

HOMILY ~ 28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME OCTOBER 12/13, 2024

There was a husband and wife that were saving for many years to build their dream house. They saved for years, and they finally had enough money to have it built. They hired an architect that had designed a home for one of their friends. The architect wanted to know some of the details of what they wanted, how many bedrooms and bathrooms, the type of layout, the style of home, things they wanted outside like landscaping, deck, patio and sun porch. He advised the two of them to talk it over and get back with him. A few days later, they returned to the architect and said, "*We have given this a lot of thought.*" The man took a doorknob out of his pocket and handed it to the architect and said, "*We are very attached to this doorknob, it has been in our family for many years and we are attached to it.*" What do you think the chances are that they will get the dream house they wanted? The doorknob may be very important to them. It may have a prominent place in their home, but can you build a whole house around it?

In the Gospel Reading, the rich young man came to Jesus and asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life. He was a good man. He observed all of the commandments from his youth. Jesus tells him to sell his possessions, give the money to the poor and come follow him. He came to the right person, at the right time, asked the right question, got the right answer and made the wrong decision. I think Jesus knew that the rich young man's possessions possessed him, and that his possessions stood between him and eternal life. His possessions were at the center of his life rather than Jesus.

I think that is a good question for each of us to ask ourselves today. "*What must I do to attain eternal life?*" Who or what is at the center of your life? What are you building your life around? Sometimes it does become money or possessions. Did you ever think that if you just had more money, all of your problems would be solved? We certainly need to have enough to be comfortable; but studies show that after a person achieves a certain level of wealth, further accumulation has an inverse effect

on their happiness and general wellbeing. The more we have, the more energy we have to expend to take care of it; and the more likely we are to neglect the things that are important, the things that make us happy, the things that will get us to heaven. Think about the biggest problems you have experienced in your life, the death of someone you love, the end of a marriage, the loss of a job, the loss of a child to drugs or alcohol, a difficult medical diagnosis. Will more money stop war or stop natural disasters? Money may help, but it definitely would not solve these problems. Sometimes when we get too much money and material possessions, we start to believe that we do not need God. We will be in trouble when life gets difficult. When we have God at the center of our lives, money is a means to an end. We realize what is important is our family, our friends, helping other people in need, doing good in the world. The rich young man seemed to have everything, but he realized that something was missing. Having a relationship with God was that something that was missing.

We get into trouble when we have something other than God at the center of our lives. That happens with all addictions. We build our lives around alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, sex, food, our phone. These bring us momentary pleasure but destroy our lives in the meantime.

When we have God at the center of our lives, we pray regularly, we come to Mass regularly, we are part of a Catholic community, and everything gets better. We need to have a sense of the transcendent, that there is someone bigger than we are. This can be a source of great wisdom that we need to tap into. When we are guided by the wisdom of Christ, our marriages improve, our families grow closer, our friendships are stronger, our world becomes a better place, our lives become happier and our sense of wellbeing increases. We need money and possessions, but we also need to know when we have enough. Then we can let that go and focus upon what is important. Keep God at the center of your life. That is how we inherit eternal life.

Love and Peace,

Fr. Jim