

Daily Devotional, January 18, 2021 Unfailing Love

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" Mark 10:21-23 (NIV)

In the story of the rich young ruler, we see a Bible character that many of us can mostly relate to. At the same time, we are gain new insight into how Jesus views us even when we are far off the mark from being in the right. To be honest, this story is most powerful and persuasive in forcing us to take a look at our own priorities. Jesus is in the middle of heading toward Jerusalem for the final acts of His earthly ministry when suddenly this man appears before Him. Jesus knows this rich young man's heart, for He has seen it far too many times. Christ knows what this man values, and what he covets, and He knows what the man seeks.

The man approaches Jesus with one question on his mind. Whether it is driven by guilt or whether it is self-serving, we cannot be certain, but he asks, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" At one time or another, we all struggle with this same question of assurance no matter where we are on our spiritual walk with Jesus. I believe that we all run into this question and want to receive some assurance that leads us to a place of spiritual and emotional peace beyond our normal everyday understanding. However, we do not typically get the epiphany moment that we would hope for.

Oftentimes we experience a deafening silence that ought to send us back to searching scripture and familiarizing ourselves with what God has previously instructed us. The young man in this story seemed to have great power, success, and wealth yet he was searching for something else, something far beyond what he had previously experienced. Does that sound in any way familiar to some of us? No matter what our power ranking might be on any of the meters of success and wealth, if we are honest, we see ourselves quite clearly. We all yearn for something more regardless of our situation in life.

The great hope in all of this is how Jesus, knowing this young man's heart, would look upon him and love him. Do you get that?! Jesus loved him! This man was searching for something and Jesus knew his heart. More importantly Jesus knew what was holding back this man's faith. Yet, knowing all this, He still loved him. Think about that, Jesus' fallback position towards us is to love us even though He knows everything that holds us back.

Christ in His most wonderful and merciful love is able to see our hearts, our hurts, and our desires, and still love us. Jesus loves you! He loves you with a love that transcends the earthly love that is so familiar to us and yet so flawed. His love is all-knowing and yet still all-loving. This is the model of what our love for others ought to be, but undoubtedly, this will always be something for us to strive for. Let us thank God for God's love and for God's Word and for the Spirit who brings that love to life in our lives today.

Prayer: Most gracious God, Your love never fails. Even when I fail You, You love me all the same. Thank You for a love that never gives up on me. Thank You for the comfort of knowing that I am secure in the promise that nothing can ever separate me from Your love. I thank You for Your perfect love that seeks the best in my life. I am grateful for Your sacrificial love that did not withhold Jesus from me, which makes me realize that You love me greatly. Help me to love as You do. Amen.