

Can't Inherit Eternal Life- Gift

Intro. There is a television commercial showing a man checking his mail. The letters stick to his hand, then the mailbox and then the garbage can. As hard as he tries to shake them off, he can't. Some days I feel the same way about my phone. It's like it is stuck to me. Or more truthfully, **I** am stuck to **it**.

The man in the gospel was stuck to his things too.

I. He was on a journey, a journey to holiness.

Apparently he worked hard to follow the commandments and felt like he was on the right path. He came to the Lord asking for the next challenge. He was disappointed to learn it involved a bigger commitment than he willing or able to make at that time. He didn't see *that* coming. Mark tells us something that neither Matthew nor Luke tells us in their recounting of the same story. Mark wrote

Jesus looked and him and "loved him." He *loved* the man because he was living a good life even though he was unable to make the radical step of giving up his possessions and going on the road with the Lord. The Lord was sad and told the disciples how having a lot of possessions makes it difficult to get to heaven. It shocked the disciples. The prevailing understanding of the time – and of some today – is wealth was a sign of God's favor; those who didn't have it, well, *not* so favored. The Lord didn't stop there. He said it is difficult for *everyone* to enter the kingdom of God. Peter and the others had given up everything and now thought they had no chance to enter the kingdom of God. Left unsaid was what do they get for their sacrifice? The Lord's promise of more homes, lands and family was not one the disciples could put in the "bank." Being with the

Lord they already knew something about the persecution part. I wish I could tell Peter and the disciples how at every parish, I have been blessed with a richness of friendships and experiences I could never have imagined.

Concl. Although some of us might be, most of us are not called to an ascetical lifestyle either, living as the Lord did. But we can do some things without moving to the desert and living on honey and grasshoppers. We can learn *not* to put our trust in possessions to make us successful, popular or powerful *or* to get us saved. We *can* use the blessings we receive to serve others. The teaching is *not* an indictment of people who have things. You and I know people who are successful and have possessions, but are not stuck to them. They give generously to support many projects others aren't

able to. It depends on what we do with our blessings. The number of people in our parish who are involved in so many ministries in our community is a clear sign of that. The good man thought he could *inherit* eternal life. He couldn't and we can't either.

Entering the kingdom is a gift from God," [Sacra Pagina, Mark, p. 303] not reserved for a few, but for all who want to enter. Like everything worthwhile, there is a cost however. What are we willing to give up to enter the kingdom of God? **It doesn't have to be everything, but it has to be something.**

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