

Jesus and the Rich Man

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself? The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Father, let's just bow our heads in prayer. Father, we confess before you that most of the time we don't realize this, Father, but we confess before you that we are way better at seeing little tiny specks in other people's eyes while we have logs right planted in our own eye and we're completely unaware of it. We're just, Father, often, sometimes, most of the time, Father, we're just really good at seeing sins in other people, but at the same time, Father, you know, sometimes we just beat ourselves up over things that we have done wrong or not accomplished. And so, Father, we bring to you, we come to you as who we are. We are way more unbalanced and way more fragile than we realize, and we give you thanks and praise that Jesus sees us as we really are and loves us.

And so we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would bring this word, your word, very deeply home into our hearts, that it might rule within us, knowing that as your word rules in us, you will strengthen that which is fragile and broken. You will heal. You will help us to repent and amend our lives and live a life that is good for us and brings you glory. So, Father, may your Holy Spirit do this wonderful and mighty work, and we ask it in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, that was a really encouraging verse that I just read a couple of moments ago.

[2 : 47] What we're going to be looking at today is how do you, how do you follow Jesus? How do you live in a world where money and possessions exist? I mean, how do you live in a world where money and possessions exist?

And money and possessions affect us very, very, very powerfully. Many of you, if you are honest, in a small group or others, despair about ever owning a house. Some of you who have investments, you know, maybe where some young people wish that we were going to be in 20 years or 30 years, have seen the value of your investments drop a lot within the last little while, and inflation is slowly making all of us poorer. You come here to get good news and to be encouraged. That's what I always say. But that's, you know, the fact of the matter is, is that, you know, when times are really good for us in our personal life or in the society, it's really easy not to think much about money, but we're always being formed by it. And it's a very disheartening time for a lot of people with inflation, with housing prices, and for some underemployed or not being able to get jobs.

So the Bible text that we're looking at today is going to talk a little bit, but very wisely, and not in a way that's disheartening about money. And so if you take your Bibles, money and possessions, take your Bibles, and we're looking at Mark chapter 10, and we're going to begin at verse 13. And so if you're following along in these small ones, it's on page 60. Mark chapter 10, verse 13. And what's happened, those of you who've been tracking with the church, this is my fourth, in a sense, controversial sermon in a row. We've had to talk, we've talked about demons, we've talked about hell, we've talked about marriage and divorce, and now we talk about money. And it's about the main context, and that's just because those are the parts of Mark's gospel that have just, we've looked at up until today. The main part of the context, so that we need to grasp, is that at the end of chapter 8, Jesus said he was going to Jerusalem to die. And basically the disciples and the other followers don't believe it, and nobody else believes it, and even the people who are plotting it aren't entirely sure they're going to be able to accomplish it. But Jesus knows that he's come to die, he's going to

Jerusalem, and he's going to die. And that's the context within, you hear everything in Mark's gospel after chapter 8. Jesus knows he's going to Jerusalem to die and arise from the dead. So here's this next bit, verse 13. We looked at 1 to 12 last week, verse 13. And they were bringing children to Jesus that he might touch them. And the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

[6:17] Now just sort of pause here for a second. One of the things about, it's helpful to think about what Canadians think about things like this. And as we all know in Canada, if I was to say to somebody, let's say somebody came to me for some counseling, or in the coffee hour after the service, and I listened to them a while, and if I said to them, you're such a child, now they would be pierced.

That's like an insult to Canadians, to say that you're such a child. To say that if you're, say, to your husband or your wife, you're so childish, that's an insult. And so if we think about it for a second, it's a little bit odd that Jesus tells us, I mean, we like the fact, Canadians like the fact that Jesus welcomed children, and he wanted to bless them. And in fact, it's almost too bad that we have the Sunday school going on outside, and we almost should have brought them back in, because we should really give a round of applause, maybe even a standing ovation to the people in the church who care for children during the service and teach them in the Sunday school, because they're doing, we're doing exactly what Jesus would have us do, which is to bless children, to love them, accept them, and to bless them. But when Jesus says, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive, sorry, verse 15, truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it, Jesus isn't telling us to be childish, that only people who follow Jesus, people who follow Jesus are to become like children all their lives, and never mature, never grow up, never use their minds, never have adventures and take risks. No, he's not referring to that at all.

