

THE DEAL OF A LIFETIME

Devotional for October 14, 2018 based upon Mark 10: 17-31

Suppose someone very reputable says to you, "Go into business with me. It will be very expensive for you, but I guarantee you it will be worth it. Dig up whatever cash you can. Take out all the equity in your home. Cash in all your life insurance policies. Pay the penalty and take all the money out of your IRA's. In every way you can, come up with all the cash that you can and invest it with me. I promise you that you will get back 100 times whatever you invest. If you put in \$10,000, you will get back one million dollars. If you put in \$100,000, you will get back ten million dollars." Is there anybody who would turn his or her back on an opportunity like that?

Well listen again to the words of Jesus in our Bible lesson for this morning. "Truly, I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age – and in the age to come eternal life." That is quite a promise. Whatever you invest, you will receive a hundredfold return. Not a one hundred percent return, which would be only doubling your money, but a hundredfold return, which is getting back one hundred times your original investment. And Jesus is not just offering it. He is guaranteeing it.

A rich young man came up to Jesus one day, seeking the way to eternal life. "Keep the commandments," Jesus said. "I have," the young man replied, "since my youth." Mark then tells us that Jesus said, "You lack one thing. Go, sell what you have and give it to the poor. Then you will have treasures in heaven." And so Mark tells us that the young man turned away sadly, grieving because he had many possessions.

The Deal of a Lifetime. The rich young man turned down a one hundredfold return – the Deal of a Lifetime. Why do you suppose he did it?

First, I believe he turned down the deal of a lifetime BECAUSE HE COULD ONLY SEE WHAT HE WOULD BE GIVING UP, NOT WHAT HE WOULD BE GAINING. I am sure he was accustomed to the best of everything. He did not want to give that up. He valued financial success above everything else. Jesus said that if you do that, your odds for entering the Kingdom of God are equal to that of a camel squeezing through the eye of a needle. Which are pretty slim odds, indeed. Being forced to decide between Jesus and their wealth, most people would only be able to see what they would be giving up, not what they would be gaining.

Second, I believe he turned down the deal of a lifetime BECAUSE HE OVERESTIMATED THE VALUE OF MATERIAL THINGS. Andrew Carnegie was one of the richest men who

ever lived. He was also very generous. Perhaps because as he once said, "Millionaires seldom smile." I have read that Andrew Carnegie practically became allergic to money as he grew older and richer. He was offended, he said, just by the sight and touch of money. And he never carried any of it with him. One time he was put off a London train because he had no money with him to pay the fare.

Why make your greatest value something that will eventually rot or rust? Something that someday you will have to leave behind? Something that by itself cannot give peace of mind? The rich young man overestimated the value of material things.

Third, I believe he turned down the deal of a lifetime BECAUSE HE WAS NOT ABLE TO SEE THAT THE ONLY KIND OF RICHES THAT REALLY COUNT IS BEING RICH TOWARDS GOD.

Someone once said, "We cannot take it with us, but we can send it on ahead." The great test of our faith is whether we really believe the promises of Jesus. Jesus has promised that anything we give to Him, He will return a hundredfold. Does that mean that if we tithe, someday we will be materially rich, just as some television evangelists have suggested? No, it does not mean that. But it does mean that the rewards for following Jesus far exceed the costs. It does mean that in following Jesus you will be making investments that will pay rich dividends for eternity – long after all of your material possessions will have deteriorated into dust.

Someday each one of us will move from this world to the next. We brought nothing with us into this world, and we will take nothing with us out of this world. If the promises of Jesus are true – and I believe that they are - then that means that our hands will be empty so that we will be able to receive from Jesus a hundredfold more than we left behind. Our hands will be empty so that we will be able to receive from Him blessings untold.

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