

Sunday, June 8, 2025: Matthew 19:16–30

The Promise of God

Matthew 19:16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" 17 "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." 18 "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, " 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.' " 20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" 21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. 22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" 26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." 27 Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" 28 Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Introduction:

This man comes up to Jesus and asks THE most important question that anyone can and should ask: "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" The key word is GOOD, and it points out that this man has a works-based righteousness or a works-based faith. Jesus points out that only God alone is good and then turns the question back on the man to expose where the man is wrong. Jesus asks about The Law. He responds he has kept them all. Jesus' reply: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." This man left sad.

1. Why did he leave sad?

The reason is because he loved the world and things of the world that he could have because he was rich and could afford them. He had idols. He wanted everything AND God. Jesus exposed the fact that he had put THINGS before God.

2. **Why is it hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven?**

Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven."

He talks about material wealth and salvation.

- It is easier to be Self-reliant which makes it harder to recognize the spiritual reality that we are all dependent on God.
- It is easy to be self-righteous. It is hard to see personal faults.
- There is a stereotype of the rich being stuck up, stingy, conceited, unsatisfied.

This type of attitude and outlook is contradictory to that of Christianity.

Jesus expounds on this: "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

3. **Camel through the eye of a needle:**

If you read this literally then you would recognize this as hyperbole (a figure of speech that exaggerates for emphasis). Jesus uses hyperbole periodically (ref: plank in the eye of someone quick to judge others). Jesus is not saying it is impossible for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God, hard but not impossible.

I Timothy 6:2These are the things you are to teach and insist on. 3If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. 6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

4. **So, is money evil?**

No, wealth is not evil. The LOVE OF MONEY is the root of all kinds of evil. This man loved his money more than he loved God. That is why it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.

5. **Who then can be saved?**

Matthew 19:25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

In this culture (and perhaps our today) wealth was a sign of God's blessing. The wealthiest people would have been the Pharisees and teachers of the Law (along with the tax collectors, but there is a reason that they are wealthy, they are thieves). Remember, in this culture, if you were rich (and not a tax collector) you were considered righteous.

It is not about money:

Matthew 19:26 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

What is impossible with man? Salvation. Jesus is bringing it back to the impossibility of humanity saving themselves. You cannot work your way to heaven. There are no righteous acts that you can do to earn Salvation. No amount of MONEY can buy your way into the kingdom of heaven.

Is this statement really about money? No. It is an illustration and an example of something that we struggle with and can be deceived by. Wealth is deceiving, do not be deceived by it.

6. **What about those who have left everything to follow Jesus?**

Matthew 19:27 Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

Everything we have in this life is a gift from God: talent, position in life, opportunities you have been given, everything. We are stewards while we are alive. As Paul said to Timothy: we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

Jesus said store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. What we do while here on earth will be rewarded in heaven.

The truth of the Gospel is that Salvation is free. Our salvation has been bought and paid for. It is IMPOSSIBLE for man to save himself. Salvation is only POSSIBLE by God, and IT COSTS YOU YOUR LIFE.

7. **Jesus answers with the Law of Sowing and Reaping, or is it a promise?**

Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

QUESTIONS

1. If you were extremely rich, what is something you would buy for someone else?
2. This man's culture viewed wealth and prosperity as a sign of God's favor, blessing, and a measure of faith. Does our culture still believe this? Why could that be harmful to our faith? In what ways does money blind us to seeing our need for a Savior?
3. "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Martin Luther. Discuss this quote. There are many different things that can hinder your walk with Christ. What in your life would be incredibly hard for you to give up for God?
4. Why are people so resistant to receiving salvation as a gift? Does our sinful nature play into this, how? Does a relationship with God have a price? Am I transactional with Him?