

Pastor Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Mark 10:23-31 | The Reality of Loving Money
May 2, 2021

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Mark 10:23-31
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, the Holy Spirit taught us the Irony of Heaven.

And we learned the Irony of Heaven from a young man known as the Rich Young Ruler.

The irony is this—^{Little} children who possess nothing and can do nothing—even though they offer nothing to God—the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

Versus this young man who is a leader at the local synagogue.

He has worked and served the Lord week in and week out and built this very impressive resume over the years— still lacks one thing!

It just happened to be the most important thing—he didn't have a relationship with God.

He thought He did.

He thought that his serving/"good deeds" was enough.

~~He thought he could punch God in and out like a timecard.~~

Not only that, but he thought he was morally "good" enough.

5-2-21

He found out wrong.

Jesus was not impressed with his false humility and his worldly resume.

Jesus impressed upon this young man that the way to inherit eternal life is to come as a child with complete and utter dependence on Him—and not depending/trusting on himself and his stuff.

What we see as a weakness, Jesus sees as a strength.

cf. **2 Corinthians 12:9**—But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness." Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may reside in me.

cf. **2 Corinthians 12:10**— So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What we see as problems, Jesus uses those things to perfect our character.

And that's where we are today.

Jesus will use this conversation with the Rich Young Ruler as a teaching moment for the crowd and His disciples.

INTRODUCTION:

So let's pick it up from last week.

We saw this young man turn his back on Jesus. why

Because This Rich Young Ruler didn't want God at the cost of his gold.

He wanted God & his Money

But Jesus didn't turn his back on him.

Jesus loved this man and told him the truth.

Jesus told him what he needed to hear even if he didn't want to hear it.

That's what love is, isn't it? 

Biblical Love challenges peoples for their own moral good.

Just as a good doctor diagnoses and prescribes the proper treatment for physical health, regardless of how unpleasant the medication may be or radical the surgery may seem, the physician takes an oath to save your physical life.

Jesus did much more than that for the Rich Young Ruler.

Last Sunday we saw Jesus prescribe eternal life, and the young man chose eternal death.

Last week
Today, we the the sequel to this story.

Jesus uses the Rich Young Ruler as a teaching moment on wealth, riches, possessions, and stuff.

Although this lesson was taught 2,000 years ago — and the impact of this lesson is just as vital to us today. *truth*

Why is that? Let's find out.

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10:23-31 CSB

Mark 10:17— As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark 10:18— "Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone."

Mark 10:19— You know the commandments: **Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not defraud; honor your father and mother.**"

Mark 10:20— He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth."

Mark 10:21— Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Mark 10:22— But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Mark 10:23— Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24— The disciples were astonished at his words. Again Jesus said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:25— It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God."

Mark 10:26— They were even more astonished, saying to one another, "Then who can be saved?"

Mark 10:27— Looking at them, Jesus said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God."

Mark 10:28— Peter began to tell him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you."

Mark 10:29— "Truly I tell you," Jesus said, "there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel,

Mark 10:30— who will not receive a hundred times more, now at this time—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and eternal life in the age to come.

Mark 10:31— But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

These are the very words from God for us this morning.

PRAY:

EXEGESIS: - *Postverse from last week*

Mark 10:22— But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Did you notice from last Sunday how his grief is tied to his possessions.

In other words, it's his possessions that caused him grief.

Secondly, notice that Jesus never makes anyone do anything they don't want to do.

Jesus doesn't run after this man and try to talk him into staying.

Jesus doesn't apologize for his message. He doesn't even try to soften it.

Can't you just see Jesus shaking his head with compassion as the Rich Young Ruler walks away from him?

Mark 10:23—Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"

Jesus looked around—

Jesus is taking a survey of the situation.

Jesus was looking to see what kind of impact this conversation had on everyone.

Who else is going to leave at this point?

Is the cost too high for others in the crowd as well?

How hard— What Jesus demands of the wealthy is not easy.

It requires exceptional Godly character and self-control.

It demands a humility that people don't inherently have.

The Holy Spirit gives this kind of humility in small doses over long periods of time.

Theologically we call this sanctification.

Sanctification is where God sanctifies, purifies and sets you apart from the world.

What makes it hard?

What makes being holy? Having money hard?

I have a friend of mine who at one time had a lot of money.

He had more money than he could spend and certainly more money than he needed.

He eventually lost it all—business deal gone bad.

