



THIRD MONDAY OF LENT
DEVOTIONAL

MARCH 21, 2022

Today is the third week of Lent.

Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly.

Intentionally.

Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled presence.



In this third week of Lent how do you find yourself? Light and free? Heavy and angry? Content and loved? Questioning and hopeful?



Where has God been found on your Lenten journey thus far?



If someone were to give you basic suggestions on how to experience more of Jesus in the everyday flow of your life, how do you believe you would respond?



As you listen to Jesus this week, use the spiritual practice of imaginative reading, by placing yourself on the scene. Through imaginative reading, enter into today's passage being someone, the rich person to whom Jesus is talking. Hear, feel, see and respond to the passage as if you were the rich person on the scene.



SCRIPTURE
MATTHEW 19:16–30 (NLT)

¹⁶ Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”¹⁷ “Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.”¹⁸ “Which ones?” the man asked. And Jesus replied: ““You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely.¹⁹ Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.””

²⁰ “I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

²¹ Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.²⁴ I’ll say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!”

²⁵ The disciples were astounded. “Then who in the world can be saved?” they asked.

²⁶ Jesus looked at them intently and said, “Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.”

²⁷ Then Peter said to Him, “We’ve given up everything to follow you. What will we get?”

²⁸ Jesus replied, “I assure you that when the world is made new and the Son of Man sits upon His glorious throne, you who have been My followers will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for My sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then.



Gleaning from the practice of imaginative reading, what did you hear, feel or sense as the someone – the rich person – to whom Jesus was talking?

Did anything Jesus tell you make you uncomfortable? Why or why not?



When you read the Message version of verse 22 you find it rendered, *“That was the last thing the young man expected to hear. And so, crestfallen, he walked away. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and he couldn’t bear to let go.”*

For me, this is one of the saddest verses in all of the Scriptures. Here we have someone who supposedly came to Jesus with good intentions. My guess is, he just wanted Jesus to give him another gold star but that’s for another devotional.

Jesus tells him what he’s asking for. But the rich person wasn’t expecting what he heard. He wasn’t expecting Jesus to reveal to him, truly, that which his heart was attached. But out of love and grace that is what Jesus did. He revealed to him that his heart – his source of life – was found in his wealth and possessions. Jesus then – out of love and by grace – offered the person a choice and a way forward. A way to receive what he was asking for – eternal life – which only happens by embracing Jesus fully, the true Source of life everlasting.

Hearing this story today I'm reminded of an interesting but strange practice that traditional hunters have used in Africa to catch monkeys. They hollow out a coconut. Tie one end to a rope and stake it in the ground, then put the monkey's favorite treat inside the coconut. A monkey comes along sticks his hand in the hole, grabs his favorite treat and tries to make a run for it. But because he has his hand in a fist – clinging – to his favorite little treat, he can't escape. And in time the hunters come back and they have themselves a monkey.

†

Translate the story you just heard to your life here and now.

Is there anything you are holding on to that is keeping you tied up and preventing you from moving forward with Jesus? Lack of forgiveness? Anger? Questions? Fears? Trust? Aspirations for which you don't believe God approves?

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SCRIPTURE
MATTHEW 19:16–22 (NLT)

¹⁶ Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”¹⁷ “Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.”¹⁸ “Which ones?” the man asked. And Jesus replied: “You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely.¹⁹ Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”²⁰ “I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?”

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²² But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions.

In these final moments today, talk to Jesus about what you are clinging to that has you tied up from following Him fully.



Now look at your clenched fists and imagine Jesus sitting in front of you – offer your fists to Jesus as a request to help you love Him more than what you are clinging to for life.



Imagine Jesus lovingly opening your fists to reveal your now empty outstretched hands, able to receive the life that only Jesus can give.

Close your time with Jesus by expressing to Him your gratefulness and love.



CLOSING AFFIRMATION
JOHN 6:66–69 (NLT)

⁶⁶ At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.