

Wednesday's Wisdom

a weekly short note from Mike Minear

What Lack I Yet?

By Bruce Austin

*"What yet am I still lacking to obtain eternal life?"
Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 19*

This was the question posed to Jesus by the rich young ruler. We can only guess what his motives were in asking; but I do believe he was sincere. I feel sorry for him in a way; for he seemed so eager and pious before Jesus. Just such a question alone must have been pleasing to God. Obviously this man was different from the rest who had tried to test or trap the Lord with some profound question. I am impressed with his courage to search for the truth, although it is possible he may have thought too highly of himself or had not yet come to learn that faith with commitment is not without some degree of sacrifice, some willingness to change, and some desire to grow in the spirit. But the Teacher's answer was like a knockout in the first round, a jolt from a live wire, and a weight impossible to lift. The answer the man got for himself meant the end of his life as he knew it.

There are three accounts of this encounter between the rich young man and Jesus: Matthew 19, Mark 10, and Luke 19. We read that the man ran up to Jesus, knelt before Him and said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal Life?" Jesus said, **"If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."** The man said, "Which ones?" And Jesus recited the last six of the Ten Commandments. The young man replied, "All these things I have kept: what am I still lacking?" Jesus stood looking at the man and felt a love for him and said, **"one thing you lack; go and sell all your possessions and give to the poor and come and follow Me."** The scriptures then report the young man's reaction as follows: "But at these words his face fell and he went away sad for he was one who owned much property."

As you continue reading, the message is clear. It is a difficult thing for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God. Love for God and love for riches have always been at odds. But there is a hopeful aspect to the man's response in spite of all the negatives. Others certainly would have felt challenged and outraged at such an extreme request. Some might have tried to reason or negotiate a more reasonable deed and some certainly would have agreed and left, never to be seen

again. But this man grieved, a reaction any conscientious person would experience upon discovering that a complete faith would result in personal sacrifice, a change of mind and a change of life; and that total commitment can sometime make us feel uncomfortable, scared, or sad. I suspect, for this man who sought for perfect obedience, things would never be the same. I would like to think that God who works the impossible gave him the help he needed to enter the Kingdom. I would like to think that the riches forsaken became his treasures in heaven. I would like to think that when he heard that the same good teacher he had once knelt before with his question of eternal life had been crucified, that once again he would kneel before Him in Heaven. I would like to think that the sadness for loss of riches became sorrow for sins, and sorrow became joy, and joy became happiness, because what he had been lacking for eternal life, Jesus had fulfilled. I would like to think that in the end, the rich young ruler followed Jesus.

All Jesus asks from you is your heart and trust in faith. He died for us to rid our souls of sins and ensure out eternal salvation. You need not go away sad; but upon your obedience you can go forth in joy!