

Weekly Gospel Readings
4th Sunday of Hathor

The Danger of Riches

“How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ([Mark 10:23](#))

This Sunday is the Fourth Sunday of Hathor, and the Gospel comes from [Mark 10:17-31](#). In this passage, we read about the man who asked Jesus about what he should do to obtain eternal life ([Mark 10:17](#)). In response, Jesus said to follow commandments. However, when this man said he followed those commandments, Jesus said to Him ““You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”” ([Mark 10:21](#)). Upon hearing this, the man was disheartened ([Mark 10:22](#)).

Jesus then explains to His disciples how difficult it is for those who trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God. ([Mark 10:23-24](#)). Finally, this passage concludes with Jesus sharing the reward for those who forsake all to follow him: ““Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life”” ([Mark 10:29-30](#)). As St. John Chrysostom explains; “Christ did not say this because He hated riches, but because He knew that riches had this man in chains; He commanded him to cast off the weight that hindered him.” (Homily on Matthew 63).

Although this Gospel is often discussed in relation to the danger of trusting in riches, the other liturgical readings for this Sunday reveal a broader theme centered on sacrifice.

In the Pauline Epistle, St. Paul talks about his sufferings and sacrifice: “To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things” ([1 Corinthians 4:11-13](#)). Additionally, at the end of this Epistle, St. Paul encourages the people of Corinth to imitate his actions ([1 Corinthians 4:16](#)).

Additionally, in the Praxis (Acts) readings for today, we read about when the Jews attacked Jason and fellow Christians in Thessalonica. It is interesting hearing about the reasoning of the perpetrators: “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” ([Acts 17:6-7](#)). In this verse, “these men” refer to Sts. Paul and Barnabas, and Jason suffered for simply offering hospitality to Christ’s messengers. His willingness to risk his safety shows the same spirit of self-sacrifice found in St. Paul.

Returning to the Gospel, Jesus is contrasting the rich man and the Disciples. The rich man was not comfortable making any sacrifice—after all, the rich man walked away upset when Jesus told Him to sell his goods—whereas the disciples sacrificed all. Jesus acknowledges the Disciple’s reward by saying “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time” ([Mark 10:29-30](#)).

St. Cyril of Alexandria comments on the disciples’ willingness versus the rich man’s sorrow, saying, “The disciples, having abandoned all worldly things, followed Christ with joy; but the rich man was grieved because he preferred his possessions to the love of God.” (Commentary on Luke, Sermon 122).

All the readings appointed for this Sunday share a common theme: the call to sacrifice. St. Paul sacrifices comfort and honor for the sake of his ministry, Jason sacrifices his safety by supporting the apostles, and the disciples sacrifice everything to follow Christ. The rich man, by contrast, is unable to make such a sacrifice. The Church reminds us that the true danger is not wealth itself, but the unwillingness to let go of anything we cling to more tightly than we cling to Christ. Salvation requires a heart willing to surrender all for Him.

In all our struggles and sacrifices (financial or otherwise), no matter how hard they may be, may we always continue to persevere.

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version (ESV)
- Bible, New King James Version (NKJV)
- St. John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, Homily 63.
- St. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Sermon 122.