



SUNDAY ALIVE

27th July - Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The lottery has opened up the possibility — albeit 14 million to one! - that each week someone can become a millionaire in an instant. Success is the luck of the draw. 'What would you do if you won the lottery?' people often ask their friends during a leisurely chat. The question is underpinned by the notion that a substantial win would bring not just untold wealth and riches but also untold joy and happiness.

Today's passage contains two parables which challenge our idea of riches. Each parable contains a simile of the kingdom of God: in the first the kingdom of God is compared to hidden treasure and in the second it is compared to a merchant searching for fine pearls. When the man finds the treasure buried in a field, he buys the whole field in order to get hold of the treasure; and when the merchant finds the fine pearl he sells everything he has in order to buy it.

The meaning of the parables is that the greatest treasure we can ever have in life is discovering the truth of the kingdom of heaven. In comparison all the other riches which this life has to offer are finite and limited in their value. The life of faith invites us to store up true treasure in heaven where no thief can break in and steal and no rust can corrode and corrupt. Scripture tells us that our heart will be where our treasure is, and that true and lasting treasure can only be found in the Lord.

When set against knowing and following Christ St Paul considered everything that this life has to offer as 'rubbish' (Phil. 3:8 NIV). The Greek word he used for 'rubbish' was skubalon, which translates more accurately as 'dung'. We need the gift of grace not only to understand this truth but also to live it because the treasures and rewards of the world can appear very attractive. We need a revelation of the truth that Christ in us is the hope of everlasting glory and that to have found him is to have found everything.

*'How suddenly it became pleasant for me to do without worthless pastimes,
and I with joy left off that which previously I had feared to lose!
For thou didst remove them far from me, and thou, the true and highest joy,
thyself didst dwell in me, O Sweetest of all joys!' (St Augustine)*

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12 Psalm 118(119):57, 72, 76-77, 127-130 Romans 8:28-30 Matthew 13:44-52



www.catholic-bible-school.org

© **Alive Publishing Ltd.**

Click here for daily reflections on the Mass readings - www.biblealive.co.uk

