

Biblical Background

MARK 10:17-30

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: In the beginning of chapter 10 Jesus leaves the Galilee region traveling south through the Jordan River Valley towards Judea. Judea is the region or county in which the city of Jerusalem sits. The journey from the Jordan to Judea would be from a river valley to hill country and mountains.

TERMS: *Rich man, eye of a needle* Jesus and the Kingdom of God is all about status reversal. It is with humility, choosing to bow to another and their needs, that one is raised. In choosing status in the Kingdom of God one will be lowered. Like a camel would have to do in order to fit through an eye of a needle. Some scholars reflect that there was a passage or eye in a mountain area that camels would have to get down on their knees to get through. That is the image - it takes great humility, and you can not take anything with you to make it through, belongings would not fit. Sacrificial love is the way of the kingdom of God. In opposition to the seeking of status the ways of the world encourage.

Loved him In Mediterranean culture, "love" is translated as "attachment" in an active and practical way. Jesus is attached to the young man. Jesus wants him to be a true follower, but Jesus can see there are many obstacles for the man to become truly free, thus the image of a camel passing through the eye of a needle. Jesus, in sadness, recognizes there is too much for this man to let go of, he is not there yet. This is so different than a poor man with little possessions, resources, or attachment. The poor are in a freer state - this state to respond to the call of Jesus - not so much to let go of. This is why Jesus tells us...blessed are the poor.

CULTURAL INSIGHT: In Mediterranean times, one's possessions were family, home, and land. This is what gave someone status or made them rich. It is status, Jesus is saying, that all must forsake to live in the Kingdom of God. One must not be attached to the possessions, resources, and status. We must let go of these to seek the treasure of heaven. God will replace the sources of sustenance for anyone who willingly sacrifices. Jesus says, "Come follow me," and promises the rich man fellowship in a new community with far greater "riches" than anything his family with only material resources would be able to provide.

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: In Mediterranean culture the greedy rich want for nothing because they surround themselves with resources that meet all their needs. They are in control and act as their own god in their own lives. Therefore it is impossible to be a participant in the kingdom of God. To receive the treasure of heaven one must be in a state of receptivity. Therefore grace and goods can flow through one to meet the needs of the impoverished, those that stand wanting. And one through emptying themselves for others can then be in a state to be given too, to be able to receive from God and others. In this state of giving and receiving one's family grows into all who share in this connection of giving and receiving. This is the state of being in the kingdom of God. One who clings to their own resources is not in a state in which they can participate. They are closed off. One must be open and receptive to be nourished by the treasures of heaven.

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME
AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: What lives on after a person dies?

