



60B PENTECOST 20B – MIDWEEK LITURGY

A wise heart

Abstract

29 “Truly I tell you,” 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—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Mark 10:29-31 (NIV)

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GOSPEL*Mark 10:17–31*

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

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 great wealth.

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 someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “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 Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”

²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” 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—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.” ⁱⁱ

Response

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

60B Pentecost 20B – Midweek liturgy

A WISE HEART

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2021 | PENTECOST 20 | PROPER 23 | YEAR B

Old Testament & Psalm, Option I

Old Testament Job 23:1–9, 16–17

Psalm Psalm 22:1–15

or

Old Testament & Psalm, Option II

Old Testament Amos 5:6–7, 10–15

Psalm Psalm 90:12–17

New Testament Hebrews 4:12–16

Gospel Mark 10:17–31ⁱⁱⁱ

A rich man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus challenges him to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor. The man feels unable to do this; he is too attached to what he has. This, Jesus says, makes it hard for rich people to enter the kingdom; following him involves sacrifice and letting go.

We are reminded that eternal life cannot be bought or achieved through completing a list of tasks but only by being in relationship with God. Loving God is the most important thing we can do, and that must come first.

This week we explore what can get in the way of our relationship with God.

	<p>Pre-Service TIS #717 – “Give thanks with a grateful heart”</p>
	<p>Introit</p>
	<p>Greeting</p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all</p> <p>and also with you</p>
	<p>We Gather</p> <p>Satisfy us with your steadfast love that we may rejoice and be glad all our days, and gain a wise heart.</p> <p>Come and meet the Lord who loves us and is all we need. Come, rejoice and be glad as we worship together.</p>

	<p>Acknowledgements</p> <p>A gathering prayer Loving Lord, you know us better than we know ourselves. As we come together to worship you, help us to explore our relationship with you. May your words and challenges strengthen and affirm us. May your love sustain us and guide us. May our worship be acceptable to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.</p>
<p>Chorus 1, Chorus 1,</p>	<p>Hymn/song P&W #40 – “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases” (sung twice)</p>
	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever heard or used a strange phrase to illustrate something? For example: ‘It’s like herding cats.’ There can be few if any people who actually herd cats, but we can imagine trying cats are not known for doing what you ask of them! Other sayings include: ‘Go on a wild goose chase’, ‘Get a taste of your own medicine.’ <i>Invite people to suggest sayings they know and/or use.</i> • How about this one ‘Pass a camel through the eye of a needle’? What does that mean? Depending how you imagine this, it might be rather funny • (<i>show a video clip</i>). • You probably know that this was a phrase that Jesus used. It is part of today’s reading(s), and I would like to think Jesus intended it to be amusing, and relatively easy to understand. He does use it to make an important point. That is what we shall explore in today’s worship. <p>A prayer of approach Lord God, the rich man had obviously been pondering. His thoughts brought him to his knees before you. He thought eternal life was something he could achieve. But he suspected there was more to know. And he was right! We come today with our ponderings, to bow before you, to ask you to meet with us here, and teach us with words of eternal life. Amen.</p>
	<p>We say Sorry</p> <p><i>Invite people to spend some time thinking about things that get in the way of their relationship with God. pray:</i></p>

	<p>Lord, there are so many things that can get in the way of our relationship with you. We offer them to you now and ask that you will forgive us and show us new ways to always put you first. Whatever they are, Lord, grant us your wisdom, Lord. Amen.</p>
	<p>Words of Assurance As we bow before you now, our hearts contrite: All things are possible with God. You call us to yourself and bless us with the assurance that our sins are completely washed away in you. All things are possible with God.</p> <p>Our sins are forgiven Thanks be to God Amen.</p>
	<p>Readings</p> <p>Gospel Mark 10:17–31</p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord Thanks be to God</p>
<p>Verse 1, Chorus x2, Verse 1, Ending,</p>	<p>Hymn/song/video Simple living (A rich man came to ask of Christ) Keith & Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend TIS #717 – “Give thanks with a grateful heart”</p>

Reflection

What Must I DO to Receive Life?

Mark 10:17-31

An expert in diamonds happens to be seated on a plane
Next to a woman with a huge diamond on her finger.
The man said, "Can you tell me about your beautiful diamond."
She replied, "This is the famous Klopman diamond,
one of the largest in the world.
But there is a curse that comes with it."
"Oh - What is the curse?" the expert asked,
"It's my husband, Mr. Klopman." she replied

Ok, so that's just a funny story.

But seriously the true curse of any kind of valuable possession
is its capacity to steal our hearts and souls.

The rich young man in today's reading
is one of those unique characters from the Bible

that have come to represent greed.

