22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – A

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you would give just about anything to have it? This morning I am going to tell you a story about a little boy and a whistle. The little boy in the story is named Ben. His full name was Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin Franklin later grew up to be one of the wisest men our world has ever known, but in our story today, he was a little boy who did something very foolish.

When Ben was seven years old some of his friends gave him some money. It was quite a bit of money for a small boy. As Ben told it, "They filled my pockets with coppers." That is what they used to call pennies. With his pockets full of money, Ben headed straight for a store where they sold toys. On the way to the store, he met a boy who had a whistle like this one that I have with me this morning. When Ben heard the whistle, he liked the sound of it so much that he told the boy he would give him all of the money he had in his pockets if he would give him the whistle. The boy gave Ben the whistle and took the money.

Ben headed for home and when he got there, he went all around the house playing his whistle. His brothers, sisters, and cousins asked Ben where he got the whistle and he told them that he had bought it with the money he had been given. They all started to laugh at Ben and make fun of him. They told him that he had paid four times as much as the whistle was worth. Ben was so hurt and felt so foolish that he began to cry, but he learned a lesson that day that he would remember for the rest of his life. From then on, whenever he saw someone who had made a foolish choice in life, he would say, "That man paid too much for his whistle."

Some boys and girls want to be popular with a certain group of kids at school. They do things that they know are wrong because it will make them popular. They are paying too much for their whistle.

Some boys and girls want to be a winner more than anything. They are even willing to cheat if that's what it takes to win. They are paying too much for their whistle.

Some boys and girls think the most important thing in life is to have fun, so they spend all of their time playing and they never have time for God. They are paying too much for their whistle.

Is there something that you want so much that you are willing to do almost anything to get it?
In today's Gospel Jesus asks the question, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet loses his soul?"   Are you paying too much for your whistle?

- Before St. Augustine was St. Augustine he was just Gus
  - He was recognized as a brilliant philosopher BUT he was NOT a Christian
    - He was totally caught up in what the world had to offer
    - successful, rowdy friends, a mistress – eat drink and be merry
  - BUT – a nagging sense that *Christianity offered something more*
  - AND – he had a mother who knew Christianity offered something more
    - St. Monica prayed and prayed and prayed for her Son

In "Confessions" St. Augustine tells the story – He was in a Garden, thinking about the parties, the drinking, the women – and the conflict of that life with Christianity
- He hears a voice "Take and read", again "Take and read"
- ROM 12 – same message, don't be conformed to this age - Put on Christ
  And he made the commitment
  - We can **conform** to this age – or be **transformed with Christ**
  - We can chase the world's goals, OR GOD's

This is what Peter learned in today's Gospel
- He had just proclaimed Jesus as the Christ
- Jesus re-named him Peter & said, 'Upon this rock I will build my Church'
- But tho Peter knew JC was the Christ – he wasn't ready to accept the CROSS
- The world sees the cross as folly – to die – willingly – for sinners! That's nuts!
- But Jesus says, 'Get behind me satan'
  - Anything tempting JC to another path was not of God
  - All of JC's life was oriented towards getting to the Cross
  - To offer Himself to atone for OUR sin
- Like Augustine – there is a choice – the world's goals or God's
- It's not an easy choice. -   But it's a choice we each have to make