He said, "Oh Dustin, it was nice. It was so nice to pay for everything in cash and not have to worry about anything."

So, what makes it hard for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God?

1. *Self-sufficiency*. The attitude that I don't need God, I can provide for my own well-being.
2. *Independence from God*. Self-rule, self-determination, self-legislation. Ultimately, we're talking about self-sovereignty.

These are only two examples as to why it's hard.

Back to...

Mark 10:23—"How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"

Notice here, Jesus says, "to enter the Kingdom of God."

Who's Kingdom? God's.

This is not the Kingdom of self.

And the Kingdom of God is a society under God's rule.

People enter "The Kingdom of God" (Heaven) by submitting to God's authority.

here on Earth.

→ Your life today is a spiritual probation of sorts,
 → God is inviting you to know Jesus Christ as Lord & Savior. Jesus is the mediator.

And what Jesus is saying is, if you have wealth, the normal human tendency is not to submit to God, but to be self sufficient and live independently from God.

Wealth tends to give people a false sense of security.

So let's see how the crowd responds here...

Mark 10:24—The disciples were astonished at his words. Again Jesus said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God!"

Jesus knows that many of us will agree that money does not buy happiness.

And we'll agree that money can't buy Heaven.

Question: Then why is it that all of us still wish in our hearts that we had just a little bit more?

Jesus knows this, so he repeats himself to drive home his point.

The Twelve were amazed and astonished—"stunned/rocked."

And they were stunned because the Pharisees taught (from Scripture) that wealth was a sign of God's blessing.

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:1**—"Now if you faithfully obey the Lord your God and are careful to follow all his commands I am giving you today, the Lord your God will put you far above all the nations of the earth.

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:2**—All these blessings will come and overtake you, because you obey the Lord your God:

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:3**—You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:4**— Your offspring will be blessed,
 and your land's produce,
 and the offspring of your livestock,
 including the young of your herds
 and the newborn of your flocks.

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:5**— Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed.

cf. **Deuteronomy 28:6**— You will be blessed when you come in
 and blessed when you go out.

Who doesn't want that?

Pause...has anything changed with this mindset of money over the past 2,000
 years?

The prosperity Gospel was alive and well back in the first century— just as it is
 today.

It's just as easy for us to take Scripture out of context as it was for them.

Some Pharisees had bad hermeneutics—their interpretation of Scripture was
 incorrect.

They falsely believe the same thing we do today—that wealth is a sign of God's
 blessing.

They also thought that being poor was a curse from God.

Secondly, some of the disciples had money.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John—all these guys were successful business owners.

Matthew, the ex-tax collector, had more money than the other eleven together.

So it's fair to say that when the Twelve heard these words from Jesus, there was now a concern that their wealth might be a barrier even for them.

Prosperity theology is nothing new...

It is written,

Ecclesiastes 1:9—*What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; there is nothing new under the sun.*

The more things change, the more things stay the same.

Back to...

Mark 10:24—*...Again, Jesus said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God!*

Obviously, Jesus got quite a rise out of the crowd, so he repeats Himself a second time.

Notice here that he calls the crowd, which include the Twelve Disciples, "Children."

Why would he do that?

Most of the Twelve are manly men. They used to be manual laborers—fishermen, and Jesus chooses to call them children.

Interesting, isn't it?

Jesus is pointing them back to the conversation that He had with them before the Rich Young Ruler showed up.

As Jesus was blessing the children a few weeks ago, He said,

Mark 10:15— Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive, the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

He called them children because they didn't want to become like a child—they intend to come on their own terms...just like the Rich Young Ruler.

The Rich Young Ruler would have come to Jesus in child-like faith, but he absolutely and positively would not give up his stuff.

Jesus continues here...

Mark 10:25— It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God."

Put a smiley face next to this verse in your Bible. ☺

Can't you see Jesus grinning from ear to ear as He says this?

This is a little Hebrew humor of ^{points} something being impossible.

Now, don't let Jesus' humor lessen the impact of His teaching.

This metaphor picks out the largest animal in Israel and the tiniest opening that everybody is familiar with—and paints this picture as an impossibility.

This is a famous proverb in the first century.

Now, throughout Church history, there have been many attempts to dodge this bullet.

First, some have said that this story only applies to those who are rich.

By the way, I recognize that there are few of us here today that would say that we are wealthy. Not

But by the world's standards, we most certainly are. -Allos

Most of us are more comfortable than King Solomon.

