

SUNDAY ALIVE

1st August 2010 - Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

The man in the crowd asking Jesus to settle a family dispute wants him to act like a rabbi. Jesus, however, is instantly aware that his request stems from greed and envy. He chooses to expose the motives of the man's heart rather than settle his grievance. The Lord teaches that the purpose and meaning of life is to make oneself 'rich toward God' (v. 21).

Greed and envy focus a person on self. Those who pursue wealth seek security and safety. They use their riches to shield themselves from life's vicissitudes and to find comfort and confidence in material things. In the pursuit of wealth they lose sight of the real meaning of life because they are seduced by the illusion that with their fortune they can control their lives. Yet one day everyone will die - possessions cannot protect against that day.

Furthermore, the pursuit of affluence and pleasure eliminates both God and neighbour from sight since the focus is exclusively on obtaining possessions in order to feel secure: 'I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry' (v. 19). Finally, wealth creates the desire for greater wealth, making the circle of illusion complete.

Being rich in the sight of God, on the other hand, brings into sharp focus the purpose of life and allows us to live according to truth. The real meaning of life is that we depend upon God for everything; God is the source of all good, and we are created for relationship with him. Our security is to be found in God alone: we can live with confidence in the knowledge that he is directing our lives, that he cares for us and will provide for all our needs.

Since God gives us everything we need, we can be generous towards those in need and share our goods with them. Unlike those who pursue the self-absorbed path of avarice and envy, we can, to God's glory and praise, live our lives 'rich towards God'. This will enable us to place greater trust and dependency on our Father in heaven and in openness to our neighbours' needs.

'Lord, you are the source of all I am and all I possess. Cleanse my heart of greed and envy. Teach me to depend on you for my every need. Make me rich in your sight.'

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23 Psalm 89(90):3-6, 12-14, 17
Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11 Luke 12:13-21

The Living Word - a living experience



www.catholic-bible-school.org

© Alive Publishing Ltd.

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

