

ctkAlive! Scripture Study
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
2021—B Cycle



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Opening Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

True Riches . . . True Life

Risen Lord, give me strength
against the temptations of money,
the arrogance of ownership,
the false hope of wealth.
Instead, let me pursue righteousness,
godliness, faith, love,
endurance, and gentleness.
Let me . . . do good . . .
be rich in good deeds,
and generous in sharing.
In this way, I will lay up treasure for myself
for the coming age,
by taking hold of the life
that is *truly* life. Amen.

Original version by [Sam Hargreaves](#)

Scripture Readings

Wisdom 7: 7-11 “I prayed and understanding was given to me.”

Psalm 90: 12-17 “Fill us at daybreak with your kindness.”

Hebrews 4: 12-13 “The word of God is living and effective.”

Mark 10: 17-30 “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom (7: 7-11)

“I prayed and understanding was given to me; I asked earnestly and the spirit of Wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepters and thrones and I considered wealth as nothing compared with her. I preferred her to any jewel of inestimable value, since gold beside her is nothing but a few grains of sand, and silver but mud. I loved her more than wealth and beauty and even preferred her to light, because her radiance never dies. She brought with her all other good things, untold riches in her hands.”

Personal Reflection

The Book of Wisdom—the final book of Hebrew Scriptures (OT)—marked a breakthrough effort to express the faith and wisdom of Judaism in Greek. The book also adapted itself to Greek culture. This passage from Wisdom addresses the crucial questions of evil, pain, and death. It sketches a proof of the existence of God that later inspired St. Paul’s life and teaching. In addition, it shows that God’s mercy extends to all creatures *without exception*.

The entire book is an invitation to seek Wisdom, as one would seek a spouse. By contrast, sovereign rulers of the First Century, even in Israel, declared themselves “divine.” The book reminds us that Yahweh/Christ is *uncreated* Wisdom. For Christians, seeking the Wisdom of God manifests itself in seeking union with Christ. This union is not sentimental but rather the never-ending search for the One who identifies himself as the Truth.

“I asked earnestly and the spirit of Wisdom came to me.”

— *When did I last pray for the gift of true Wisdom? What were the circumstances? What happened next (after praying for wisdom)?*

— *Would I consider myself at this point in my life a wise man/woman? How does that wisdom manifest itself in my life and daily decision-making? (Be specific.)*

“I loved (Wisdom) more than wealth and beauty.”

— *In my own life today, how would I rate myself on the scale of Wisdom—wealth/beauty? What signs do I see that reveal my place on that scale?*

Responsorial Psalm 90 (12-17)

Pondering the brevity of life

*Fill us with us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!*

So make us know the shortness of our life,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

How long will you be angry, O Yahweh?

Have mercy on your servant.

*Fill us with us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!*

Fill us at daybreak with your goodness,
that we may be glad all our days.
Make joy endure as misery did,
and the years in which we were afflicted.
*Fill us with us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!*

Let your work be seen by your servants
and your glorious power by their children.
May the sweetness of Yahweh be upon us;
may he prosper the work of our hands.
*Fill us with us with your love, O Lord,
and we will sing for joy!*

Personal Reflection

The plural pronouns indicate community singing. The psalm addresses the meaning of our life. What do we value? We cannot imagine a 'tomorrow' for ourselves, without counting on God.

This psalm can help us mature in wisdom and grace. Our earthly life is short and frail compared to our eternal God, who alone is our ultimate refuge. Only divinely implanted wisdom gives meaning to our existence. Psalms 89 and 90 combined urge us to fill our lives with wisdom, which we accomplish by loving, praising, and serving God and our neighbors (at home and throughout the world).

"Make us know the shortness of our life, that we may gain wisdom of heart."

— *What happened within me or around me recently that made me aware that my time on this earth is limited? How grateful am I for the gift of life on this side of eternity?*

Listen: "[Who knows where the time goes?](#)" written by [Sandy Denny](#) and sung by [Judy Collins](#)

"Make joy endure, as the misery did in the years in which we were afflicted."

— *How good am I at being "joyful" no matter what's going on within me or outside me? When "in the throes of misery," how do I find that place of joy deep within my soul? Or do I find it? If not, why?*

A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (4: 12-13)

"For the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword. It pierces to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and judges the intentions and thoughts of the heart. All creation is transparent to him. Everything is uncovered and laid bare, to the eyes of him, to whom we render account."

