

## What do you want?

Luke 18:18-30, 35-43

July 6, 2008

What do you want? I'm serious! What do you want?

Do you want to make some changes in your life? Do you want to lose weight or stop smoking or eat healthier or spend more time with your family? Do you want to learn a new language or learn a new craft or learn ways to boost your confidence?

Do you want to repair a broken relationship or breathe new life into a dormant relationship? Do you want to feel closer to your wife or your kids or your brother? Do you just want a friend?

Do you want to feel useful? Do you want to do something that means something to somebody? Do you want to feel needed? Do you want to make a difference? Do you want to make the world a better place?

Do you want to be happy? Do you want to make people happy?

Do you want to know you're living the life that God has called you to live? Do you want to be a better person? A better Christian? Do you want to feel closer to God?

What do you want?

Sometimes we aren't honest enough -- with God, with other people, even with ourselves -- not honest enough to admit what we really want or to ask for it ... out loud!

Maybe because we're just too busy with everyday tasks, too busy doing everything we have to do and everything everybody else wants us to do, too busy to think about what we want.

Or maybe because if we don't say -- out loud -- what we really want, we spare ourselves the disappointment and the embarrassment of not getting it.

Or maybe because if we don't "go on record" with what we want, we won't be held accountable -- by ourselves or anybody else -- for making it happen!

Because sometimes, even when we do know what we want and do say it out loud, we aren't prepared to do what it takes to get it. We are not ready to put in the effort or make the changes or make the sacrifices or take the risks or take the responsibility needed to get what we want. Self-pity is so much easier than accountability. It is so much easier to blame everybody and everything for your troubles than to take responsibility for your own happiness. It is so much easier to bravely endure your lot in life than to do something to change it! It is so much easier just to stay miserable! Could it be that's what you really want? To be miserable?

Luke relates two stories about two very different men, both of whom approach Jesus with their wants, with very different results. One of them gets what he wants, the other doesn't.

A Jewish leader came to Jesus and asked him: "Good Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?" He wanted eternal life! Wow!

Do you want eternal life? Would you say so out loud? It is a noble desire, a desire not just for extended life beyond death, but for life that is full and rich and deep and meaningful and God-filled.

And this man is serious about it. He has obeyed God's commands, he has done his best to do God's will, ever since he was young. "So Teacher!," he asks, "What must I do?"

*Sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me.*

There it is, the answer he wanted, simple and clear. This is what he must do to receive eternal life, but he is not prepared to do it. Why not? Why not? Because he was very rich. So?

So he went away sad. He went away sad because he didn't get what he wanted ... Or maybe it really wasn't what he wanted. Apparently he wanted wealth more than he wanted eternal life, so maybe he was sad because he realized that his deepest desires really weren't so noble after all.

What do you want?

A blind man was sitting at the side of the road begging, when Jesus passed by. He heard all the commotion and asked the people standing around him what was going on. When they told him it was Jesus, he shouted out: "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!" And the people around him told him to be quiet!

Why is it so many different people -- religious leaders and Jesus' own disciples and just plain bystanders -- take it upon themselves to make sure Jesus isn't bothered ... with blind beggars ... with children ... with tax collectors and prostitutes ... with Samaritans ... with people already dead? These are just the sort of people Jesus wants to see! Because the good news he brings is for them! The good news of forgiveness ... the good news of healing for broken bodies and healing for broken spirits ... the good news of resurrection ... the good news that this upside-down, out-of-balance, unjust world is going to be set right!

So Jesus heard him and called for him and asked him what he wanted. And he said to Jesus: "I want to see again." It was a simple wish, not as lofty a wish as a wish for eternal life, but an honest wish. He merely wanted to see again. And he did!

He got what he wanted. It was that simple. And what did this blind beggar have to do to get what he wanted? Nothing! Nothing more than ask ...

So what's the difference? What's the difference between these two men? Why did one get what he wanted and the other didn't?

But I am telling you ... they both got what they wanted! They both got what they really wanted most. But only one of them got Jesus, and only one of them got eternal life! Jesus invited the Jewish leader to follow him, to follow him on the path that leads to life, but he couldn't ... or wouldn't. But Jesus didn't even have to ask the blind beggar to follow. He made that decision all on his own!

The Jewish leader had a lot to do to get what he wanted -- or what he thought he wanted -- because he had a lot. He had a lot to do to make room in his life and in his heart for Jesus. But the blind beggar had to do almost nothing, because he had almost nothing.

What do you have? A lot or a little? To what are you most attached? In what are you most invested? What stands between you and eternal life? What stands between you and Jesus?

In the end, the question for you is this: What do you want? What do you really want the most? That is what Jesus will give you ... when you are ready to say it out loud, and when you are ready to do what it takes to get it.