News
EarthBeat



The Moumbi luxury apartments overlook the Paraisópolis Favela in São Paulo, Brazil. (Shutterstock/Caio Pederneiras)



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Second week of Advent theme—Money

Day 11: Wednesday, Dec. 9

REFLECT

> 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." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
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> -Mark 10: 21-22
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> "In this world, human beings live at each other's expense, and the affluence of the few is proximately related to, and supported by, the poverty of the many. This interdependence of rich and poor is something Americans are tempted to overlook, since so many Americans are in fact prosperous, but it is as true today as it was in earlier times: the vast multitudes of people on the face of the earth are consigned to poverty for their whole lives ... Their hardships in great measure make possible the comfort of those who are not poor; their poverty maintains the luxury of others; their deprivation purchases the abundance most Americans take for granted."
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> -William Stringfellow, *Dissenter in a Great Society: A Christian View of America in Crisis*

Jesus tells the rich young man that the way to eternal life requires giving up his money and worldly possessions. Jesus loves the young man as he tells him this, which seems to be a clear sign that Jesus has empathy for our human tendency to make an idol out of money. Money in itself is not evil, but when it becomes our focus, it takes away our freedom to love our neighbor and to be in right relationship.

Extreme wealth is often accumulated through the violation of the dignity and rights of people living in poverty and the destruction of the earth. While the young man believes that he has kept all of the commandments, if he were to think critically about how he amassed his wealth, he would probably realize that he had broken other commandments in his dealings with workers and possibly even in how he acquired his land.

Jesus invites the young man into freedom and right relationship with the earth and his neighbors in this parable. How are you being called to freedom from the idol of money this Advent?

ACT

Select one spending habit that you could change that would help you to better live in right relationship with your global neighbors and the earth (e.g., switching to completely fair-trade coffee, making changes to your investment portfolio or buying second-hand clothing or electronics).

View the Advent Simplicity Calendar for a short video reflection on wealth, workers and your economic geography.

Simple Advent, Abundant Life

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