

## 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday In Ordinary Time, Year B

### Wisdom 7:7-11

*The book of Wisdom, or the "Wisdom of Solomon," was written centuries after Solomon by an author of Jewish background who had knowledge of Greek philosophy.<sup>1</sup>*

**7** I prayed, This prayer is given in Wisdom 9. **and prudence was given me;** Prudence is understanding. Solomon preferred wisdom over power, riches, health, comeliness, and light. Solomon prayed for wisdom and it came to him along with all these good things.<sup>2</sup> **I pleaded, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.** It is clear here that "wisdom" is another expression for "God."<sup>3</sup> The wisdom to master life's challenges can be found only in one's relationship with God. The Hebrew view is practical in focus. Wisdom is expressed in Godly living. For the Lord gives wisdom and out of his mouth come knowledge and understanding. This means that as we not only read and study God's holy Word, but also live it out, we come to understand what is right and just. Wisdom will enter into our hearts and knowledge will be pleasant to our souls. Wisdom will protect us from the ways of deceitful people. A person who is full of wisdom is a person who is sensitive to God and willingly subjects himself to Him in everything. A wise person is one who is at peace with God, knows God, and spends a great deal of time with God.<sup>6</sup>

**8** I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her, **9** nor did I liken any priceless gem to her; because all gold, in view of her, is a little sand, and before her, silver is to be accounted mire.

**10** Beyond health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than the light, because the splendor of her never yields to sleep. This means that wisdom never ceases to exist.<sup>4</sup>

**11** Yet all good things together came to me in her company, and countless riches at her hands.

### Hebrews 4:12-13

*Our reading today is about God's warnings based on Israel's infidelity and tells us to persevere for the word of God judges rightly. Since nothing is unknown to it; it is light, those of the present generation will be judged worthy or unfit to enter God's rest. This is the particular judgment.<sup>2</sup>*

#### Brothers and sisters:

**12** Indeed the word of God This refers back to verses 7 through 11. The word of God is His judgment, and you are judged by how well you have kept His covenant.<sup>2</sup> **is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword,** A two-edged sword cuts no matter which way you swing it. Here we are talking about its power in respect to judgment, and the fact that you can't escape it.<sup>2</sup> **penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow,** The conception of man was that he was composed of body, soul, and spirit and like joints and marrow they are intimately connected. The statement that the Word is sharp enough to separate them is made to emphasize its penetrating power.<sup>2</sup> **and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart.** The Word has a knowledge of human beings which only God has.<sup>2</sup>

**13** No creature is concealed from him, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him The word of God is not merely words from God, a vehicle for communicating ideas. It is living and life changing. The power of the word is dynamic as it works in us. Since nothing can be hidden from God, He sees all we do and knows all we think.<sup>6</sup> **to whom we must render an account.** These last two verses continue the warning to persevere, for the Word of God judges, and judges rightly, for

nothing is unknown to it; in its light, those of the present generation will be judged worthy or unfit to enter God's rest.<sup>4</sup>

### Mark 10:17-30

*Today we hear Jesus' teaching about riches. It consists of three units on wealth and the kingdom: a. The story of the rich man, b. Jesus' instruction to His disciples, and c. His teaching about rewards for giving up riches.<sup>2</sup>*

**17**As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, This is a rarely used form of address for a rabbi. It acknowledges Him as a teacher of the spiritual life.<sup>2</sup> what must I do to inherit eternal life?" The kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup>

**18**Jesus answered him, "Why do you call me good? Jesus is not rejecting the praise He has been offered, He wants to show the depth of this man's words: He is good, not because He is a good man, but because He is God, who is goodness itself.<sup>2</sup> No one is good but God alone.

**19**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." Jesus then recites the second part of the Ten Commandments that deals with our relationships with each other. "You shall not defraud" could be a restatement of "you shall not steal" or it could be a reference to the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments which deal with coveting. If it is the latter case, He has addressed all seven commandments that are to govern our human relationships. The Commandments are the very core of the Law and keeping them is necessary for attaining eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

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

**21**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." In Judaism wealth was often taken as a sign of divine favor and there was an obligation to give alms to the poor. What makes this man's case so hard is that he is to forego even the privilege of almsgiving for the sake of sharing in Jesus' lifestyle of total dependence on God while proclaiming the coming of His kingdom. Jesus knows that this man has a generous heart. God calls everyone to holiness, but holiness is reached by different routes. It is up to every individual to take the necessary steps to discover which route God want him to follow. It is not an absolute commandment for all to give everything away, but we are not to place obstacles in the way.<sup>2</sup>

**22**At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. These possessions were probably property ownership with the financial benefits which result. This points out the difficult choice which must be made by all--whether to cast aside the impediments, whatever they may be, and follow Jesus or not. The rich man asked the question, but Jesus' answer was too hard for him.<sup>2</sup>

**23**Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, This was a private instruction for the disciples.<sup>2</sup> "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" In themselves material things are good; they are resources God has made available to people for their development in society. But, excessive attachment to things is what makes them an occasion to sin. The sin lies in "trusting" in them, as if they will solve all life's problems, and turning one's back on God. St. Paul calls covetousness, idolatry. Christ excludes from the kingdom of heaven anyone who becomes so attached to riches that his life is geared around them. Or, more accurately, that person excludes himself.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>24</sup>The disciples were amazed at his words. They are astonished! From childhood they have been taught that riches are a reward and Jesus has just told them they can become an impediment.<sup>2</sup> So Jesus again said to them in reply, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

<sup>25</sup>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.” Attempts to soften this by inventing a gate in Jerusalem called the Needle’s Eye have no basis in fact and miss the point. Jesus is using hyperbole to make the point that riches are a real impediment to following him.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>26</sup>They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, “Then who can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup>Jesus looked at them and said, “For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God.” Jesus quotes Genesis 18:14 which recalls God’s power to fulfill His promise to Abraham.

<sup>28</sup>Peter began to say to him, “We have given up everything and followed you.” Peter, as spokesman for all the disciples points out that they have done what the rich man couldn’t. Behind this statement is the question: “What is the reward for accepting the challenge of discipleship?”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Jesus said, “Amen, I say to you, Here Jesus answers the underlying question. 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

<sup>30</sup>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, Opposition is part of the reward for giving things up out of love for Jesus. A Christian’s glory lies in becoming like the Son of God, sharing in His Cross so later we can share in His Glory.<sup>2</sup> and eternal life in the age to come.” Not only will we get rewards here on earth, we will gain our inheritance as children of God.<sup>2</sup>

*Some of the information in this commentary was taken from: (1) “Workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 2009” by Mary A. Eble, (2) St. Charles Borromeo online bible study, (3) “Collegeville Bible Commentary: Wisdom,” by John E. Rybolt, C.M., (4) “The Jerome Biblical Commentary,” (5) “Workbook for lectors and gospel readers: 1997” by Lawrence E. Mick, and (6) “The Bread of Life Catholic Bible Study” by Deacon Ken e<sup>3</sup> Marie Finn.*

*In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled this commentary.*