/06 Pg. 47.

A very interesting article about Jesus' awareness of the danger he and the disciples were in because of his preaching, by James Tabor is called [A Jesus Hideout in Jordan](#)".

Together

I thought it good fortune to go to the Magic monastery for Christmas. But at the foot of the hill sat a blind beggar, and when I drew near to give him some money, I heard his ask, "Who will lead me into the heart of God" I couldn't go on. Who would lead him into the heart of God? I sat down in front of him. I took his hands, "Together," I said. "Together we'll go into the heart of God." Pg. 54.

Theophane. Theophane the Monk. NY. Crossroads. 2003..

We do not know where the Rich Man who came to Jesus lived, what he possessed. Only that he had many possessions. But we can appreciate what Jesus was asking of him. I might suggest he was asking more than an adjustment in his investment portfolio. He was asking for a change in his identity. He was the Rich Man. But who would he be if he gave it all to the poor and went to follow Jesus? Who would he be then? A vast empty space opened up in that picture of the future. It would be like walking off from a high place out into that empty space. And who can do such a thing? What would allow a person to risk it? It would require a great deal of trust, and where does one find a basis for such trust? It is at this point that we can appreciate the saying that says that it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And yet, all things are possible with God. That seems to be a clue to the answer of the trust question. Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pg. 147.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs. 145-148.. To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2009. Pgs. 169-172.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2005. Pgs. 153-157.

Gill, Jean. Images of Myself. NY. Paulist Press. 1982. AWARENESS; Pg. 29 THE JOURNEY: Page 135 METAMORPHOSES: Page 143

Mitchell, Stephen. The Enlightened Heart. NY. Harper & Row. 1989. THE MOUNTAIN OF RELEASE: Page 67 ETERNITY: Page 95 RADISHES: Page 99