

LUKE 6: 20-26

The Maker of Hearts

What is Jesus talking about in today's gospel? Will the poor get to heaven and the rich go to hell? This kind of talk was very radical, in Jesus' time, because the commonly held belief was that those who were rich were blessed by God, and those who were poor or sick had obviously sinned and were far from God's care. The story of Job in the Old Testament describes these beliefs very clearly. Job's friends were adamant that his plight was caused by his sins.

What is Jesus telling us? He is telling us that what we have or don't have is irrelevant, has no meaning.

We have all heard that ten percent of life is about what happens to us, what comes at us, and ninety percent is how we deal with it, how we respond. Jesus is telling us that it's our hearts that matter. Are our hearts turned in on ourselves or opened to God and others.

Our lives, no matter how much we have, or how little we have, or how smart we are, all have blessings and woes, problems and successes. Jesus is telling us that what happens in our lives is not important, that He is, and that how we respond is important. Everything in creation, everything in our lives, is there to lead us to the love of God. God has to become important to us, more important than anything else. We must respond

to God's love for us.

The point of Jesus' teaching in our gospel is don't spend your life chasing after what in the end has no meaning or true value. He is speaking of spiritual maturity. Don't we consider selfish behavior as childish? It is not a coincidence that a behavior we attribute to a mature person, "selflessness" is the fundamental attribute of spiritual maturity.

The idea of spiritual maturity begs a question; what makes us tick, what occupies our hearts, is it our self-interest or can we be occupied by the needs of others, and God?

The truth is that we vacillate, one day, or in certain

circumstances we may be more self-serving than the next. We can get a good sense of how spiritually mature we are by our first thoughts. Every day we are presented with opportunities to be selfless. What are our first thoughts when this happens, when someone in need asks us for help, or someone asks us to do something for them? Are our hearts opened or do we think different things that all begin with I or me: I'm kind of busy now, am I being taken advantage of? I'm not comfortable with this, or what's in it for me.

Our spiritual journey and our life are not two separate things. Our relationship with God doesn't just happen on Sunday morning. Our spiritual journey is our

life and our life is our spiritual journey.

We can't simply love ourselves, and serve our self-interest as a child, we must love and serve the interest of others and our Father in heaven? It is not rocket science !!!!!

From the Catholic Catechism we learn we are spirit and matter. Thus we live in two dimensions time and space, and the spiritual dimension. Most of the time we live as though the physical dimension is the only reality and see the spiritual dimension as illusory and abstract, when in fact the spiritual dimension is the only lasting reality. We are all in the process of dying.

Jesus is telling us that our path to being aware of

and actively participating on our spiritual journey is through our hearts. It is said that God is the maker of hearts, yours and mine. We have to cooperate with His efforts.

Many, even people we know and love, think things of God, the spiritual life, and His Church are for holy people. But being alive means that we are already spiritual beings, and are already on our spiritual journey, whether we like it or not. Jesus will help us form our hearts if we let Him. Our spiritual journey in God's love, life and spirit is already happening. It is called, "our life".