And there's two reasons to understand that. What fundamentally he's saying is the aspect, it's going to become more obvious when you look at the next story, is what he's really emphasizing is children's complete trust and abandonment.

I mean, I think, I don't know, I mean, you know, you see some of the little kids who are here, and I mean, if their parents were to just leave them, just to leave them, leave them, leave them, they'd be dead in no time at all. And that's not even counting like a, like just a six month old or something, that they wouldn't live more than a couple of days. Children are completely dependent on a parent, an adult, and they're fundamentally trusting. And that's really what Jesus is getting at here. It's a call to be dependent, and it's a call to trust, because you can't really be dependent without trusting, or you can, but it's miserable. We hate depending on something that we don't trust. I almost made a comment about something, but I'm glad I, somebody's praying so I didn't say it. And, and the reason we know that it's not a matter that Jesus doesn't want people to grow up is, is because of the word bless. Because you see, the word bless, what that really is, when you want to bless somebody, you pray God's blessing upon them. You're praying that God's grace and his power will come into their life, so they will thrive.

So they will thrive, both in the sense of just as a fundamental human being, but for those who, and that, that we will thrive as human beings. That's, that's what blessing means. If I, if I pray God's blessing on somebody, I'm praying that they'll, they'll thrive. And, and you can't thrive if you stay constantly childish and immature. Part of thriving is, is growing up, is developing your talents. And, and of course, as well, there is this other aspect that true thriving means to be reconciled to God, to have the fruit of the Holy Spirit become more evident in our lives. And so what we see here isn't that God is, that Jesus is telling us that we have to be immature and unthinking for the rest of our lives. He's, he's saying, listen, at the heart of receiving the kingdom of God and eternal life is a dependency, ultimately on Jesus and a trust in Jesus. And that's what he's saying. And it's going to become very obvious with this very next story. And by the way, this next story, which I just read part of it when I was reading the gospel text, it begins at verse 17 of chapter 10. The ancient, the the four, there's four ancient biographies of Jesus, which have survived. And these are eyewitness, biographies, based on eyewitness testimony or directly from eyewitnesses written while eyewitnesses were still alive. And in three of the four ancient biographies of Jesus, they tell this story. So it's obviously a very important story. In fact, all three of them have the story about the children, and then this story about the man, one after the other. And so they, they saw that they were connected and they thought that this was a very important story. And here's how it goes. It's what we just read, but I'll read it again. Verse 17, and he was setting out on a journey, sorry, and Jesus was setting out on his journey, sorry, and as Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. Now, before we go any further, let's just be honest that for most Canadians, this would be very confusing. It would be very confusing, and the confusion affects you and me as well at a different level. Because what is it that most Canadians will say about themselves? Maybe every Canadian will say about themselves. And it wouldn't matter if they have just been caught doing something completely and utterly horrific, that they've been caught, they've murdered somebody, and you might actually even hear them say about themselves, listen, I know there's some things that weren't quite right, but I'm a good person. I'm a good person is like a

[12 : 33] Canadian motto. It could be tattooed on your hand. I'm a good person. And in fact, one of the deepest ways that I could insult another person, even more than saying that you're being such a child, which would be insulting, even more than that, if I was to say to somebody, you're not a good person. And to say that to another Canadian would be highly, highly, highly offensive. You, I'm a good person. I'm a good person. Like, how dare you say that I'm not a good person? And so to hear this, sorry, this is my stopwatch to watch my time. And I had it positioned so that it keeps, anyway, I've moved it. It was shining in my light and distract, eyes and distracting me. So I finally figured out maybe I should just move my stopwatch. Anyway, so it's something which, in fact, if you hear about it as the story is going to progress, the implication is that it's not clear to Canadians whether Jesus is acknowledging that the young man is a good person. But to not say, to not acknowledge, to not affirm somebody when they say that they're a good person, that's, that's like deeply offensive and wounding. In fact, if they told everybody about what everybody, if they said to all their friends, you know, I was talking to

