

“The Hundred Fold”

based on the account of the Rich Young Man from the Gospel of Mark (10:17-31)



I watched him fall to his knees
hurriedly, in his zeal, to catch Jesus before we were leaving town.

I knew that look—I could see it not only in his eyes,
but in his very body—he could not forget Jesus or His words.

There was something about Him—
something in Him that his heart had found, and had longed for for so long.

I knew that look—I knew that desire—I too had felt it.

His face shone in eagerness and expectation—

I could see he was ready to receive

But I had seen this expressed in him before:

in our time in that city,

in all of Jesus’ teachings, miracles, and public encounters, he had been there.

He was always the last to leave—

he drank in Jesus’ words,

soaked them up as the parched earth does the rain—

he had even provided for us during our stay—
a visible expression of his growing love.

Yet, nothing...

I thought that we would not see him again,
much the same way as with so many others before him in our travels...

But there he was, on his knees.

Unaware of our presence, unashamed of his public display...
not knowing that he had just asked the question that would mark his heart forever:

“What must I do, Good Teacher, to inherit eternal life?”

There was only one thing left for him, as Jesus clearly said—
the Commandments weren’t enough—there was more he felt—
“You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and follow me.”

Words similar to these were spoken to me in the boat that day—
and like a child, I was brought to my knees in surrender—
I knew I could not run anymore from this One who had caught my heart.

That is what Jesus had last said, before we set out to leave:

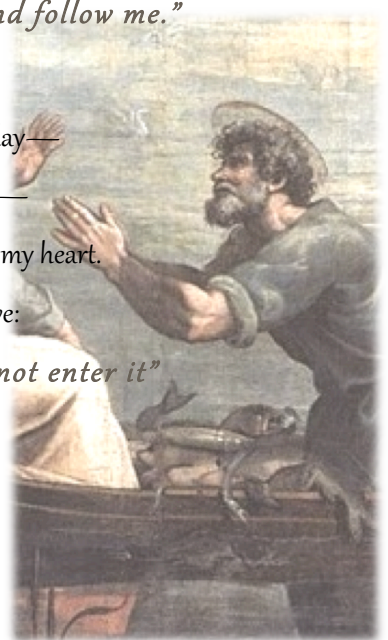
“Those who do not accept the Kingdom as a child will not enter it”

By your grace alone, Lord, I did that.

But was I really in the Kingdom?

I saw him fall to his knees,
and now I watched his face fall.

The glow, the love, the hope, the desire fell away
as quickly and spontaneously as they’d come.



I saw before my eyes the thorny soil Jesus had told us about—
the Word he just received was being strangled
by the attachments and cords around his heart.
His desires were so pure, so good—how could this be?
And yet, he rose from the ground, walking away in sadness and silence...
leaving behind the Answer to all his yearning.



Had he not seen the love in Jesus' eyes?
That unmistakable and special look I too had seen?
That was the look that empowered me to leave my boat, leave my nets...
leave my family, my routine, my home, my land, my respect...
that was the look his riches denied—
choked and blinded by the weeds of his heart.

What happened next amazed us all—
a camel through the eye of a needle?
Do any of us qualify, then?
Is my renunciation in vain—
are my desires, too, so feeble, mere “counterfeit money?”¹

¹ This was a saying St. Therese used to describe beautiful declarations that we say to the Lord but do not put into practice

And as I was, I spoke—
my impulsiveness and passion proved again to be a source of grace,
and opened the way for a fundamental teaching on the hundred-fold.
And I had only begun to speak those words: “We have given up everything...”
when He dispelled our fears and doubt:

With sublime authority, with strong love,
He pronounced the words which define the economy of the Kingdom:



*“There is no one who has given up...
for my sake and that of the Gospel
who will not receive
a hundred times more now”...*

And He listed them all!
All I had just been dwelling upon!
*“Houses, brothers, sisters, mothers,
children, lands, with persecutions,
and eternal life in the age to come.”*

I could not doubt. I could not fear.
I was overjoyed—I was overwhelmed by His generous love.
He knows who I am! He knows my heart!
And yet, it is faithfulness and trust He rewards—one hundred-fold....

...That was years ago.
I could not see then the hundred-fold of which He spoke—though I believed.
And no sooner had He risen, ascended, and sent His Spirit
did I begin to see it alive before me:

All of the new believers I baptized: children
All of the places I preached and traveled to in His Name: lands
All of the moments of love and Christian fellowship, so true and real: houses
All of the new brothers I ordained: brothers
And as He promised, all of the crosses, dangers, hatred, misunderstandings: persecutions—
our share in His Cross—for we love and follow a crucified and risen Lord.

I could go on...
every day, the hundred-fold reveals itself to me,
places a new installment in my hands—
not so that I can cling to it,
store it up in a treasure chest for my personal consolation,
but so that I, like a poor and loving child,
may return the gift back in love to the Father.

For His love is enough!
Back then, I didn't know it fully.
His love is all of the recompense I could ask for—and more than I deserve.



And yet, so that our joy may be complete in His,
He has promised, and He gives, the hundred-fold.
To all who, like a child, love Him more than life itself
and risk it all for the sake of Divine love—
who are not held back by fears or personal riches,
and who count all as loss for the sake of knowing Him—
the hundred-fold joy, the hundred-fold gain, the hundred-fold love will be given...
and lived.



*“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant
searching for fine pearls.*

*When he finds a pearl of great price,
he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.*

Matthew 13:45-46



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Sr. Rachel, sctjm

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