So unwilling was he to part with earthly wealth
that he sold his soul to keep his money.
He wanted to be saved
but couldn't or wouldn't if it meant losing his possessions.

But let's not judge this young fellow too harshly.
There is in fact a lot that impresses me when about the rich young man.
He was devout, He asked all the right questions,
He understood the Law and he understood Jesus' teaching.
But in the end love of money kept him out of God's kingdom.
Christianity has come to regard him as a moral coward.

So, this week I asked myself
Is that conclusion too simple.
Is there are a lot of good things to be said about our rich young man.
We have to be impressed by the fact that
having talked with him only a few minutes,
Mark tells us that Jesus looked upon him and loved him.
That doesn't sound like a scathing criticism to me.

And, I think that we also need to remember that
to this young Jewish man,
Jesus was not the Son of God.

He was simply a new prophet,
with an exciting message, ,
and a magnetic personality.

The story of the rich young man could be seen to be saying
that rich people cannot have eternal life or a share in God's kingdom.
Jesus is quite clear in his direction:
go and sell everything;
and, of course, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle
than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'
So, are all rich people doomed?
And how rich is rich is rich?

Look a little more closely
and we see that the man's problem
was not the fact that he had great wealth,
but the importance this had in his life.

Jesus' directive to give up his riches was not a statement about wealth
or even lifestyle per se;
it was a challenge about what took priority in the man's life.
And that was his wealth.

Although he wanted to inherit eternal life,
 and although he knew God's commandments and the Law of Moses,
 his riches were more important to him.
 Why was this?

Perhaps it was the status, security, comfort or power they gave him.
 But we needn't dwell on that question,
 because again it is not those things of themselves that caused the problem.

Whatever it was, it got in the way of his relationship with God.
 It prevented him developing or deepening that relationship.
 That is the challenge posed here.

Whatever it is that gets in the way
 of developing or deepening our relationship with God
 is the equivalent for us of the rich man's wealth.
 Will we take up the challenge to reflect on our lives
 and see if there is anything that qualifies?

Having said that –
 and as good and important
 as such personal reflection and subsequent repentance is –
 there is something else we need to note from this passage.
 And that is the camel – the camel and the eye of a needle.
 We don't need to explain it, it is a proverb.
 maybe a very humorous one.

We just need to understand the concept:
 some things are just not possible.
 No one can earn the right to eternal life.
 The rich man stood no chance – and not because of his riches.
 It is not possible.

Not possible for mortals, for humans, that is.
 But with God, all things are possible.
 Jesus' words remind us that God's kingdom
 is open to everyone who puts God at the centre of all they do
 even though we know that this is, and always will be,
 work in progress!
 Amen

Prayers for all people

Giver of life,
 we think of our world today –
 where there can be so much greed
 and so little justice.

We pray for those for whom money is their great motivator,
 while other concerns get pushed aside.
 We ask for a renewed compassion

	<p>among those whose hearts seem so focused on their own gain, to the detriment of others.</p> <p>We pray for situations we have heard about this week, where wickedness and corruption hold sway, and where those who have little are trampled under the heels of the powerful.</p> <p>We ask for your light to spread into the darkest places – the remote areas scarred by suffering we know nothing about, the anguish behind closed doors of respectability, the evil that can lurk within human hearts.</p> <p>Jesus, you defeated darkness by confronting it on the cross, and then rising to brilliant life again. May we be your torch bearers, showing those around us a better way of living. In your name. Amen.</p>
	<p>The Peace The peace of the Lord be always with you. And also with you</p>
<p>Chorus 1, Verse 1, Chorus 1, Verse 2, Chorus 1,</p>	<p>Hymn/song Hymn TIS 647 SA 25 - Comfort, comfort, all my people</p>
	<p>The Invitation</p> <p>Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another.</p> <p>This is the joyful feast of the Lord. People come from east and west, from north and south, and eat at the table of the Lord. (based on Luke 13:29)</p> <p><i>Let us pray</i> Be present, risen Lord Jesus, as you were with your disciples, and make yourself known to us in the breaking of the bread; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.</p>
	<p>The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.</p>

	<p>Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise</p>
	<p>It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God, for you have suffered with us and tasted despair that we might taste mercy and grace.</p> <p>Your living and active word created all things; and everything lies exposed before your eyes. When our forebears put their trust in you you rescued them, for all things are possible for you.</p> <p>You sent your Son, Jesus, into the world, preaching your message and calling everyone to follow. His word cuts to the core of all things, exposing the addictions that bind us and blind us and hold us back from investing all we have in serving you.</p> <p>When Jesus was brought down to the dust of death, dying in the horror of abandonment, you raised him to life again, and through him we have the confidence to come into your presence and look to your grace for our life.</p>
	<p>And so, with all the company of heaven and earth we rejoice before you and praise your holy name saying:</p> <p>Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.</p>
	<p>Blessing the elements</p> <p>At this table we bear witness to the love which has been poured into our hearts and lives. We remember when Jesus washed his disciples' feet and sat down at a table to share the meal with them. At that meal - he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."</p> <p>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. We remember and we give thanks for such outpouring of love .</p>

