

## *Poor? Not us.*

I have gone through stages in my life where I have had lots of money and traveled the world and I have gone through stages where I lived in a tent and considered free ketchup at McDonalds to be a treat. Mostly I have lived somewhere in between.

I remember one point in my life where money was tight and we weren't sure exactly how we would pay the light bill. At the time my sister and I worked at the same place and one of our bosses came to us to complain about something. He whined a lot. The man made an income in the low six figures and moaned constantly. I never actually met anyone who worked so hard at being unhappy. This particular time he was talking about money. He said to us, "I am so poor." We ignored him, noticing that his watch was worth more than my house, yet he persisted.

"Don't you feel poor?" he asked. My sister replied with a simple no. This amazed him; literally stopped him in his tracks. I have to admit it sort of threw me too because I was still trying to figure out how to pay the light bill. "You aren't poor?" he repeated. I was wondering where she was going with this as well. "No," she answered, without blinking an eye, "***all we lack is money.***"

It kind of took me off guard too. Then I came to the realization that they were, in fact, both right. He was poor. His spirit lacked any sort of treasure laid up for heaven. His pockets were full but his heart was empty. We had a close family, a roof over our heads, good friends, our health and a spirit that yearned to know God. We had been blessed in so many ways. We were rich beyond the dreams of most of the world, all we lacked was money. I felt sorry for my poverty stricken brother. I remembered the words of Jesus;

**"I tell you the truth, it is easier to thread a camel through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven."**

We have all heard this before but how much have we really thought about it. Remember that the man couldn't do it because he was rich and those possessions meant so much to him. He built up a fortune on earth, perhaps over the course of a lifetime and he was reluctant to let it go. His gold, his jewels, his wine and rare foods meant too much to him. Each of these things he held dear in his heart.

And therein lies the problem. It is not the money or the possessions that are bad per se, it is the place they hold in our hearts. Over time each such cherished possession took a place in the mans heart that blocked out the light of God. Each object of desire became like a brick in a wall that he slowly built between himself and his relationship with God. He even recognized this at some level because he came to the Lord and asked for help. He felt the hole that was in his soul and nothing else was working for him. Jesus recognized it as well and told him how to fix it, but the wall was too strong for the man. Like so many of us, he was given the answer to his prayer. Jesus himself told him what path he must follow to find his salvation, but brick by brick he had closed off the light of God. Even when told, he could not see the Way.

If you truly feel a hole in your life, take this time, here in our church, and allow it to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Just for now, do not let your possessions, or your desire for possessions be a wall between you and God. Think of all that you have by way of worldly possessions. Everything you own, especially those things you really cherish. Don't be noble here, bring up, in your own mind, the *stuff* that you like. I collect old arcade machines so I am thinking of them. Maybe you have a set of china, or a TV or something like that. Whatever it is, think of all the things you are attached to and all the things you wish you had.

Now, in your heart, as truly as you can, give up everything. No more possessions, no TV no car, no video, no house, nothing. There you are in rags, sitting on a dirt floor eating rice. Just you and no stuff. Now think of what God means to you. Let the Holy Spirit fill the void left behind by all that stuff. Feel God enter your heart and your life.

And know how truly rich you are when all you lack is money.

If you have any questions or comments about these writings please contact me.

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