😊 He didn't have central heat, AC, lazy boy chairs, two hundred channels of entertainment, or the Internet.

So this lesson applies to us all today.

When we hear a sermon on wealth, our sinful human nature somehow manages to place ourselves below this invisible financial danger line.

* → Please don't think that this message doesn't apply to you because it does.

And we've seen this throughout Church history.

This passage has also been subjected to many clever theological gymnastics.

Around the ninth century, a legend spread that Jesus was talking about a secret gate that entered the city of Jerusalem.

And this gate was supposedly called the Eye of the Needle.

Now, Jerusalem had several gates and each of the gates had a name, such as the East Gate, the West Gate, or the Dung Gate.

These were traditional city gates, but the Eye of the Needle was supposedly a tiny opening in the wall.

If someone had a camel and wanted to enter the city through this "Eye of the Needle" gate, he had to force the camel to bend its knees.

Then, the man would have to push and shove and pull the camel to squeeze through.

It is a lovely story. It makes the point that rich people can get into Heaven on their knees.

The problem is that it's fiction. There is no gate.

All the other gates in Jerusalem are large, so why would anyone even bother?

It's this kind of Biblical interpretation that eases the force of Jesus' statement.

This kind of ~~stuff~~ ^{hermeneutics / exegesis} makes us feel better about ourselves...because we tend to believe that we do have what it takes.

There is something that is wickedly deep inside us that says, "I can still get to Heaven on my own terms."

Jesus says, "No, dear friend." That's impossible, because you're not perfect.

-not forgiven

Jesus' teaching is specifically designed to disturb you.

He's trying to rattle you. Jesus wants to wake you up from your spiritual slumber.

So, there is no reason to give any other meaning to verse 25 than a literal meaning.

The eye of a needle is the literal eye of a physical needle.

The camel— is a huge, hairy animal with bad teeth.

They do not represent some ~~more~~ ^{SECRET} profound, spiritual truth.

Luke, who was a medical doctor, used a different Greek word than Mark.

Mark used the word for sewing needle, but Luke uses the term for a surgeon's needle.

Regardless of what kind of needle, Jesus' point is that it is easier for an enormous camel to go through a tiny hole of a tiny sharp object-- than for a rich man to trust God.

WOW!

KEYPOINT 1:

We should always be suspicious of Biblical interpretations that soften Jesus' radical demands.

We need to hear Jesus' warning at this point because we are the most prosperous people in the history of the world.

Even the poor in the Verde Valley have cell phones! That's no joke!

I was the assistant pastor in Phoenix many years ago, and this homeless woman walked into the church asking for money.

She's telling me her story, and all of a sudden, her phone rings.

So, all that brings us to our next keypoint...

KEYPOINT 2:

According to Jesus, wealth is an obstacle for anyone who wants to enter Heaven.

Scripture has a lot to say about money.

Have you ever read through the Bible doing a word study/theme study on money and wealth?

If you find yourself continually worried about money, I would encourage you to do that.

It's that kind of study that will radically and permanently change your view on money.

Practical: It's not hard.

Take a green highlighter—green for money—and every time you see a verse that talks about money, highlight it.

After you're done, simply put those verses in categories.

God has a lot to say about money.

Do you know how many verses are on money? 2,350

How many verses on faith and prayer? 500

Why does God talk about money more than four times as much as faith and prayer?

KEYPOINT 3:

Our heart is attached to our wallet.

Yes, Jesus has a lot to say about money.

cf. **Mark 4:19**— *but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness, of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

cf. **Matthew 6:19**— *"Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal."*

Bugs

+ cf. **Matthew 6:20**— But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal.

+ cf. **Matthew 6:21**— For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

+ cf. **Luke 16:13**— No servant can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

But God loves you, and he'll give you the space to try.

Prv 30:8-9
Give me poverty nor wealth,
feed me w/ food I need.
Otherwise I might have too
much & deny You, saying, "who is the Lord?"

The central issue is not money.

+ cf. **1 Timothy 6:10**— For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Money is not the issue—loving it is. It's about loyalty. It's about your heart.

+ **KEYPOINT 4:**
Those who are ruled by money cannot be ruled by God.

dominated

Jesus did not envy the rich, but instead, He pities them.

Jesus knew that wealth puts a terrible handicap on our relationship with Him.

