

Reflection Questions

- Consider how your addictive and compulsive behavior has served you in the past.
 - How might you seek God to have these same needs met?
 - What are your needs?

- Do you sense God actively seeking to express His will for you through certain scripture passages, remarks made by others, or other spiritual reading that has guided your recovery?

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time



In many recovery groups, the saying “let go and let God” is often expressed as a plea to relinquish control of the things that control us. In addition to material possessions, as we will hear in this week’s gospel reading, we are to also let go of our behavior, attitudes, and expectations. This is much easier said than done, especially considering the mental obsessions that can haunt the early stages of our recovery. We have been conditioned to cope in an unpredictable world around us and we get our short-term needs met in the only ways we know how. Unfortunately, this also tends to lead to patterns of resentment and disappointment.

God offers us another route and an escape from the dungeon of these obsessions. We may not always like the direction He asks us to take, but we gain confidence in the journey by finding support and fellowship among those that have walked a similar path. We center our open discussions around scripture so that it may transform us while helping make sense of things.

This week's second reading, taken from the Letter to the Hebrews, describes the process that takes place when we refer to scripture to discern the movement inside of us:

*Indeed the word of God is living and effective,
sharper than any two-edged sword,
penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and
marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts
of the heart.
No creature is concealed from him,
but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of
him to whom we must render an account.*

We may notice that God speaks directly to our situation or circumstances when we put aside our old coping mechanisms and intentionally seek Him. When we open our eyes and ears, we may see and hear our story being told in a variety of ways. To the extent that we can set aside our own expectations and ideas of how things ought to go, we will find our answers.

This week's gospel reading shares an account of a rich man asking Jesus how he can inherit eternal life. Having observed God's commandments since a young boy, the question seems genuine. Mark's gospel continues:

*Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him,
"You are lacking in one thing.
Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor
and you will have treasure in heaven; then come,
follow me."
At that statement his face fell,
and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.*

Jesus speaks directly to the interior life of the rich man in this story. While we do not know of his destiny, we know he went away sad. We may feel the same way when we consider what God asks of us, especially when the things we are asked to let go of serve us in some way (but have unfortunate consequences).

Some of us might be frightened by the prospect of putting up healthy boundaries with our loved ones. There may be several reasons for this, including fear of what we do not know. If we take a thorough spiritual inventory, some of us may find that we are served in some way by being needed by others and enjoy the role as the "fixer." The point is that we are to let *God* serve us in ways that our limited resources cannot.

Christ summarizes this as he debriefs with his disciples, first noting, "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples are amazed at this teaching and ask a similar question we may be asking ourselves:

*"Then who can be saved?"
Jesus looked at them and said,
"For human beings it is impossible, but not for God.
All things are possible for God."*