

A NOTE TO PARENTS

A young man comes panting up to Jesus, full of religious enthusiasm. He has been leading a blameless life; he has earnestly kept all the demands of a demanding faith. But he senses something more to the life of faith—something rich, stirring, tantalizing, something that shakes the soul to its very center. He senses also that Jesus is in touch with this something. So, with eager hope, he asks for the secret to possessing it. And Jesus probes the young man's heart, first telling him that the secret lies in all the things he has already been doing. But he answers, "No, no, that's not what I meant, not what I'm looking for ...". So Jesus replies, "Let go of everything, then, and put your faith in me alone." Suddenly, the young man can no longer play games around his longing. He must choose.

Not everyone has such longings, nor does Jesus ask everyone to make such a choice. In Luke's Gospel, the story of Zacchaeus follows this story (Luke 19:1-10). There, Zacchaeus, smitten by the beauty of God's love in Jesus, makes the impulsive decision to give away half his goods, and restore fourfold what he had swindled, and Jesus accepts his decision gladly. Many others, Jesus simply tells to "go in peace." All of us need God, and need his Kingdom. But we hunger for it in different ways. Today's story shows that those who hunger most deeply must realize that they cannot be satisfied without the making of costly choices. For those who have always had everything come easily, this may be a devastating discovery.

As parents, we may find that our children's hunger for God is very different from ours. Our children may have an inner life of longing and devotion for God that we simply cannot enter or share. As they grow older, they may feel the call to "sell all that they have," or "leave house or brothers or sisters or mother or father" (Mark 10:29) in obedience to that longing. Or they may disappoint us, by seeming to lack the faith and devotion we want them to have. We can bring them to Jesus as children; we can share our faith with them, and teach them to observe all the commandments from their youth up. What happens afterwards is between them and God.

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Year B
PROPER 23
TRACKS 1 and 2

*A rich young man came running up,
to ask Jesus a question.*

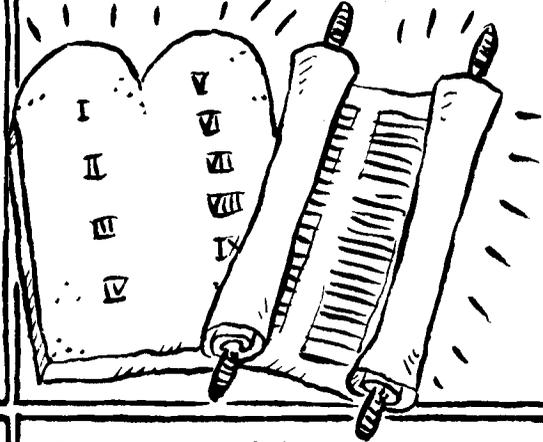
MARK 10:17



The young man said, "What do I need to do to be part of God's kingdom?"



Jesus said, "You know what it says in God's law: honor God's name... do not steal... do not tell lies..."



The young man answered, "But I already keep those laws! I've always kept them!"



Jesus said, "Now do this. Give away all your money, and follow me."



The young man was not daring enough to do what Jesus asked. He went away, feeling sad.

Jesus was sad, too. He liked the young man. He wanted to have him for a disciple. He said, "It's so hard for rich people to trust in God's promises, instead of in their money! It's as hard as squeezing a camel through the eye of a needle!"



Some people think the "needle's eye" was a very small gate. How will the camels get through it?