

8<sup>th</sup> Monday of Ordinary Time I 2003

Sirach 17: 20-24

But to the penitent he provides a way back, he encourages those who are losing hope!  
Return to the LORD and give up sin, pray to him and make your offenses few.  
Turn again to the Most High and away from sin, hate intensely what he loathes;  
Who in the nether world can glorify the Most High in place of the living who offer their praise?  
No more can the dead give praise than those who have never lived; they glorify the LORD who are alive and well.  
How great the mercy of the LORD, his forgiveness of those who return to him!  
The like cannot be found in men, for not immortal is any son of man.  
Is anything brighter than the sun? Yet it can be eclipsed. How obscure then the thoughts of flesh and blood!  
God watches over the hosts of highest heaven, while all men are dust and ashes.

Mark 10: 17-27

As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"  
Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? <sup>3</sup> No one is good but God alone.  
You know the commandments: 'You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.'"  
He replied and said to him, "Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth."  
Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to (the) poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."  
At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions.  
<sup>4</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"  
The disciples were amazed at his words. So Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!  
It is easier for a camel to pass through (the) eye of (a) needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."  
They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

I remember an old comedy sitcom from my youth called The Real McCoys. The family lived in the hills and Grampa Amos was asked if the preacher's sermon was good that Sunday. Grampa replied, "YEP". Well, what was it about? "SIN" Well what did the preacher say about it? "HE WAS AGIN IT".

These scriptures talk about sin and how it separates us from God. They are leading us to Lent, a special season for praying, fasting and almsgiving.

Sirach tells us to return to the Lord, give up sin and pray. Trust in the Lord who is merciful and forgiving. But it is God who provides the way back, not man.

The Gospel talks of obtaining the Kingdom. The young man is seeking eternal life and says he obeys the Top Ten. Jesus looked at him. This was a real look into the man's heart. Yes murder, adultery and theft may cause one to turn away from God, but there was something else that stood between this young man and God: his love of possessions.

Jesus is not condemning possessions; He is condemning anything that comes between man and God. Is there a message to support the poor? Sure, remember Jesus sees Himself in the poor: "as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

What "riches" do you have that come between you and God? Do not be anxious about them. We have a wonderful season of Lent to pray, fast, and give alms that will help you with your perspective....and in the end, where it is impossible for you alone, all things are possible for God.