	<p>Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, O God, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that they may be for us the life of Christ - his life in us.</p> <p>Renewed by his life and recreated in his image, we set our minds on fulfilling your purpose for us and for this world of which we are a part. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen</p>
	<p>THE LORD'S PRAYER</p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. *Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.</p>
	<p>THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD</p> <p><i>lift the bread and breaks it in full view of the people, saying:</i> The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.</p> <p><i>lift the cup in full view of the people, in saying:</i> The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.</p> <p><i>hold out the bread and the cup to the people and says:</i> The gifts of God for the people of God.</p>
	<p>LAMB OF GOD Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.</p> <p>Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.</p> <p>Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.</p>
	<p>THE COMMUNION</p> <p><i>If the people are to serve one another, say to all:</i></p>

	<p>Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.</p> <p><i>Words such as the following are said before or during the distribution.</i></p> <p>The body of Christ, given for you. Amen.</p> <p>The blood of Christ, given for you. Amen.</p> <p><i>Optional Lines</i></p> <p><i>“Remember that you are God's beloved child.”</i></p> <p><i>“Remember that for you Jesus came, for you Jesus died, for you Jesus rose and Jesus is in heaven praying for you.”</i></p> <p><i>“May the Holy Spirit give you everything you need to follow Jesus.”</i></p> <p><i>“Remember that you are God's beloved child and when God looks on you, God smiles.”</i></p> <p><i>“May you always know how much Jesus loves you.”</i></p> <p><i>“Jesus loves you too.”</i></p> <p><i>“Jesus knows your name.”</i></p>
	<p>PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION</p> <p>Let us pray: Holy God, we give you thanks that we have been fed and renewed by Christ's life in us and we go now to share that life with others.</p> <p>Send us forth equipped with the power of your Spirit to follow Jesus, and to spread the message of his love to all whom we meet. In his name we pray. Amen</p>
<p>Verse 1, Verse 2, Verse 3, Verse 4,</p>	<p>Hymn TIS #215 (AHB 144) – “You servants of God, your master proclaim”</p>
	<p>We are sent out</p> <p>Loving God, who sees us and loves us just as we are, be with us and go with us, guide us and challenge us to draw closer to you, and to be and live more like Christ. Amen.</p> <p>May the Lord bless us and keep us May His face shine upon us and be gracious to us May he lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace</p>

	Benediction
	Thank you

Alternative Response

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Ok, so that's just a funny story.

But seriously the true curse of any kind of valuable possession
 is its capacity to steal our hearts and souls.

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 that have come to represent greed.

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 that he sold his soul to keep his money.
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 but couldn't or wouldn't if it meant losing his possessions.

But let's not judge this young fellow too harshly.
 There is in fact a lot that impresses me when about the rich young man.
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 He understood the Law and he understood Jesus' teaching.
 But in the end love of money kept him out of God's kingdom.
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So, this week I asked myself
 Is that conclusion too simple.
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 having talked with him only a few minutes,
 Mark tells us that Jesus looked upon him and loved him.
 That doesn't sound like a scathing criticism to me.

And, I think that we also need to remember that
 to this young Jewish man,
 Jesus was not the Son of God.

He was simply a new prophet,
with an exciting message, ,
and a magnetic personality.

And so for a few moments this morning,
can we try to have a look at this fellow as an underdog.

First let's look at the positive qualities.

He was courageous.

Luke describes him as a ruler.

That means, he belonged to the upper or ruling class.

This group brought the most criticism against Jesus.

Perhaps it was his youth

or maybe it was his willingness to learn

but he didn't let his social position keep him from Jesus,

he didn't buy in to his peers' assessment of Jesus.

Nicodemus was also rich man who went to see Jesus.

But he went at night,

Though with much the same question.

Nicodemus didn't want to be seen consorting with the Nazarene.

Why? Probably because he felt his peers might ostracize him.

Not the rich young ruler of today's reading.

He was different.

He came to Christ in broad daylight.

He must have seen something in Jesus and his teachings

that convinced him that Jesus was the real deal.

I doubt there is any of us that hasn't hesitated to defend the church
or make Christ known among our friends and peers at some stage.

So, I say this young man had courage.

The second positive thing is: he was humble.

Elite people don't run. It's considered undignified. 😊

This young rich ruler runs up to Jesus and kneels before him,

in the middle of the road in broad day light.

If his friends saw him, he would be teased and looked down on.

