

MARK — Jesus Doesn't Hinder Us, But We Often Do

Pastor Danielle Burkholder

Mark 10:13-31

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

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?”

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

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.

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 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."

The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mk 10:13–31.

What do you need to do to inherit eternal life?

The Issue of All of Our Hearts?

How can we ever know that we're good enough to enter the kingdom of Heaven? Am I good enough? Should I even go in here? I think I am good enough!

That may be some of our thoughts as we consider what we need to inherit eternal life.

The real question though is: who gets to decide? Is it me or is it someone else? And if someone else, who, based on who's standard?

If we measure ourselves, we are sorely tempted to measure ourselves next to other people who we perceive to be worse than us to feel better than ourselves.

Why do you call me good? It's an issue of the heart: only God is good. Jesus is getting him to look at what determines who is good or not.

What's going on in the man's head? Am I good enough? I AM good enough! I have followed Torah! I have kept the commandments!

Jesus quotes the commandments we use most often to measure ourselves to whether we were good. And the man stuck his claim there: I have kept all these.

But Jesus already told him that no one is good except God. And the commandments prove to us that no one is good, because every command we break instantly starts to

break other commandments. Lying to someone is not loving our neighbor as ourselves (Lev 19:18), and it's not honoring God, so it's breaking Shema as well (Deut 6:4).

Jesus' Love Isn't Enough?

Jesus' love is not enough to get us into the kingdom. We see here that Jesus loved this man and told him the cost of this love. Love demands a response. We can't passively appreciate it. The love of Jesus compels us to reckon with who God is and compels us to respond.

This text isn't just about money, but about whatever idol of the heart that we have. It's not bad to be wealthy; what we see instead is that Jesus is confronting the core issues of that man's heart.

Whatever you trust in besides King Jesus for security is going to cost you everything and not give you eternal life. King Jesus will cost you everything but you will gain eternal life.

One of the invitations through this text is for us to assess what we're standing on as our foundation, and as a response, fill that space with Jesus. But know that tis love demands everything of you.



Jesus will call us to give up our other idols and receive his blessings, but also the persecution that comes along with it.

Decide if you will trust me wholeheartedly, then come follow me.
Then you'll have treasure in Heaven.

For this rich man, his treasure was his wealth, his knowledge, and his moralism. Sometimes we hinder people from coming to Jesus, like how the disciples hindered the children from coming. Sometimes we hinder ourselves because we replace Jesus with other gods and idols.

Children Vs. The Wealthy

In 1st century Roman occupied Palestine, children didn't have the status or value as the wealthy elite. And in our day, not a lot has changed. But Jesus treated them like disciples. They're not future disciples, but current disciples, and Jesus is indignant if we prevent them from coming to Jesus.

We don't want them to turn 18 and wonder why they're even in church.

If it gets loud in church, or if they disrupt our gathering, that's okay. They are disciples just like us, and we're learning to be good family members with them.

Think about the children and their status, and how they receive Jesus, vs. how the rich man receives (or doesn't receive) Jesus. There is an intentional juxtaposition here to show us that the Kingdom of God follows some very upside down values.

The Wholehearted Response

Jesus' love costs them everything. The disciples realized that and asked, "We've left everything! What about us?"

And Jesus promises that they will get blessing and will inherit in this life (along with persecution) and inherit in the next.

Are you standing outside the kingdom of God wondering if you're good enough? According to Jesus, you aren't good enough. But Jesus was — only God is good. And

he made provision for our lack, and encourages us to come to us like children.

Are you to the doorman, standing in judgment over those who are trying to enter the kingdom? As a church family, we want to fling our doors open. They might be loud or smelly or politically different. Do we just want people who are easy to be around? Probably, but the Lord can help us align our values to his upside down kingdom.

A huge bulk of the New Testament is written to encourage Christ followers to align their view of people toward The Upside Down Kingdom of Jesus and break out of the world's value system.

Jesus doesn't hinder anyone from coming to him, but he does demand a high price — abandoning whatever we thought was going to give us merit to enter the kingdom. And on those grounds, we often hinder ourselves. But the invitation is always open.

If any of this is true about you, we have an opportunity to be humble and confess that. Repentance and confession are the gifts of the church to reconcile with Jesus and others.



Lastly, we have practical needs to serve the children in kid's church. We have an opportunity to bless them and invite them into the kingdom as well. If you sense God calling you to serve in nursery or kid's classes, Angie Lee is the one to email (angie@everynationseattle.org). The initial ask is for 6 months, once or twice a month.