

St. Frances Cabrini - Lebanon, TN
Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time – Year B
October 14, 2018

Wisdom 7:7-11

Hebrews 4:12-13

Mk 10:17-27

I would like to start by asking a few questions. What are you willing to sacrifice for a loved one? Are you willing to sacrifice living space, having them move in with you? Are you willing to sacrifice financial means to support them? Are you willing to sacrifice time? These are all very noble things. Now, what are you willing to sacrifice for God?

Looking at the gospel, let's examine the rich young man who was running to catch Jesus. The response can seem a little cold from Jesus. "Call no one good but God alone." Jesus is trying to get him to slow down. The man is excited after hearing Jesus. He is ready to act. Great enthusiasm can be short lived. Think about the parable of the sower. "Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root... The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away."

Next, we have Jesus telling him what must do to have eternal life. He tells him of some of the commandments. The man states that he does these things. Jesus looks at him lovingly since he does follow those commandments. Yet Jesus tells him that this is not enough.

Before we talk about the riches, let's look at the commandments. Notice that the commandments the young man is following, are toward other people. This is good. It is also the minimal of what should be done, or, said another way, what not to do. Is anything missing? Where is God? What is he doing for God?

In the bible, those who were rich were considered blessed by God. Look to Job. Look to Solomon. This young man is being asked by Jesus to give up his “graces” from God by giving up his riches.

Earlier this week we hear in Luke’s gospel Jesus teaching his disciples how to pray. He teaches the Lord’s Prayer. *“Father, hallowed be your name, your Kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread...”*

Give us our daily needs. Needs, not wants. Give me what I need to love you and love others. When I do that, I am abiding by Your will. God is first in the relationship.

Jesus tells his disciples that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. This shocks them. Look at this visually. While it isn’t a camel, try and pass through the needle. Nothing. What does it tell us? Our “things” get in the way. We put things before God. We put other people before God.

Solomon had it right. He sought Wisdom, which is likened to God in our first reading. He sought God. To him, riches lost the shine when compared to the glory of God. He had his priorities in the right order.

What are you willing to sacrifice for God? There a numerous time in the bible when we are challenged to put God above family. That does not mean we ignore the needs of family. When God is at the root of our actions, family is taken care of. Also, remember who our family is; those who listen and act on the Word of God.

I would be willing to say that sacrificing for family does not oppose God. This is if it doesn’t deal with stuff. Sacrificing to make sure our kids have the latest mobile phone doesn’t count. Sacrificing so they have a brand-new car doesn’t count. Sacrificing so the have the latest fashion in clothes and shoes doesn’t count. We are teaching them that stuff is more important.

God is not against people who have things. He is not against people who are rich. The challenge is when the riches, the stuff gets in the way of our relationship with God. BTW – you don't have to be rich to let stuff get in the way of your relationship with God. The challenge is when those things are more important than God. Are you willing to lighten that load to improve your relationship with God? We may find that those sacrifices for God are not a burden when we consider what we have gained. What are you willing to sacrifice for God?