George and I, and he said I wasn't a good person, they'd all take that person's side, not mine. Almost always. Because you're not allowed to say that. And so it's very confusing to Canadians, like, and Jesus said to him, verse 18, why do you call me good? Like Canadians go, like, what's going on here? Like, that doesn't make any sense. Like, why wouldn't Jesus just accept that?

See, the other aspect for Canadians, which makes this text very confusing, is that there's actually two things the average Canadian believes. The first one is that I'm a good person, and the second one is that I'm not sure if the God described by Christians is good.

You know, once again, if you go to your workplace, if you go to a Tim Hortons, it's, it goes beyond class differences. You could go to Tim Hortons, you could go to Starbucks, you could go to, to Bridgehead, you could go to some little very, very, very trendy coffee place that old, unhip people like me have never heard of. It wouldn't matter where you go, but if you were to say to people, I don't know if God's good. Like, hardly anybody would get upset with that. Most would just go like this. They would just nod, yeah, I don't know if God's good. The fact of the matter is, is that I am good. That's something that I can say about me. But it's, God in a sense is on trial. He's on trial, because we're not sure if the triune God is good. So, so you look at, again, and just realize, right, verse 18 is highly confusing to Canadians. Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. That's the exact opposite of what Canadians think. The exact opposite of what Canadians think.

You know, but by the way, one of the things about it, and I, and this might be a bit shocking, but one of the things about Canadians really maintaining, it's not just Canadians as well. If you re, if you watch Ricky Gervais, like I think was a four season special, I mean really time after every episode was whether he was a good person or not. And it's, it's a, it's a, it's sort of a Western world thing. But I think part of it is it reveals our, how fragile we are.

[16 : 23] That we, we're trying to hold ourselves together. And, and the fact of the matter is, is that what often happens with people, that at the same time that they're, they're, they, they use drugs to numb the suspicion that they're not a good person, that the shame in their lives. They use alcohol to try to numb. There's the, the voice in your head that you're not good, you're not good enough. You should be ashamed of that.

That we, we spend lots of money on clothes. So the appearances will be that we're all together, while inwardly, we can't sleep at night.

We take medication and go to doctors, we go to therapy, we take on meditation practices and yoga. And it's all different attempts to prop us up in this view that we're a good person, meditation while inwardly we're falling apart.

That one of the things which fuels so much addiction is that secretly in our own head, we say to ourselves, if people knew who I really was, they would, if people knew who I really am, they wouldn't love me.

If people knew who I really am, what I'm really like, they wouldn't love me. And that's a very terrible thing, very hard thing to say to yourself over and over again.

[18 : 03] And so it's very powerful that we want to try to maintain the opposite while we, while we try to medicate and numb these things. So what we're going to see in this very confusing dialogue, which begins with being good and ends up talking about money.

Jesus isn't hating you or merely trying to drag you down. What he's actually offering is something deeper and better than meditation, deeper and better than drugs, deeper and better than alcohol, and deeper and vastly better than your thin assurance to yourself that you're a good person.

Well, let's see what he does. Verse 19. So Jesus says, so you know, Jesus says, no one is good but God alone, except God alone.

That's verse 18, verse 19. You know the commandments. Jesus continues, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.