That makes him courageous in my book.

So, he asks: Good teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life?

He didn't come to Jesus with verbal puzzles, mental gymnastics,

Or even pious theological jargon like the Pharisees did.

The church sometimes does the same

Spending a lot of time on academic issues, buildings and political structures

Rather than the eternal questions of life.
This young man ran to Jesus.
He Knelt before him in the middle of the road.
And asked sincere questions.
He was humble.

The third positive thing is: he was religious.

Now I don't mean that in a negative way.
He was a spiritual man deeply concerned with religious things.
When Jesus instructed him to keep the commandments, he answered,
"Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy.

We as Christians assume that no one has ever kept the commandments.
Remember our prayer of confession 15 mins back.
Here's the key to this passage of Scripture
and the turning point of this young man's life.
Let's recognize that this young man was courageous;
He was humble and religious.
But here the negatives come up in this young man's life.

The first negative is he was looking for a rule to keep to please God.

he says, "What must I DO to receive eternal life?"
What must I DO. It is a pretty telling word, this DO.
And Jesus answered him by mentioning the commandments.
And the young fellow says "oh well yes, well, I've kept those since a boy."

A story is told of a young Buddhist monk
who sat outside his temple hands clasped in prayer.
He looked very pious as he chanted all day.
One day the head priest of the temple sat next to him
and began rubbing a piece of brick against a stone.
Day after day he rubbed one against the other.

finally the young monk blurted out,
"Father, what are you doing?"
"I'm trying to make a mirror," said the head priest.
"But that's impossible!" said the young monk. "
"True," replied the head priest.
"Just as it is impossible to acquire grace by a chant."

It's like our rich young ruler.
I have kept the commandments since childhood but I still feel I am doing wrong.

Have you worked out what is wrong?
They were performing outward exercises to arrive at internal truths.
They were conforming outwardly instead of obeying inwardly.
They were living by law and rules rather than by grace.

The second negative thing is: he loved his money.

It is interesting that Jesus,
after being pressed by this young man,
actually does give him something to do.

Jesus says,

“You want something to do? All right.

Since you have great wealth, sell all that you have,
give it to the poor, and come follow me.”

I must admit that this is a little confusing
because Jesus is trying to teach this young man
that it is not outward acts that bring life
but inward obedience.

So why does he tell him to DO.

If you look closely

Jesus is conveying the difference between the letter of the law
and the spirit of the law.

Here, in this text, is another teaching of the great commandment:

Love God and love your neighbor.

Sell what you have to help the poor and come follow me.

Here is a story

Brother Leroy was leading services one Sunday morning.

It wasn't going very well,

And when it came time to receive the offering it came back empty.

So he passed it again. Same thing. Empty.

Brother Leroy then went before the people and said,

"Now, I know that you all want this church to progress."

No response from the congregation.

Brother Leroy shouted a bit louder:

"Now, before this church can progress it has to crawl."

And the congregation started getting excited and they yelled back,

"Make it crawl, Reverend. Make it crawl!"

Brother Leroy continued, "After this church has crawled,

it's got to pick itself up and start to walk, this church has got to walk!"

And the people yelled back at him, "Make it walk, Reverend. Make it walk!" "

And after this church has walked,

this church has got to get up and run."

And the people were worked up into a terrible frenzy,

and they hollered back: "Make it run, Reverend. Make it run!"

And then Brother Leroy said,

"Now, brothers and sisters, in order for this church to run,

its gonna need money, its gonna take money for this church to run!"

And the people yelled back, "Let it crawl, Reverend. Let it crawl!"

It is sad to watch as a church crawls when it could be running.

You know what Jesus said, "Where your treasure is there is your heart also."

**The third negative thing in the young mans life is:
he walked away.**

He couldn't handle the truth when he heard it.

To love God and love your neighbor
in such a sacrificial and self-effacing way was beyond him.

I think he knew all along what was missing.

He knew where his heart was.

He did not want to give up his life style.

He did not want to part with his wealth.

And when he retained his wealth he knew he was relinquishing eternity.

Amen.

lvvvlil

ⁱ Stu McLellan, www.stumclellan.co.uk

ⁱⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱ [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 150). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^v Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016).

^{vi} Faithlife Study Bible (Mk 10:17). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

^{vii} Garland, D. E. (1996). Mark (p. 394). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

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<https://www.gotquestions.org/camel-eye-needle.html>

<http://www.reverendfun.com/toon/20110110/>

<https://www.thebackpew.com/camels-and-needles.html>

Lay Leaders Liturgies (Mediacom)

esermos.com

Moira Laidlaw's published liturgies

Laughingbird.net

Words for worship (Mediacom)

and others I can't remember

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^{iv} Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 150). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

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