CHARACTER QUALITIES: RECEIVING OTHERS
HONORING OUR ANCESTORS

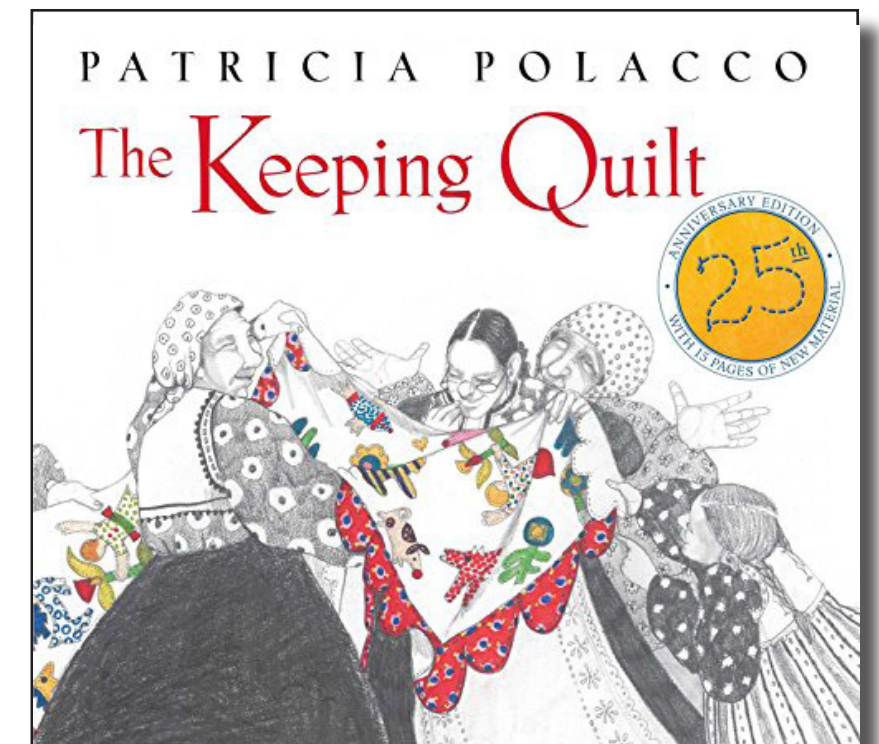
FAMILY ACTIVITIES: 1) Offer support to someone who has a family member with a terminal illness. Anyone facing these realities walks closely with God, realizing that death comes to us all - sometimes even when someone has so much life left in them. People and families in this situation can be deeply in touch with all that has real value. Can you visit, send a card, or make a meal for a family in this place? Try to learn from them what Jesus is talking about regarding our attachment to the things of this world.

2) Practice taking your eyes off your personal or family goals of attainment, and put your eyes on the rest of the world and the realities that future generations will inherit. This is more difficult to do than you would think as modern advertising keeps feeding us that we need more and more. Work together as a family to build the world that you want your future generations to inherit. Activity: Gather magazines and have children cut out pictures and words to paste together to create an image of the world they would like their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren to inherit.

CYCLE B 28TH SUNDAY
ORDINARY TIME

Living Grace

"JESUS INVITES US TO TRUE RICHES"



In The Keeping Quilt, Anna's mother said, "We will make a quilt to help us always remember home. It will be like having the family in backhome Russia dance around us at night." And so it was. From a basket of old clothes, Anna's babushka, Uncle Vladimir's shirt, Aunt Havalah's nightdress, and an apron of Aunt Natasha's become the Keeping Quilt, passed along from mother to daughter for almost a century. For four generations the quilt is a Sabbath tablecloth, a wedding canopy, and a blanket that welcomes babies warmly into the world. This true story and the quilt are symbols of the enduring love and faith of the author's family.

Art & Faith

CELEBRATING THE BEAUTY & TRADITION
OF SACRED ART



EDUCATING THE RICH ON THE GLOBE
Sculpture by Todd Otterness ~ 1997
Upper Broadway ~ New York, NY USA

EXPLORING THE ART: USING ART & HUMOR TO MAKE A POINT

In this piece the sculptor, Tom Otterness, is poking fun at NYC's relentless drive to make money. In addition to this one he had a collection of sculptures that graced five miles of the New York City Broadway 60th and 168th Streets after years of planning and preparation. He is one of the most humorous contemporary public sculptors living today. His larger than life-size bronzes have taken root all over the United States in public and civic spaces. Otterness elevates the goofy in high-priced bronze works that are also endearing. You want to like these goofy characters, and they are likeable, but not easy like a Disney character. In his art exhibit in New York on Park Avenue in 2005, Otterness' sculptures about money dominated the streets. "Free Money", two goofy figures with turtle-like bodies embrace in a dance on a huge money bag that appears to be stuffed with money. Another sculpture in this parade of sculptures that bears the theme of money is a giant penny being pushed by little bronze characters.

Sunday Gospel

MARK 10:17-30

As Jesus was setting out on a journey,
a man ran up,
knelt down before him, and
asked him,
"Good teacher, what must I do to
inherit eternal life?"

Jesus answered him, "Why do you
call me good?"

No one is good but God alone.
You know the commandments:

You shall not kill;
you shall not commit adultery;
you shall not steal;
you shall not bear false witness;
you shall not defraud;
honor your father and your mother."