So he just names a couple. And the young man says to him, and he said to him, teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. Now, we're all being solemn. Let me tell you, if at coffee time, I was to tell you that I kept all of these things perfectly all the time, and my kids or my wife were beside me, they'd snort or look up at the ceiling. That would be an interesting thing. If I said with complete earnestness all of these things I have kept from my youth, and you see my kids going like this, my wife looking away or looking down or snickering or something. So the young man is naive and more than a little bit deluded, but he's also very earnest. Like it's a very... Billy Graham said of this story famously, that... How did it go? I should have written it down. He said of this story, the young man asks the right question of the right person and gets the right answer, but responds the wrong way.

[20 : 19] Not really, he asked the right question of the right person, gets the right answer, but he responds the wrong way. Anyway, this young guy says, well, I've kept all these things from my youth. And, you know, if we actually overheard somebody saying that to another person, like if we overheard a co-worker say this, if we were sitting beside somebody in a meal and we heard them say something, we would actually sort of despise them of it, wouldn't we? Like we would actually probably think that we're better than them. We'd look down our nose at them. I'm not shallow like that guy, like that gal. I'm not shallow like them. How does Jesus react? Well, look at verse 21 and 22.

And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, you lack one thing. Go, you lack one thing. Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me.

Now, this is a very good translation, but it can't capture without having something annotated what it really says. If you look at verse 21, it says, I'm looking at him. This isn't just like me looking to the side and looking over there, you know, at Deborah Victory or something. This is like what if you go to somebody who's trained as a therapist and they've spent decades perfecting being therapists, what they teach you in therapy is how to look at a person, like really look at them.

And notice everything. Notice whether they have chewed fingernails or how they're dressed and their mannerisms, but to look at them, to have the person feel like they've really been seen, like they've really been heard, that you are really looking right into who they are in a way that's going to be looking at them to help them. And that's what's being communicated here. When Jesus says he looks at them, he doesn't look down his nose at them. He doesn't make a comment. He doesn't snicker.

He doesn't say, you know, you're being pretty shallow, like dude, let's be a bit more real. He looks at them. He really sees the young guy as the young guy. And then it's the only place in the gospels where Jesus says, and he loved him. I mean, isn't this the long, when I said earlier about how most Canadians, part of what's going on with us maintaining that we're good people is that inwardly, we're very fragile and we're very broken and we have lots of anxiety and we have lots of worries.

[22 : 59] And maybe we don't have that all the time because we have these times where we're very successful or, you know, like, you know, we've just gotten the promotion and we just bought some really, some really, really good looking clothes and, and it's a beautiful fall day and we're feeling like a billion bucks as we walk around. And it's not as if we're depressed all the time, but inwardly there's this type of fragile and brokenness. And what we really want is somebody to look at us and see us as we really are and love us. And that's what we see here in the gospel, Jesus on his way to the cross. Jesus, I talked a couple of weeks ago about the fact that hell is real. It is possible to die and spend your eternity separate from God and in rebellion from God and, and, and living with all the consequences of that is both the internal ones that eat you up and God's judgment on you. But what this text is saying is that nobody goes there because Jesus didn't love them. Nobody is apart from God forever because Jesus didn't love them. This is how Jesus sees you.

And this is how Jesus sees me. He looks at you. He sees you as you really are. And he loves you. And here in the text, he's on the way to the cross to die for you.

The young man in verse 22 is disheartened. He's sorrowful. And this is a really important thing for us to understand. Being sad isn't the same thing as repentance. Being sad isn't the same thing as repentance. See what, what the Jesus is asking the young man to do. Look what, if you look up again at verse 21, you lack one thing. And by the way, one thing doesn't mean, oh, you're just one little tiny thing. No, no, no. It would be like, it would be like, yeah, you know, I've done this, I've done this, I've done this. And then, you know, then, and then I say, okay, you lack only one thing to be a superhero. You have to jump over the Grand Canyon. Just that one thing, you know?

Like it's not one tiny little thing. It's like a huge thing, right? And, and what Jesus is, and I'll explain more in a moment what he's saying here. But, but right here, he says, you know, go, sell all that you have, give to the poor, you'll have treasure in heaven, and come follow me.

