**SUNDAY 10/10/21**

**SERMON**

**MARK 10:17-31**

When Amanda was 4 years old her Daddy gave her a necklace of fake pearls. Amanda treasured that necklace, and loved her Daddy for his beautiful gift.

She wore it every day, and showed it to everyone she met.

One night, when she was 6 years old, her Daddy asked Amanda:

 “Do you love me?”

Amanda was surprised and said: "You know I love you, Daddy."

And Dad said: "Then give me your necklace".

She started crying and said: "I can't."

The next night, Dad asked again: "Do you love me?"

Amanda climbed up into his lap and said: "You know I love you."

And Dad said: "Then give me your necklace."

Amanda cried again and whispered: "I can't"

This went on for several nights.

Finally, one evening, as her Daddy was sitting in his chair,

 Amanda silently came to him, and with tears in her eyes,

 she took off her precious necklace, and put it in his hands.

Daddy thanked her.

Then he reached into his pocket and took out a pale blue box and gave it to her.

When Amanda opened it, she saw a beautiful necklace made of real pearls.

She hugged him and said: "I love it Daddy, it is so much better that the other one."

Dad helped her put it on, and they sat for a long time together.

Amanda gave up what she thought was important and valuable,

 and received something much more precious.

In our Gospel reading this morning, we encounter a young man

 who faced the same difficult decision as Amanda.

He had kept God's commandments, yet wanted one thing more:

 he wanted to receive eternal life.

Jesus loved this young man, and He wanted to grant his request.

But in order to accomplish this, the man would have to let go of his treasures.

Jesus told him to sell what he had and follow him.

But he did not want to give up his possessions.

He missed out on the opportunity of letting go of what he owned,

 so he could follow Jesus.

The man was shocked and went away grieving.

How often do we cling to the things we have collected during our lives,

 instead of discovering a whole new way of living.

When we follow Jesus, life may be difficult and troublesome,

 but it is a whole lot more interesting, fascinating, and amazing

Lee was a reporter for the Chicago Tribune and had been assigned

 to write a series of articles about Chicago's neediest people

 shortly before Christmas.

One of stories was about the Delgado family,

 consisting of a grandmother named Perfecta and her two

 granddaughters, Jenny age 13, and her sister Lydia 11 years old.

Lee had been totally unprepared as he walked into their two room apartment.

He found bare walls, no furniture, no rugs,

 nothing but a kitchen table, and a handful of rice in the cupboards.

He learned during the interview that Jenny and Lydia

 only had one short-sleeved dress each,

 plus a thin gray sweater which they shared.

On cold days when the girls walked the half-mile to school,

 one of the girls would start with the sweater,

 and then give it to the other at the halfway mark.

It was all they had.

Perfecta wanted more for her granddaughters and would gladly have worked,

 but her severe arthritis and age made work too difficult and painful.

The article Lee wrote described the poverty of many families like the Delgado's.

A week later he decided to check up on the Delgado family.

When Jenny opened the door he couldn't believe what he saw.

His article on the Delgado's had touched the hearts of many subscribers

 who responded with gifts of furniture, and appliances, and rugs,

 clothes, dozens of coats, scarves, and gloves.

The girls wouldn't have to share a sweater any longer.

There were boxes and bags of food everywhere.

They had so much food that the cupboards and closets couldn't contain it.

Someone had even donated a Christmas tree,

 and under it were mounds of presents, and hundreds of dollars in cash.

Lee was astonished.

But what surprised him the most was what he found

 Perfecta and her granddaughters doing.

They were preparing to give most of it away.

"Why would you give so much of this away?" Lee asked.

Perfecta responded, "This is wonderful, this is very good.

 We did nothing to deserve this.

 It is a beautiful gift.

 But our neighbors are still in need.

 We cannot have plenty while they have nothing.

 This is what Jesus would want us to do."

Lee was dumbfounded, he could not think of anything at all to say.

He watched in silence as the girls happily carried gifts to all the neighbors.

When we trust in God, a window of opportunity opens.

There is a chance to be a part of mercy and grace, generosity and love.

When we follow Jesus, we truly experience His blessings.

Don't miss it.

Don't miss the opportunity.

It may be a long time before you recognize another opportunity.

God is doing something

God is doing something through us.

Saints are simply ordinary people,

 doing extraordinary things,

 which most people find crazy.

But with God all things are possible,

 if only we follow Him.

AMEN