He replied and said to him,
"Teacher, all of these I have observed
from my youth."

Jesus, looking at him, loved him and
said to him,

"You are lacking in one thing.

Go, sell what you have, and give to
the poor
and you will have treasure in heaven;
then come, follow me."

At that statement his face fell,
and he went away sad, for he had
many possessions.

Jesus looked around and said to his
disciples,

"How hard it is for those who have
wealth

to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his
words.

So Jesus again said to them in reply,
"Children, how hard it is to enter the
kingdom of God!

It is easier for a camel to pass
through the eye of a needle
than for one who is rich to enter the
kingdom of God."

They were exceedingly astonished
and said among themselves,
"Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said,
"For human beings it is impossible,
but not for God.

All things are possible for God."

Peter began to say to him,
"We have given up everything and
followed you."

Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you,
there is no one who has given up
house or brothers or sisters
or mother or father or children or
lands

for my sake and for the sake of the
gospel

who will not receive a hundred times
more now in this present age:

houses and brothers and sisters
and mothers and children and lands,
with persecutions, and eternal life in
the age to come."

Read-aloud video link:

[THE KEEPING QUILT](#)

Written & Illustrated by Patricia Polacco

Bonus: You can watch an entertaining and inspiring video with the author
[HERE](#) and you can see the real Keeping Quilt, too!

Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

JESUS INVITES US TO A LIFE OF VALUE, VERSUS ONE FILLED WITH VALUABLES.

The past couple of decades have taught us that anything is possible, the impact of 9/11, a major cities by hurricanes and earthquake a war that we started, a global pandemic, and immigration, economic and environmental crises. All of this is evidence of what Jesus tries to tell us in this Gospel - no matter what kind of materials we use to build our "castles" in this world, they all can come tumbling down. Whether we put our trust in financial structures, church leadership, the United States as a super power, our health, family or job related status - all can come tumbling down. Jesus pulls us out of our attachments to be someone and something bigger than ourselves.

To truly follow Jesus we have to take on an eternal perspective. We must be in touch with deeper selfless values - ones that will keep us standing in the storm, in grief, or in the loss of our house and belongings. Jesus call his followers to have lives that represent eternal values, the values of the Kingdom of God. He promises that through giving up, we will be given more - the inner treasures, one's that "no thief can break in and steal".

In our children's story, Gramma Anna gives up all her riches to seek a more abundant life in a new country for her family and for the generations to follow. She does not live for today, hoarding her treasures. She lives for the future of her family - her own children, and her children's children. Her life becomes a beautiful example of acceptance of the invitation that Jesus offered the rich young man.

For every decision Native American's make as a tribe they think about how this decision will affect the next 7 generations. It is with this kind of heart that Jesus invites us to live lives beyond ourselves - lives rooted in the eternal perspective. Through this "key" - the Camel's Needle which we can only get through on our knees (in humility) and with no belongings - will we be able to pass through to live the life of abundance here and now. This is the heart that is rooted in eternal values. Only with God's grace Jesus acknowledges is this possible.

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

MY STORY: Can you imagine if you had to leave everything behind with only your clothes on your back to go to another country? What would you wear? What we be hard to leave behind? How did your family get to this country? Did your ancestors sacrifice to get here? How can you and your family show your gratitude to them for their bravery?

THE CHILDREN'S STORY: Why do you think Gramma Anna's family would make such a big sacrifice - to come to leave everything to come to a new country? Was making this quilt a good idea? Why? Where did you see the quilt in the story? What did the quilt symbolize?

THE GOSPEL STORY: Would the rich young man have had a hard time doing what Great Gramma Anna did for her family? How does Jesus challenge him? What do you think Jesus means by treasure in heaven? What do the eternal values offer us?

How does giving up what gives us security or identity here on earth, offer us more? Jesus says it is hard to think this way. How does prayer offer us the grace to let go of our "stuff"?