It's calling him to repentance, to change the direction of his life. And sorrow and sadness about your life isn't the same thing as repentance. The fact of the matter is, is that some people, when they finally come to Christ, or maybe as a long period of time when they've been far from Christ, where they've had a problem with maybe a type of a demonic oppression in their life, or they've been terribly anxious and, and burdened because of something they've made of an idol of, or they have some secret and besetting sin, and it's finally brought into the open, and they're able to confess it and feel the love of Christ. What they don't feel is sadness, but I'm free.

[25 : 58] I'm free. See, what God is asking us is for repentance, not necessarily a particular emotional experience.

Now, Jesus sort of broadens it out. Actually, what he does is, I'm going to go back to here to say what, when Jesus says this, it's not, he's not trying to demoralize us, although at first it's going to sound like he really is trying to demoralize us. But you see, what, what Jesus, what the Bible does, what Jesus is doing, is he's helping to see us as we really are in the context of the fact that the triune God really exists, and that there really is a savior, and that Jesus is the savior. And so the Bible wants us to try to see who we really are, so we begin to appreciate who he really is, and what the world is really like, and so we can live and be free. So what does he do? He makes it worse. Look at verse 23.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words, but Jesus said to them again, children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. And note when he says that, he says that's for everybody, for poor people and rich people.

Verse 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. And so they're completely shocked by this. And by the way, some people have said that there's some gate that you go in, and no, no, no, no, no, no, that's not, there was no gate like this.

Basically, you know, the time Jesus was the biggest land animal that anybody could see was a camel in Jesus's time. And the smallest hole in most people's experience was the eye of a needle.

[27 : 55] And he picks it because it's impossible. It's completely and utterly impossible. Now, the other thing about it is, is that we don't feel the full sting of why the disciples were amazed, because part of the reason we don't, when Jesus says how difficult, verse 23, it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. Like most of us go, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because most Canadians hate rich people. First of all, most Canadians don't think they're rich.

Like if you were to go to Rockcliffe or Bell, you know, or to the Glebe or some of those other, like, you know, very, very, you know, expensive areas, probably people say that I'm not rich. And you all snicker, but that's people, most Canadians don't think they're rich. And most people think, yeah, look at Trump. Like I could see that Trump can't get into heaven, like he's a rich guy.

So, but here's the thing, right? How is this going to help us in our heart? The fact of the matter is, is that generally Canadians don't like rich people. And remember, Jesus loved this young guy.

In fact, I'm going to make a little, I'm going to make a terrible, I'm going to make this aside. I think I have to say it. One of the things that Jesus is going to talk about, I'm going to explain what Jesus is saying about money. But one of the things which is completely unavoidable about Jesus's comment about money is that we should care for the poor. Christians should care for the poor.

And one of the problems in Canada is that the left has been taken over by white collar unions. And what characterizes most of the left is not that they care for the poor, but they hate the rich.

[29 : 37] And they're caught up with white collar, middle class preoccupations. And we as a church, and the Christian community has to be countercultural, and not hate the rich, and love the poor.

Hating the rich isn't the same thing as loving poor people. Using poor people as a pawn to stick it to the rich, isn't what Jesus is calling us to. Christians should have a heart for poor people.

But here's the thing. We can use this, we can have multiple examples. Many people could say, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I can easily, effortlessly see how rich guys, and they think of Trump.

But then they don't think of Clinton as being rich. People can say, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I can see how Jordan Peterson's a terrible guy, because he's well off now. And Olivia Wilde, whose movies just came out where she bases the villain on it, and she's very public about basing the villain on Jordan Peterson. And so some people, if they don't like Jordan Peterson, they can say, yeah, yeah, yeah, people like Olivia Wilde are right, and they're really good, and they're really leading the way. And yet we can see how by people like Jordan Peterson. Or if you're on the other side of the political spectrum, you stand up for Jordan Peterson, and you sort of try to demonize Olivia Wilde. But the fact of the matter is, is that Olivia Wilde is rich. See, the fact is, we're only selective in the rich people that we don't like. And we ultimately do believe that there are people who are very well off that are better than us. And Jesus says, the best of humanity can't possibly be good enough to enter the kingdom of God. That's what Jesus is saying.