Personal Reflection

This short passage requires no lengthy commentary. The text speaks for itself.

— *In my opinion, why does the liturgy of this weekend offer us this tiny—but loaded—slice of the Book of Hebrews?*

“For the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword.”

— *What evidence do I find within myself that verifies these words? What am I doing to deepen my understanding of that “living and effective” word of God?*

— *What signs do see in my daily life that I am truly internalizing my faith in God’s word and wisdom?*

Proclamation from the Gospel according to Mark (10: 17-27—shorter version)

“Just as Jesus was setting out on his journey again, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked, ‘Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?’

“Jesus answered, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: Do not kill; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not cheat; honor your father and mother.’

“The man replied, ‘I have obeyed all these commandments since my childhood.’

“Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him; and he said, ‘For you, one thing is lacking. Go, sell what you have, and give the money to the poor; and you will have riches in heaven. Then, come, and follow me.’

“On hearing these words, his face fell and he went away sorrowful, for he was a man of great wealth.

“Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!’

“The disciples were shocked at these words.

“But Jesus insisted, ‘Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’

“The disciples were more astonished than ever and wondered, ‘Who, then, can be saved?’

“Jesus looked steadily at them and said, ‘For human beings it is impossible, but not for God; all things are possible with God.’”

Personal Reflection

The Hebrew Scriptures contain numerous passages about how to gain eternal life by observing the call to *justice* and *compassion*. This young man asks Jesus the explain the path that leads to eternal life. Jesus offered no new commandments. This gospel passage addresses the “rich” in the most common sense of those already having abundant material wealth. Jesus asserts that their situation can prevent them from experiencing the kingdom of God within their heart of hearts.

The Hebrew Scriptures never condemned *shared* wealth. In fact, they considered it a blessing...as long as a person knew how to direct his life well. To those who already enjoyed wealth, like the young man in Mark’s gospel, Jesus proposes a new way to experience liberty and wealth: “Sell what you have and give the money to the poor.” In other words, *become my personally invited follower and imitator.*

For most of us, the call is not to physically follow Christ, as into formal ministry or a monastic way of life, but by revamping our attitude toward our possessions and freeing ourselves to become “cheerful givers,” sharing our good fortune with others less endowed or even suffering in some way.

- *Where do I recognize within myself traces of the “rich” young man?*
- *How do I decide the level sharing of my personal wealth and how much I need to keep in reserve for me and/or my family’s needs (my future “rainy day”? Am I doing too much, just enough, or not enough?)*

Listen to “[If I Were a Rich Man](#)” from the Broadway show “Fiddler on the Roof.” Compare Tevye’s prayer with the message of Jesus to the wealthy you man in the gospel for this weekend.

- *If I were Yahweh, what might I say to Tevye’s in response to his desires?*

For Inspirational Viewing/Listening

Video

“[The Prosperity Gospel](#)” with [Bishop Robert Barron](#)

The Week Ahead

Journaling Prompts

Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do TODAY regarding . . .

- (1) *the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and*
- (2) *my life as an emissary of Christ, committed to bringing God’s love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?

Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?

Why do I hesitate?

In light of this weekend’s Scriptures, take some time to write about events occurring in your life this week and what you see happening in the world.

Preview of Next Week’s Scriptures

29th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Isaiah 53: 10-11 “The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.”

Psalm 33: 4-5, 18-19, 22 “The eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him.”

Hebrews 4: 14-16 “Let us confidently approach the throne of grace.”

Mark 10: 35-45 “Jesus said, ‘What do you wish me to do for you?’”

Closing Prayer

(edited and abridged for use here)

Prayer For True Success And Prosperity

Lord, you have provided me with
so many blessings I cannot count them.
And although many would not understand
nor value the weight of your blessings,
your gifts to me are treasures
that will last through eternity.

So, I pray,
give me a right perspective
on success and prosperity.
Keep me from squeezing myself
into the world's too-small mold.

May I not view success and prosperity
through the eyes of the world,
but rather through your
perfect and eternal perspective,
for you have given me love, light,
peace, and joy. These are
better than life itself.

I praise Your holy name.
Amen.

Source: [Knowing Jesus](#)

Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to algarrotto@comcast.net

Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.

The Sunday readings are from [Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)

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Imprimatur: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
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Coming VERY soon!! Inspector Javert: at the Gates of Hell
(a novel exploring "what happens next?" after death)