

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

THEME: WE SHOULD LIVE EVERY MOMENT IN VIEW OF OUR PRECIOUS GOAL

Jesus concludes a long series of parables about the reign of God in today's Gospel reading, by praising those men and women who have listened carefully, understood, and responded to his message.

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus is telling us that the kingdom of God is something of extraordinary value like a hidden treasure or valuable gem and that its possession calls for total commitment. According to Jesus in our Gospel reading, the kingdom of God is priceless. Its value is so great that one should be prepared to sell all of one's possessions in order to acquire it.

Last Sunday and the one before it, Jesus was a farmer, using the language of agriculture to describe the kingdom of heaven. Today, he is a businessman, a merchant, using the language of commerce to describe the same kingdom. When business people see a good deal, they are prepared to sell all their assets in order to clinch it. If the worth of their assets is not sufficient to seal the deal, they will even go and borrow money from the bank or credit company.

My dear friends in Christ, the kingdom of God is the best deal we can ever find. That is why we should be prepared to dispose of all our possessions in order to acquire it. What that means in concrete terms is that we should prefer the kingdom of heaven to all of our possessions, and all our possessions in this world are nothing compared to the kingdom of heaven. Most of the time, we are chasing false treasures such as money, status, or pleasure. Consequently, the really valuable treasure of sharing God's life here on earth and later in heaven is never found.

The kingdom of God is the reign of God in our hearts, in our lives, in our homes, in our society, and in our world. Only those who develop a searching mind and are willing to give up everything for the great treasure will be rewarded. So, if we owned the entire world, but do not have the kingdom of heaven with it, all our possessions would be worthless, "so much rubbish", to use the words of St. Paul in Phil. 3:8.

My dear friends in Christ, there is nothing wrong with having earthly possessions. If we have them, we have done nothing wrong. They are blessings from God. We only must make sure that we acquire them through the right means and that we have the kingdom of heaven as well. We must make sure that our quest for earthly possessions does not come between us and our possession of the kingdom of God.

If we must sacrifice any of them, it must be our earthly possessions, and not the kingdom of heaven. Remember the words of Jesus in Matt. 16:26, "What then, will it profit anyone by winning the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?"

My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we continue with this Mass, let us like Solomon ask God to give us the wisdom to always make right decisions, especially in matters concerning our salvation.