He's not playing to your ideological biases. He's trying to get us to understand our ideological biases. So what does he say? Look at verse 26. He makes it very clear. So they're exceedingly astonished. You know, verse 25 again, 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. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for Trump to enter the kingdom of God, or the Clintons, or all the people in Martha's Vineyard, or Obama. Like, you know, just pick your rich person. And they, verse 26, they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, then who can be saved? And Jesus looked at them and said, with man it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God.

[32 : 24] So no one is good enough to enter the kingdom of God. And unless God does something, then human beings are in trouble. So what's going on here in the text? The last few minutes. I'm going to finish in a moment with the last few verses, but very briefly. Shortly after I was ordained a hundred million years ago, because I'm ancient of days, one of the first things I had to do, and by coincidence, I now live about six houses from this house. But at the time, I was living in the very, very low rental, you know, townhouse. And anyway, I'm just a young guy. I'm 29 years old. I haven't been ordained for very long.

And the minister says, a woman in the congregation would like a house blessing. And he knew I was sort of charismatic-y and I do that type of stuff. And the reason was, is that somebody had broken into her house. And now she'd like the house to be cleansed. And so I went over, you know, I was thinking about it, I'm thriving in today. You know, I remember at 29, I thought she was probably impossibly old, and she was probably in her mid-50s. But at 29, I thought she was impossibly old.

But I never, I can never forget sitting in her living room in her beautiful house, just as simple, you know, many ways as simple as a beautiful house. And she shared with me how to have somebody come into her house and go through her stuff and steal things. She felt violated. She felt personally violated.

She said, I know it's not the same thing as being raped or beaten up, but George, it's just this powerful sense of being violated. Because the fact of the matter is that our possessions, our house and our possessions are closely tied to us. So here's the thing that Jesus was doing to the young man.

He offered himself as a substitute for the man's possessions. That's what he was doing. He offered himself as a substitute for the man's possessions. And because possessions are so closely tied to who we are, it's a way to get through to him that he's offering himself as a substitute for him. You see, that's what he's going to the cross to do. He's dying as a substitute. When Jesus dies on the cross, he dies in my place. He dies instead of me. The doom that I deserve falls on him. That's what he's doing on the cross. He is dying as my substitute. And Jesus, in a sense, remember, he's preparing people for the fact that he's going to the cross to die. And he offers himself as a substitute for the young man's possessions. And the young man doesn't want to give them up.

[35 : 06] The second thing which is going on in this text...

Well, let me tell you this. This is now about 15 years ago or more, and I've lost track with him. But there was a fellow that I had a series of conversations with.

And he was a Christian. He'd been a Christian for quite a few years. But he was dealing with a profound sense of loss. Because about five years earlier, he had been dating a young woman.

And he was really very much in love with her. But there came a point in time before he could ask... He was going to ask her to marry him. But he had a chance to move to a different city for like a really big time promotion. Like, I'm not just talking about an extra 5,000 bucks. Like, this is like going from...

Like, this was a huge type of thing. Somebody who had noticed him and thought he had huge potential and headhunted him. And here he is five years later. He, you know, his income, whatever, quadrupled, quintupled, like in a very short period of time.

[36 : 24] And we had a series of conversations because he said, I realize that the love of my life, I chose my money and my job over her. And if I could go back in time...

You know, he knew through things that after a couple of years, she got over him and she was now married to another person. And he said, if I could go back in time, I made a very foolish mistake.

I put this job and money and this prestige and I put it ahead of a person that I could spend the rest of my life with. And frankly, I've tried to date and I can't find anybody like her. She was absolutely perfect for him.

