

To help us think about the message of our Gospel reading this morning, we're going to start off with a fun auction.

We're going to get a feel for what it might have been like for the young man in the story. He was very wealthy and never really had to worry about money. We get the impression he was able to buy anything he wanted, whenever he wanted it.

So in our auction, we're going to pretend that money is no object. You've got millions to spend and can bid as much as you like for the objects on offer.

### **LOT 1 Personal Image**

So first item is a personalized number plate:

JH 007

(In a recent auction, one number plate sold for £10,000)

### **LOT 2 A piece of history**

Handbag – similar to the one used by Margaret Thatcher on her last visit to Number 10

(Sold at auction for £47,500)

### **LOT 3 Appreciation of the arts**

A unique painting by a well known artist

(Last February Gauguin's picture of two Tahitian girls sold privately for \$300,000,000)

## **LOT 4 Living life in the fast lane**

Ferrari... no ordinary car!

(1962 Ferrari 250 GTO, which won the 1963 World GT Championships, sold for \$38,115,000 in 2014).

## **Returning to our Gospel Reading**

A young man asks Jesus – “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus replies – “Keep the Commandments...

Don't kill,

Don't steal

Be faithful in your relationships

Don't be dishonest

Respect your father and mother

Love your neighbour as yourself

The man says, “I have done all these things - Is there anything more that I must do?”

Jesus tells him – go and sell all that you have, give it to the poor and then you will have riches in heaven.

When he heard this, the man was very sad and went away, because he was very rich.

For that young man, the cost of discipleship was too high. He was wealthy, and presumably enjoyed the life style of never having to worry about money, and buying all the things that he wanted.

This is a hard message for us all to take on board. Not because we're all incredibly wealthy, but because we all need money to pay the day to day bills, buy food and enable us to enjoy the leisure activities we might take part in.

To understand it, I think we need to remember something else that Jesus said on another occasion. He said,

*where your heart is, there will be your treasure too.*

Following Jesus isn't just about obeying a set of commandments – “don't do this or do that” and we will be part of God's Kingdom and share in his eternal life.

We need to put our hearts into following the way of Jesus.

Modelling our lives on his teaching and example needs to become something that we are passionate about. It needs to be in our hearts. When something is in our hearts, it begins to affect the way we think and behave.

Jesus tried to help the young man in the Gospel reading today, to realise that his wealth and love of the lifestyle that went with it, was making him blind to the needs of those around him. In challenging him to go and sell all he had, Jesus tried to open his eyes to see that as well as keeping the commandments, he needed to be prepared to be part of God's work by caring for those in need.

I think that the message for us today, is that in following Jesus, we too are challenged to put our hearts into being a Christian.

It isn't just about making a set of promises and leaving it at that.

It is about trying to live out those promises in all the decisions that we make in our journey through life.

It is about being passionate in our faith – standing up for the values that Jesus calls us to live by – love, peace, forgiveness, generosity, caring for those in need – loving our neighbour as ourselves.

It is about how we use the resources that we have, to show that our hearts are in what we are doing.

That might be about giving some of our money to support charity, it might be about giving of our time, energy or skills in the life of the church or wider community.

Putting our heart into following the way of Christ will be expressed in different ways for each of us.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, gave up a privileged life style to go and work amongst the poor on the streets of Calcutta. Throughout her life she challenged world leaders and helped many to see the needs of those around them. She inspired many to respond to the need of the most vulnerable in society. Mother Teresa put her heart into sharing in God's work – She was officially hailed as a saint by Pope Francis, in a special ceremony in Rome yesterday.

We are not all called to live a life like that of Mother Teresa, but we are all called to put our heart into following the way of Christ.

Our prayer is that, as the parents and God parents of those children being baptised today make promises on their behalf, God's Spirit will plant a seed of faith in their hearts which will grow, and enable them

as they journey through life to put their hearts into being a Christian.  
Amen.