



**Orthodox Mission of the Entrance of
the Theotokos into the Temple**

**306 W. Main Street Emmitsburg, MD
21727**

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<http://EntranceMission.org>

For Where Your Treasure Is, There Will Your Heart Be Also!
September 12, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

... for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

Our Gospel lesson for this Sunday relates one of the most fascinating encounters in all the Gospels. St. Matthew says that a man came to Jesus, asking Him what he had to do to gain eternal life. Jesus replied with a straightforward answer. He must keep the commandments and love his neighbor as himself. The man replied with an answer that was astonishing. He said to Jesus, "All these things I have done from my youth up." Jesus then said to him, clearly discerning the problem in the man's life, that he lacked one thing. He must take all his riches, sell them, and distribute the proceeds to the poor and follow Him. Then, and only then, would he have treasure in heaven.

We know the outcome of this story, for we have all heard it a hundred times or more. The man was not willing to do what Jesus asked. Looking upon the rich man with sorrow, He said to His disciples that it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Nevertheless, with God, all things would be possible.

What I find so very fascinating and disconcerting about his lesson is the reply of the rich man to Jesus at the outset. All these things, he said, he had done from his youth up. All the commandments and the love of neighbor he had practiced from his youth up. Who among us could say that? And Jesus did not

correct him. Who among us could say that we have kept the commandments of God and shown love to our neighbor consistently throughout our lives? I could not say that, and I am quite sure that you could not either!

And yet, he lacked one thing. His heart was not where it needed to be. We can follow the rules and regulations, keeping the commandments and attending to the needs of the poor, and still have our hearts in some thing or some purpose or someone other than God. For what really matters to us – where our treasure is – will be where our heart is as well.

The question each of us must ask is what our treasure is. We all know how to discern that; we need only look within. All of the examples of treasure apart from God need no separate recounting: wealth, money, success, self, comfort, security, etc. We all know what our “ultimate concerns” are apart from God. But what does need to be said is that we must realize that everything, every good and wonderful thing that we value in life, comes to us from God Himself: our families, our wealth, our talents, our very lives. All these good things come to us from God, as His gift. And yet, it is precisely the misuse of these very gifts from God that make them into idols that take His place. Our treasure, our ultimate concern, should not be in the gifts that God generously and freely gives, but in Him, the Giver of every gift. The man who came to Jesus had abundant gifts from God, but rather than looking to Him as his true treasure, he looked to the things God gave him. His heart was in the acquisition and increase of those things, not in the abundance and endless self-giving Grace of God.

Each of us is in the same position. We live in the wealthiest nation on the earth, a nation rich with natural resources and every wonderful blessing. God did not give those things to us for their own benefit. He gave them to us as a blessing for all people, to be stewarded and shared. If we make our wealth and well-being our treasure and look away from the purpose for which God gave them, we are walking away from the Lord just as truly and really as the man did in our Gospel lesson. God Himself is the giver of every blessing, and it is in Him that our true treasure must lie. Only by looking to Him, trusting in Him, drawing closer to Him, and following Him will our hearts rest in the Abundant and Eternal Life that He alone can give. For truly it is as our Lord said, “... where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. “

Fr. Elias

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