

"Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

Hold on. How am I to live if I give all I have to the poor? **I'LL** be poor then. Where is the **WISDOM** in that? It sounds like Jesus is against folks who have money, prosperity, and high positions in the community, or is he?

No, he isn't. He wants those who have been given much in life to come to understand that what they **HAVE** is not so much due to their own abilities, but is **GIFT** from God. This was the understanding of the people, that those who **HAVE** were looked upon kindly by God, which leads us to conclude that those who **HAVE NOT**, who have little to nothing, the poor, are not in God's favor. This is the notion Jesus is trying to correct by letting all know that God looks upon the wealthy **AND** the poor alike. Just as the sun shines on and the rains fall upon **ALL** mankind – the rich, the poor, the believer, the pagan – so too does the grace, the gifts, of God.

To those who have been given much, **MUCH** is expected. And the one thing **ALL** mankind has been given, regardless our station in life, is life itself, the **FIRST** gift of God to us. What is expected of us then is to offer that life up to God in thanksgiving, because there is nothing more precious we can offer to God than a life well spent, spent in keeping the commandments, in caring for those in need, by **NOT** succumbing to the false gods of wealth, power, and fame, and then by following in the footsteps of Jesus himself. A life lived for others and for God.

This is the wisdom of Jesus. This is the wisdom of the forefathers in the Old Testament. This is the wisdom learned long ago, and

forgotten. Wisdom, where we come to know the fear of the Lord, or better put, the **AWE** of the Lord which shines about us, of which we are at the same time both insignificant and of great importance, His creation. We are, each of us, God's gift to the world, born to be gift to one another.

And of these gifts from God, the greatest is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate. His words, his teachings, cut through all the different dimensions and understandings of his time, and, as Paul wrote to the Hebrews, is living and effective, even still today, 2000 years later, as we continue to discern the will of God for our own lives. It is in living our lives as Jesus lived his that we come to see God's plan for us. When we can stand and profess our faith, both in word and deed, baring our soul, our beliefs, naked and exposed before man as they are before God who sees and knows all, then are we true disciples of the one who laid down his life for our redemption.

When we have given up all for the sake of Jesus and the sake of the good news, great is our reward "now in this present age, with persecutions, and eternal life in the age to come." May we be as bold as the sons of Zebedee, James and John, to accept as they did the cup and baptism which Jesus suffered for our sakes.