

Ordinary Time 28B 2015

Only One Thing

Sometimes it only takes one thing to make a difference in our life: a change of habit, a new way of or dealing with an old problem. Athletes discover this all time. A batter alters his batting stance, and it makes all the difference. A basketball player adjusts the way she shoots fouls and everything changes. And so it is with our lives. Sometimes it only takes *one thing*, one change to make all the difference.

The story of the rich man in today's gospel is a good example of this. By all accounts this man was a very good man. And so he comes to Jesus to ask what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus tells him to keep the commandments, the rich man replies he has observed *all* of them, without exception, from his youth. The rich man is already on the right path; he is a very good man, and Jesus looks upon him with love. And because Jesus loves him, he seeks to bring this good man to a deeper and more intimate relationship with God. And so he says, you are lacking *one thing*: sell what you have, give to the poor, and follow me.

There is only one thing that is keeping this man from a more intimate relationship with God: he is divided in his loyalty. On the one hand, he loves God, but on the other he is enslaved to his possessions. And so he will not be, and he cannot be, fully devoted to God until he is devoted to God alone.

The story of the rich man is the story of each one of us. We want an intimate relationship with God otherwise we would not be here. We want to inherit eternal life otherwise we would not be here. But there is always one thing that keeps us from devoting ourselves completely and totally to God. Like the man of today's gospel we lack one thing, and until we address that one thing our hearts will not be at peace.

There comes a moment in our life when, like the rich man, we realize what that one thing is. And it is at that moment we must decide if we will make that one change that will change everything. For some people it is the realization that their career has become an idol they serve and worship. For others it is a realization that they have become addicted to a destructive pattern of life that has enslaved them. For others, it is the realization that what they possess possesses them. What they have is more important than who they are. Whatever it is, there is always one thing we need to do, one thing we need change, and then and only then will everything fall in place.

The rich man of today's gospel was a good man, but he went away sad because he couldn't make the one change that would have made all the difference in his life. If wisdom consists in knowing what is truly important, then those who are wise know the one thing that needs to be changed in their life and they change it!