

in Jesus is loving them. In hard times, I'm not alone, but I'm loved and precious to Jesus and his sisters and brothers. In good times, I'm not alone but I can celebrate with Jesus and his sisters and brothers. Thank God he hasn't kept the love Father, Son and Spirit have for each other to themselves, but they've reached out to include us.

I like this story because it once again reminds me that my possessions, my wealth, influence and prestige doesn't love me. That's why all the wealth and possessions in the world will leave you wanting more, feeling there's something missing.

Jesus can, and does love you. He has sold everything, being crucified, with nothing to his name. Not even a good reputation. Jesus was executed as a criminal among criminals, because his executors wanted him forever to be shamed. Jesus sold everything because no possession was worth substituting for loving you. WOW!!!

Let us pray. Jesus grow in me that same attitude you have so that I don't substitute any possession in place of loving you, of being known by your love for me. Heal me of my insecurities which have me hanging on so tight to things hoping they'll keep me safe. Heal me that I don't look to think for

comfort but that I always look to you; your forgiveness, your grace, your mercy, your love and then seek to share them with everyone I share life with. Especially with our sisters and brothers. Thank you for not keeping to yourself, but that you were prepared to give up everything that we might have the fullness of life in your loving presence. Living that life today, looking forward to celebrating it in your presence in the future, where all that inhibits our relationships will be gone and we'll love as we are loved by you. Amen.

11 October 2009

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Mark 10:17-31



What's the point Jesus was getting at with this story? I don't think it was that being rich is wrong. I've noticed rich and poor alike are tempted to seek salvation and freedom through possessions, and only end up being possessed by their possessions.

As I was discussing this story with a group one person recalled the problems they had when loading some camels onto a boat. In the time it took them to get a handful of camels onto the boat they had loaded two semi-trailer loads of sheep. (I wouldn't take this story as gospel, it might have only been one semi load!)

That's when it struck me, is Jesus highlighting our attitude. Our attitude to do things; 'my way', cause we all know 'my way' is the right way. And if it isn't 'my way' then it's the highway.

Is that why Jesus said; "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:25) Was Jesus wanting to compare our attitude to that of a camel who had a mind of it's own and wasn't all that interested in following.

Does the more wealth I have give me the illusion that I'm in control of my life and can make the choices

that suit me, to my advantage? Does the more wealth and influence I have give me the illusion that I'm in control? Which could easily give me the illusion that life revolves around me, and what I want. And surprisingly what I want becomes a need I have to have. That's a very roundabout way of say; 'I become my own god'.

And of course that is the original sin. Which isn't all that original; playing god, but not finding fulfilment. Did you notice that this person was wanting more. He needed more. He felt something was missing in his life. 'Jesus, what's missing in my life?' He has an empty yearning, there

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

has to be more. Playing god will always leave you feeling unfulfilled.

Jesus doesn't get angry with this person, but when he looks at him what was his attitude? 'He loved him'. And then Jesus sets about setting this person free – "Go sell everything you have". (Mark 10:21) To which my initial response is; hang on! He can't really mean everything. Surely God knows I have needs and if I sell everything how will I meet my needs. Jesus has just nicely hit at the attitude he wants to shape.

In the Lord's Prayer what do we ask God to do? 'Your kingdom come.' 'Your will be done'. 'Your will be done on earth as in heaven', what comes after that?

'Give us today our daily bread'. What sort of bread?

When the Children of Israel were on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land they were only given enough bread for each day. If they gathered enough for a week, what happened? It

Where do you find security and comfort?

went rotten. They quite literally had to depend on God to meet their needs, and for forty years each morning they woke up and the ground was covered with 'manna'. Enough, not just for one person, but some people estimate the population at that time to be in the reign of a million people. To me that's mind boggling; providing enough food for a million people, in a desert. What

incredible trust they had to have.

You'll never guess what happened when they reached the Promised Land and started farming? More and more they stopped depending on God, and more and more they started depending on a good harvest, on

accumulating wealth so that they could be comfortable and secure. More and more they looked

to their possessions to give them the good life, to make them comfortable and secure.

If I was to sell everything and give it to the poor, I reckon I'd start feeling very uncomfortable and definitely insecure. I've got to have something to manage my needs. It only sounds reasonable.

BUT...

But the promise of wealth is an illusion. Every funeral I go to reminds me of that; because I'm yet to bury a wealthy person. When I comes to wealth we are all equal in death; we possess nothing and the really big question becomes who owns me, who possesses me.

As a disciple of Jesus it is easy to answer that, isn't it. We all know the answer; Jesus.

Jesus has taken ownership of me. I'm part of his kingdom and he owns me. He has paid with his own life that I might live with him as one of the Father's loved precious children. That's my security and comfort, and nothing in all creation can ever take that from me.

One day I'll be separated from all the possessions I've accumulated as I've wondered through this

desert on my way to the Promised Land, but I'll never be separated from the one who lead me all through that wilderness. I'll never be separated from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord. I won't be separated, I'll only be brought closer, to enjoy and

Jesus doesn't sap the life out of us.

even more intimate and fulfilling relationship. I'll be filled to overflowing. We may come into life with nothing, but we certainly don't have to leave this life with nothing. Jesus has come that I might leave embraced in the Father's love. And not only me, but I have the wonderful opportunity to invite all my family and friends to join me. To live embraced by the Father's love. To

live knowing deep in your soul that Jesus owns you, that Jesus is your security, that Jesus is your King, who has promised himself to you.

And Jesus doesn't sap the life out of us like our possessions. One thing I've discovered about possessions is that they require constant attention, regular servicing, and they still wear out, or simply go out of date. Thank

God Jesus doesn't require life sapping maintenance. Thank God Jesus never wears out or goes out of date. Being loved by God through Jesus never goes out of date. Being loved doesn't go out of date, nor out of fashion, but I'm energised and enthused by my loving relationships.

Thank God the church is community of people empowered to love each other as God