



Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries

"Riches and Poverty"

October 14, 2021

Mark 10:23-27 - And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."



Jesus surprised His disciples when He said it was hard for rich people to get to heaven. After all, rich people have a lot of advantages. They can spend all the time they want on worship and Bible study. They can give lots of money to the poor. They can buy their way out of moral problems that the rest of us are stuck with—like the choice to obey a boss who wants us to do something shady, or else lose our jobs. Why should it be so hard for a rich person to get into God's kingdom?

There is one problem that rich people have that the poor do not—they are very likely to overlook their own need for God. Worse, they are tempted to replace the real God with an idol of their own making—whether that is wealth, power, prestige, a family business, or some other false god. Being poor and needy has one positive side to it: You realize that you need help, help from someone outside yourself.

And we find that help in Jesus our Savior. We cry out to Him for what we need, whether it is food and clothing for the body, or forgiveness and life for the soul. As Luther puts it in the *Large Catechism*, "A god means that from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress ... If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true; and, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, faith and God. That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god."

And the Lord answers us! He sees that we need Him. He helps us when we are in trouble, and gives us what we need. Even when we must wait, or when He says No, He has compassion on us and works for our ultimate good. We know this not just from the Bible but also from our own lived experience. He can turn even our poverty and weakness to good, so that we cling to Him with all our heart.

If you are in need of any kind, this is the God you have: One who understands your heart completely, because He Himself has been needy. He was born in a family that couldn't provide Him any better cradle than an animal's feeding trough. He was a refugee as a child in Egypt, and was homeless as an adult. When He suffered and died on our behalf, even His clothes were taken from Him. And they laid Him in a borrowed tomb.

This God says to you, "Come to Me. Let Me take care of you. Let Me make you new and clean in My kingdom. Let Me give you the everlasting life I won when I rose from the dead. I am yours, and you are Mine—forever."

THE PRAYER: Lord, You know my needs. Please use them to bring me close to You. Amen.

This Daily Devotion was written by Dr. Kari Vo.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever been in need of any sort during your life?
2. If so, what was the hardest thing about it?
3. Tell about a time when God met your needs and helped you.

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