

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The young man of this gospel story asking Jesus about eternal life, seems to be really religious. He had accepted all the laws of Moses from his boyhood, he had believed in the absolute power of the commandments. His story seems to be about faith in the law and the commandments. Listening to this we can ask ourselves again and again: what is real faith about?

Faith in our Lord God means priority to Him in our lives above all. But is obedience itself to God's law enough for priority to the faith?

Jesus was not satisfied with this man's answer. He wanted to touch deepest heart of the man, and invited him to something more than faith in the written law. He wanted to invite this man to the faith of the heart.

In Jesus all God's wisdom appears. We heard about the light of God's Wisdom in the first reading. In the second reading the Word of God was compared to a double edged sword that can slip through the secret thoughts of the heart and soul and the body enlightening hidden emotions and thoughts. According to our faith Jesus is the incarnated word of God. In him all God's wisdom appears. Jesus sees the depth of our hearts through God's eyes. In this case he reflects on the deepest desires of this young man.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? – asked the man Jesus. And Jesus answered and called him to join his disciples, but before, to sell all his goods and give the money to the poor. His wisdom meant to see the secret thoughts of this man's heart. Actually he touched his Achilles tendon, the weakest point of this man: that is possessing and getting and collecting things, or even spiritual goods.

This man had had a strong religious practice before, what was necessary or obligatory which was commanded except for one: sharing his free love with God beyond obedience.

Jesus loved him because he recognised that this man wanted to go ahead and make a step forward. Although he had done everything, Jesus invited him to do more: He called him to give up his secret love of his own material security for the Kingdom of God. It soon turned out that the man's attitude was rooted in a certain searching for security. Material security instead of spiritual security, and now he was invited to find the latest one in God's Kingdom: his spiritual security.

This story of the young man is not really about money. It is also about an invitation from Jesus to step further, beyond our own border lines. Do we recognise our invitation? Are we brave enough to step further? This man is scared to give up all his fortune for the love of God. Fortune is more for him than the possibility of spiritual richness tendered by Jesus out of love.

We have known this story as the story of a rich young man. It really turned out that he was rich but his age nowhere is written in the text. So where this conviction might come from, that he was a young man? I think young man means a person who is able to do something for his future. An old man usually does no more than organising his or her past in several ways. But this man wants to step forward towards God's Kingdom. He can be called a young man because he wants to step further. He is looking for something about future. Jesus loves this attitude and he gives him an offer: sell your goods, give the money to the poor and follow me for the sake of the eternal life.

Jesus reflected upon his thirst for a better future and offered him the way of following him, and getting closer to God. Jesus offers a deeper security in life, than what the young man had actually: his main point is getting goods for himself. In the Kingdom of God this is possible only through giving up our deepest desires of getting.

When we simply want to embrace somebody we should put down everything even if we have really good things in our hands at that moment. Expressing love is more important than taking goods in our hands. We need empty hands if we want to embrace the person we love. Material goods are useful in our lives, but at a certain point, it is worth to give them up to get more through real love.

Jesus offers to this man a personal way to follow him. And Jesus offers a personal way to us, too. When has it happened in my life? When have I been offered a greater thing instead of a small one? Have I realised it?

We have given up something for the love of Jesus ...leaving behind our country, our parents to receive more, we have followed our personal call from Jesus. If we see the goal clearly, if we look at Christ we have a real good friendship with him it is possible to find a good place for everything that we have hold in our hands, to embrace eternal life instead. These decisions came from faith, from real faith. Let God help us to have good decisions of faith!