

You Shall Have No Other Gods

Lesson Fourteen

Apostle Tyrone McCreary • Jul 19, 2026 • Mark 10:13–31

An examination of idolatry and lordship through the account of the rich young ruler, showing that the greatest obstacle to discipleship is often not open rebellion but the unsundered heart.

Introduction

OPENING THOUGHT

The greatest threat to discipleship is not always open rebellion; sometimes it is a respectable life governed by an unsundered heart.

KEY THOUGHT

The issue is not merely whether we worship an idol, but whether something else has become the master of our hearts.

I. Understanding Idolatry

HEBREW EXPRESSION: AVODAH ZARAH אֲוֹדָה זָרָה (אֲוֹדָה זָרָה)

Avodah Zarah

- Strange worship
- Foreign service
- Unauthorized worship

KEY THOUGHT

Idolatry is giving the worship, trust, allegiance, and service that belong to God to something else.

II. Avodah — Service & Worship

In Hebrew thought, worship is more than singing—it is service and allegiance.

HEBREW WORD: AVODAH אֲוֹדָה (אֲוֹדָה)

Avodah

- Service
- Work
- Worship
- Sacred service

III. Zarah — Foreign Allegiance

HEBREW WORD: ZARAH זָרָה (זָרָה)

Zarah

- Strange
- Foreign
- Outside the covenant

KEY THOUGHT

Idolatry divides covenant loyalty by placing another authority where God alone should rule.

IV. The Hebrew Words for Idols

ELIL) אֵלִיל (
 Elil

- Worthless thing
- Empty god
- Manufactured authority

PESEL) פֶּסֶל (
 Pesel

- Carved image
- Graven image

KEY THOUGHT

Something created to serve us can eventually become something that rules us.

V. The Heart of Idolatry

Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other gods before Me.

SCRIPTURE: EXODUS 20:3

You shall have no other gods before Me.

KEY THOUGHT

Idolatry occurs whenever something receives what belongs to God alone:

- Trust
- Allegiance
- Obedience
- Love
- Worship

VI. The Rich Young Ruler

KEY THOUGHT

His wealth was not merely something he possessed. It had become what possessed him.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE

Jesus was not asking him to give away money. He was exposing the authority occupying the throne of his heart.

VII. Discipleship Requires the Heart

Mark 10:21

Come, follow Me.

Christ cannot simply become part of our lives while something else remains our master.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:21

Come, follow Me.

KEY THOUGHT

Following Jesus requires a transfer of mastery.

VIII. No One Can Serve Two Masters

Matthew 6:24

Eventually one authority will determine whether we obey or resist the other.

KEY THOUGHT

The heart cannot sustain two allegiances.

IX. The Contrast of the Children

Mark 10:14–15

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child...

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:14–15

Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child...

THE CHILDREN CAME WITH

The children came with:

- No status
- No achievements
- No leverage
- Complete dependence

KEY THOUGHT

The Kingdom is received through humble dependence, not personal accomplishment.

X. The Rich Man Came Differently

HE CAME WITH

He came with:

- Morality
- Achievement
- Status
- Wealth

KEY THOUGHT

The greatest obstacle to entering the Kingdom is not weakness. It is self-sufficiency.

XI. From Wonder to Surrender

It is possible to admire Jesus without following Him.

KEY THOUGHT

Wonder must eventually produce surrender.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

Biblical examples:

- Peter left his nets.
- Isaiah said, "Here am I."
- Mary poured out her oil.

THE RICH MAN

Walked away.

XII. Mark 10 Fulfills Mark 9

Jesus identifies what was causing the rich man to stumble.

MARK 9

Cut off whatever causes you to stumble.

KEY THOUGHT

The issue was not possession. It was what possessed him.

XIII. From Greatness to Goodness

Mark 10:17–18

Why do you call Me good?

He exposes confidence in moral achievement instead of complete dependence upon God.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:17–18

Why do you call Me good?

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus challenges the man's understanding of goodness.

XIV. What Must I Do?

The rich man treated eternal life like something to achieve.

Jesus had just taught that the Kingdom must first be received.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE

Salvation is received by grace before it is expressed through obedience.

XV. The Heart Behind Good Behavior

Mark 10:19–20

A person can obey externally while remaining mastered internally.

KEY THOUGHT

Outward morality does not always reveal inward mastery.

XVI. One Thing You Lack

Mark 10:21

Jesus, looking at him, loved him...

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:21

Jesus, looking at him, loved him...

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus confronted what mastered the man because He loved him.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE

Conviction is often Christ exposing the very thing preventing deeper fellowship with Him.

XVII. The Test of Lordship

KEY THOUGHT

Jesus will always touch the place where our identity, security, or significance is rooted.

EXAMPLES

Examples:

- Abraham — Isaac
- Moses — Midian
- Peter — His nets
- Paul — His reputation
- The Rich Man — His wealth

XVIII. The Tragedy of the Rich Man

Mark 10:22

He went away sorrowful...

He walked away because he loved something else more.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:22

He went away sorrowful...

KEY THOUGHT

He did not reject Jesus because he hated Him.

XIX. The Danger of Self-Defined Goodness

We often define goodness by the areas where we already obey while ignoring the area Jesus is

confronting.

KINGDOM PRINCIPLE

The true test of devotion is not what we have already surrendered, but what we refuse to surrender.

XX. The Danger of Trusting Riches

Mark 10:23–25

The danger is not wealth.

The danger is trusting wealth.

RICHES CAN CREATE THE ILLUSION OF

Riches can create the illusion of:

- Independence
- Control
- Security
- Self-sufficiency

XXI. Who Then Can Be Saved?

Mark 10:26–27

With men it is impossible...

No one can save himself.

Salvation and heart transformation are the work of God's grace.

SCRIPTURE: MARK 10:26–27

With men it is impossible...

ONLY GOD CAN

Only God can:

- Break the power of idols
- Free the self-sufficient
- Transform the heart
- Produce true surrender

Application

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Questions to consider:

- What occupies the throne of my heart?
- What has become my source of security?
- Is there anything I have told Jesus He cannot touch?
- Have I confused outward obedience with inward surrender?

KEY THOUGHT

You do not know what truly has your heart until obedience requires you to choose between it and Jesus.

Reflection questions

1. What occupies the throne of my heart?
2. What has become my source of security?
3. Is there anything I have told Jesus He cannot touch?
4. Have I confused outward obedience with inward surrender?

Closing

The rich ruler wanted eternal life. He simply did not want to surrender what had become his master. It is easy to define ourselves by the commandments we have kept. Jesus reveals our hearts by the thing we refuse to surrender. The issue is not what you possess... The issue is what possesses you.