



Disappointed Disciple

2nd Tuesday of Lent

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother." ' He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. **Mark 10:17-31**

In Mark's Gospel eternal life is a synonym for the kingdom of God. It refers not merely to limitless existence but to a quality of life both in the here and now and the hereafter that is full and complete. This would-be follower was searching for *life!* Ironic, isn't it? The man already possessed what our culture considers the *key* to life—wealth. He could, I imagine, buy most anything he wanted, anything that is but the *one* thing he most desired.

He had already done what his religion told him was the *key*. He had kept the commandments from his youth. He was no moral slacker, no lazy rich boy. Jesus was more than impressed; Jesus *loved him*! He said to him: "You lack one thing." Just one? And I imagine the man's heart soared with anticipation. At last the answer was at hand! But as Jesus continued, the words he spoke became for this rich man like a breath-robbing punch to the stomach. You see, Jesus hit upon the one thing that he loved more than *life*, the one thing with which he could not possibly part. My guess is that he was not so much afraid of poverty, as he was of trusting in the ultimate sense. As long as he had his wealth, he felt protected, in control of his destiny, but to give it all away put him in the position of being totally vulnerable and trusting, as a little child trusts the one in whose hand she places her own.

What are the obstacles in your life that get in the way of following Jesus? We all have them.

Prayer

Lord, grant me grace to lay aside those things that stand between you and me, so that I may know in yet fuller measure the life you desire for me. Amen.