

## “IT REALLY IS NOTHING THAT YOU HAVE TO DO”

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Another week with a difficult gospel lesson, especially for those of us who in the worldwide view are considered wealthy, whether we think we are or not. Yet, I am not sure that this lesson is totally about how much a person has or does not have, but our attitude of how we think we can have control or that there is something we *must* do to receive an inheritance. After all that was the question that the man asked Jesus, “***What must I do to inherit eternal life?***”

Number one problem with that question is that no one can control what they inherit. An inheritance is a gift given usually out of love from one person to another person following their death. In today’s world unless a person has a will or trust set up, it can become a very messy and long process for the person or persons who feel they should be the recipient of an inheritance.

The number two problem that I see in this is that we look for a formula that that we can or must follow to control the outcome that we want to see happen. The man was looking for *the* formula. Jesus comes back at him with the expected directive to follow the commandments. The man’s answer is that he had done that, since he was young. Then Jesus upped the anti on him and told him to sell all of his positions, give the proceeds to the poor and come and follow him. Could we say that became the man’s stumbling block? You could almost hear him saying, “But if I sell all my positions and give away the proceeds to the poor, don’t I become one of the poor?”

What Jesus is saying does not only sound harsh to the man he is talking to, but I would say to you and me too. Sell all my positions and live on what? Faith that I will receive all that I need and trust it will be provided? That is not going to happen, Jesus, I watch the news, I drive around town, I see the homeless people, that is not the life for me.

When the man went away grieving, I have often wondered if it was because he had not received the game plan on what he must do to inherit eternal life, or was it because he was going to have to go and sell all that he had? The

sad answer is that either way he did not get what Jesus was trying to tell him, and neither did the disciples until he explained it to them. It is not about what we *must* do but all about what God has already done. For you and me, it is impossible, but for God nothing is impossible.

Whether we use the words in this lesson, ***“For God all things are possible”*** or the ones from Luke where Mary answers the angel Gabriel, ***“For nothing will be impossible with God.”***, as any of you who have been around here for a while know that has been my go-to verse for years.

When things do not go the way we want them to go, or heaven forbid there is an emergency, you have to just drop everything and do what you need to do in that moment. It is later when you reflect on it that you realize that you were not alone, but you had the tools that were needed to do what you needed to do. Could it be that Jesus was trying to tell the man and his disciples you already have what you need for eternal life and there is nothing you can do to inherit it. It is a gift from God.

It is what I call the “ah-ha moment”, when we realize that there is no debit or credit card that is going to buy our way into eternal life, Jesus has already taken care of it for each one of us...for the world. We are not to think of our baptism as a once and done event, but it truly is the only thing in our lives that has a lifetime guarantee that we live out daily. Jesus blessed and broke bread, filled the cup and gave thanks and said take eat and drink, for this is my body and blood, given and shed for you for forgiveness of sin and do this in remembrance of me. You might say it is our early inheritance, until we receive our final inheritance of eternal life. No, with Jesus there is nothing we must do, but there are many things we get to do. Amen.