

## Wednesday in Trinity 15 Week, Year C

*Luke 18*

Here he is: the rich man. Now we have the momentous episode where we have someone coming up to Jesus who is filthy rich. We've heard Jesus teach about money a few passages ago, now we have the personification of wealth occupying the centre of today's chapter. Like most folk, the rich man reckons he's got the moral and spiritual life down pat. Unlike most folk, he's got oodles of cash. So he rocks up to Jesus, asks how he can inherit eternal life...answers correctly...but puts his foot in it.

Jesus has left out the very first commandment and the rich man hasn't picked up on it. What's the commandment? "I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other Gods before me. (Deut 5.6a, 7)"

That's the rub. God comes first. Nothing – *nothing* – is to stand in the way of God. If the rich man wanted to inherit the life of the Kingdom of God, he had to abandon the values of the old world and totally trust himself to the new world, God's world. If he was serious, he'd give up the things that held him back from God. In this case, the challenge was to give up his wealth. He had to replace his love of wealth and status with love for God.

Sadly, he couldn't do it. Money was his god. He left deeply disappointed.

This episode is a living example of the parable that Jesus had just given moments before. It's all about the attitude of the human heart towards God. If the heart's not directed to God it doesn't matter if you're like the Pharisee or the rich man leading good moral lives and being upstanding citizens – there's no place for you in the Kingdom. But if we're like the tax-collector in the parable or the blind man beside the road, faithful, hearts turned to God – we're in.