

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>18</sup> “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” <sup>20</sup> “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” <sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” <sup>22</sup> At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

There is little in life that is quite so humbling as the weather. We can calculate the best time to have an outdoor wedding reception based on the usual weather for that area at that particular time of the year, but we cannot guarantee that it will not rain. We can even wake up in the morning and rejoice in the beautiful weather, only to have it rain on our afternoon parade. Families and groups schedule ski trips in the depths of winter, only to have to cancel because of lack of snow. Farmers have their crops destroyed by a late hail storm or early drought. Even launches of the Space Shuttle have had to be scuttled because of weather. We all wish there were some affirmative answer to the question as to what we must do to have the right weather. The bottom line is that no matter how fervent and sincere we are we cannot change the weather to achieve the weather we desire; we can only prepare ourselves for whatever weather we receive.

The man comes up to Jesus. His fervor and sincerity are demonstrated by the facts that he ran to Jesus and he knelt before him, not to mention that he has faithfully kept the commandments. His quest is to take a further step in order to guarantee his entry into God’s kingdom. Jesus, as usual, gives the man the answer to what he needs rather than what he wants. Our entry into the kingdom is taken care of by Jesus; he has done what must be done. Just as we cannot make weather happen, but can only prepare for it, we must remove the barriers that remain between us and truly following Jesus. The man’s obstruction was his wealth. What is yours?

**O Holy Spirit, convict me of those things that stand as barriers between me and entering the kingdom of God. Bring them to mind and empower me to remove them so I might be free to be a disciple of Jesus. Amen**