But that's not how the crowd sees it.

+ **Mark 10:26**— They were even more astonished, saying to one another, "Then who can be saved?"

The astonishment of the crowd escalates from “astonished” in v. 24 to “even more astonished” in v. 26.

This question from the crowd shows how ingrained their prosperity theology is.

Jesus’ proverb was not lost on the crowd.

They know that Jesus is not talking about a small silly invisible gate to get into Jerusalem.

Their reaction in verse 26 proves it.

The crowd completely understood Jesus’ proverb.

Picture the crowd erupting with these questions.

They are all asking Jesus along with each other, *If a rich man can't be saved, then who can?"*

Mark 10:27— Looking at them, Jesus said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God.”

Jesus looks at them once again,

Jesus is looking at the crowd with great intensity.

It’s a similar look Jesus gave to the Rich Young Ruler before He commanded him to sell everything in verse 21.

Jesus waits for everyone to settle down and then answers the question.

His answer makes it clear that salvation is utterly and totally the work of Almighty God.

Apart from the grace of God, it is impossible for any man, especially a rich man—to enter God's Kingdom.

Humanly speaking, no one can be saved by his own efforts.

But, what we can't do for ourselves, God does for us.

cf. **John 3:16**— For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

this doesn't mean that the whole world will be saved. it means that there is one savior for the whole world.

I wonder if the Rich Young Ruler was still in hearing distance as this conversation was going on.

Mark 10:28— Peter began to tell him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you."

Peter is the guy that says what everyone else is thinking.

In other words, Peter is asking, "What's in it for us?"

Needless to say, this is not a spiritual question.

The pronoun "we" is emphatic—**"we have left everything..."**

Peter is speaking for the Twelve.

Peter is begging Jesus for affirmation.

Because he doesn't know if Jesus is rebuking him for hanging on to some of the wealth from his fishing business?

From Peter's perspective, he and the disciples had done what Jesus commanded the rich man to do.

Mark 10:29— "Truly I tell you," Jesus said, "there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel,"

Mark 10:30— who will not receive a hundred times more, now at this time—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and eternal life in the age to come.

Jesus answers Peter's question with great assurance. *—This is as good as done.*

When you come to Jesus in childlike faith, repent from your sins and believe that his death, burial, and resurrection satisfied God's wrath for your sin — *febelke*

Not only does God save you, but He adopts you. *into the family*

All believers become part of the church—the body of Christ.

Many people lose their earthly families when they become Christians.

But Jesus says that they have gained a new Heavenly family.

I like Jesus' math. He does not say 100 percent more, but a hundred times more!

not about math
→ One house is gone, but a hundred ^{is} doors are now open!

One brother in the flesh lost, but a thousand brothers in the spirit are standing with you.

Mark 10:31— *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*"

Earthly roles are reversed in the Heaven.

Those who have much in this world—and don't steward it in a Godly way—will have little in the next world, and those who have little now will have much.

PREACH:

As Mark Twain said: "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand."

Here's the thing I want you to understand, cf. **James 1:17**— Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,

Everything that you have comes from God.

Not just material things—when was the last time you thanked God for the very air you breathe?! — *Go* allows you to breathe His Air!

cf. **1 Timothy 6:17**— Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy.

It's important to note that wealth naturally works against us. It perverts our values.

Over time, we know the price of everything and value nothing.

One of the most tragic things about wealth is that it constantly goes against the grain of being a helpless child—being totally and utterly dependent on God for all things.

Jesus said to the in Laodicean Church,

cf. **Revelation 3:17**— For you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

Dear friends, be very careful with your attitude towards money.

At least

-health

Fraternity

interpretation of the word of God

Heavenly Father

*↳ can't see it
↳ blind spot*

KEYPOINT 5:

No Christian is immune from falling in love with money.

And one of the most dangerous things we can do is over-spiritualize ^{this} our sin.

→ The more money you give me God, the more I can give AWAY - help the poor, build houses,
We can justify and rationalize the idol of money and even use Scripture to back up our position. → just like the Pharisees did. Be Careful!

KEYPOINT 6:

People who love money have plenty to live on— but little to live for.

Glove, Crave, Desire, Lust

→ This is the reality of loving money.

PRAYER ROOM:

If you have questions, we are available after the service. There is a prayer room through the foyer and to the right.

PRAY:

- forgive us

- we have it so much better than we deserve

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