

# Making Space for God

Merciful and loving God, we confess today how easily we become dissatisfied with our lives. We look at what others have and ignore the gifts you have given us. We look at how others live and see their blessings while remaining blind to our own. In our envy we become jealous of people we barely know. Forgive our deep resentments. Save us from shallow lives that fake perfection. Help us rest in your grace, at peace with the lives you have given us in your mercy. Heal our restless hearts even now and help us today to rest in you. Amen.

Adapted from Church Confession

## Reflection- Looking Back

Take some times to settle yourself. Review your calendar and think back over where you have been this summer and focus on answering this one question: **How has the Lord been present to you?** In the events of your life; in your joys and fears; in what has occupied your mind and heart; in what you dream about or long for; in what you are thankful for. Journal these thoughts and offer them to the Lord.



Rich Man

Acrylic on Canvas by Steven Stuckey 2014

## Scripture Study—Rich Man—Mark 10:17-31

For two thousand years beginning with the first disciples, this story has both shocked and intrigued its listeners. It speaks to those who hunger for eternal life, which could be described as the desire to become more fully the person God created us to be through a deeper and more intimate relationship with Jesus. It also depicts how difficult it is for a person to gain freedom for the compulsions of a culture. Read the text through a couple of times.

## Reflection Questions for Mark 10:17-31

1. The religious leader in Luke 10 asked Jesus the same question as the man in Mark 10 and got a different response. Compare the two men and their motives.
2. What do you find admirable about the man in Mark 10?
3. Eternal life is more than just everlasting life. From the text and the readings how would you describe it? How does your understanding of eternal life intersect with your deepest longings?
4. Jesus changed the conversation from eternal life to goodness. What is the relationship between the two? How have you experienced goodness this week? Only God is good. Thank him for what you experienced.
5. In what ways does keeping the commandment get us in the neighborhood of goodness? Which of the commands do you find most troubling in your own walk with Jesus?

6. "You lack one thing. Go sell all that you have, give to the poor, you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me." Spend time reflecting upon this sentence. Identify the verbs, diagram it, and draw it. It was this verse that sent St. Anthony into the desert in the third century. What stirs within you as you read it?

7. If treasure is that which creates for us a sense of safety, security, and power in our hearts, what is your treasure? In what ways does your treasure hamper a deeper relationship with Jesus?

8. The words of Jesus affect the man emotionally and he goes away sad. Some commentators wonder whether the man might have been Barnabus. If it was, how does that change the story for you?

## Reading for Reflection

I have frequently seen people become neurotic when they content themselves with inadequate or wrong answers to the questions of life. They seek position, marriage, reputation, outward success, or money, and remain unhappy and neurotic even when they have attained what they were seeking. Such people are usually contained within too narrow a spiritual horizon. Their life has not sufficient meaning. If they are enabled to develop into more spacious personalities, the neurosis generally disappears.

Jung in *Memories, Dreams, Deflections*

Our task is to be whole, not fragmented, to be fully human, not mere naked apes, to reach upwards towards the Light, not to dive headlong into the Dark, and always God is there, calling us to integration, to self realization, to eternal life, by pressing on our psyches to lure us towards Him. We may have to struggle on our inner journey through the labyrinth of the unconscious mind, but the guiding light is always there ahead of us at the source of the river within.

Susan Howatch in *Mystical Paths*

God invites us to make ourselves at home in his love, accepting our status as God's beloved. There is a sense of creativity and joy that can come to us when we know we are worthy in God's eyes and we are safe in God's presence. Perhaps in this place we can let go of the self-consciousness of comparing ourselves or rating our performance – which are merely symptoms of feeling unworthy. Perhaps we can simply explore what it means to live in the house of God – to live in Christ. Here we may be able to let down our outer façade and show our true face. Without this beginning in God's love and our consent to be loved, our attempts in Christ will just be an outer façade, always at risk of crumbling in the face of life's activities.

Helen Cepero

The dark side of ecclesiastical life forms the paradox of all Christian organizations: the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but this world is the place where those who preach that kingdom have to live. And men who are valued for their spiritual gifts—who indeed come to prominence as the result of their spiritual calling—find themselves expected to do worldly work for which they have neither the training nor the inclination.

*Susan Howatch in Absolute Truths*

## The Benediction

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below; praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son, Holy Ghost. Amen

Doxology