And we spent several times... I mean, what... All you can really do in cases like that is just listen and pray, right? I can't make things better. So what's going on here in this particular story is that every single one of us has a way that we order our lives.

Like that's just how we are. And a lot of times, one of the reasons why we're so fragile is that the ways we order our lives are in rebellion against either and conflict with each other.

[37 : 32] And we aren't aware of it. Like, you know, we want to have a soul mate and we want to have a soul, you know, a soul mate. But at the same time, you know, we want them to just do whatever we want or we want them to move where we move.

And we want them to give up their life. And but that's not going to work. And but we want to make lots of money and we want to get the promotion and we want to have a soul mate. And those things are at war with each other and violence with each other.

And they're not properly ordered. And sometimes the soul friend is soul mate is higher and sometimes the money is higher. But either way, and and and and and and and so we all have different ways.

You know, we know that we want to have good relationships and we want to have money. We have job. We want to have career. We got all these types of things. But the bottom line is and this is what counselors and therapists try to do. They try to get you to understand that you have a bit of a hierarchy within your life, that human beings have hierarchies within their lives.

And that what causes us so much distress is that our hierarchies are out of whack. And and when they're not out of whack, some of the things that we put at the very top of the pyramid eat us up. They destroy us.

[38 : 40] They hollow us out. If you make money, the thing which orders and rules your life and the markets collapse 30% and you had three million dollars, you just lost nine hundred thousand dollars in a couple of months.

Nine hundred thousand dollars and a person with three million dollars investments. I'll tell you they're not rich. And inflation's eating them up.

And they're unhappy and they're anxious. And that's just the way human beings are. Human beings have a hierarchy of how they order their lives. We do. And Jesus looked at this man and he loved him.

And he looked at this young man and he loved him. He knew that the top of the hierarchy of that man's life was money and possessions. Who better to be at the top of the hierarchy of your life than the one who looks at you as you really are and loves you?

And not only does he look at you as you really are and loves you, but he offers to be a substitute for you. And he offers to die for you.

[39 : 51] And who better than he who's also the one who's created all things to be the one who begins to order the hierarchy in your life? So Jesus isn't saying here, he's not being demoralizing to young people.

He's not saying to those of you who are here starting out in your career, don't try to have a career, don't try to have a house, don't try to make money. He's not saying anything like that. He's not saying like that.

He is saying that for many people, one of the things which causes the most distress in your life and anxiety and fear and insecurity in your life and gets things way out of whack is money.

It's money. And in fact, one of the things is it might be hard in our circle, but it's very, very hard. Very, very few people will come to the self-acknowledgement unless they've been terribly, terribly broken that money rules in their lives.

We can see it how it rules in other people's lives, but it's very hard for us to see how it rules in our own life. And Jesus looks at that young man and he knows that he has an idol at the very center of who he is and that he has made money the top of the hierarchy in his life and possessions.

[41 : 00] And he says, you've got to get rid of that. And he says it because he looks at him and loves him. And he offers to be the substitute. And only Christ can be the one to order your life.

Just, um... So what Jesus is saying here... It's connected to...

You know, the way you deal with idols is you expose them to the light. And you do the opposite of what they want you to do. At the heart of dealing with the idol of money is generosity, being generous, which means giving money away.

And so Jesus isn't saying to you, okay, you've got to just start giving your money away. Because the whole point of the message is you have to come to him.

He wants to be your savior. He wants... He's died for you. He loves you. He wants to be your savior. You come to him. And once you come to him, one of the things he's going to want to start to do in your life is to reorder your life.

[42 : 20] And one of the things he's going to want to reorder in your life is your money and your possessions. To be open-handed with your possessions. To be open-handed with your house. To trust in him to care for you.

To be characterized by generosity and hope for the future, rather than despair and being miserly and grasping. And one of the ancient...

And in one level, everything that I have is God's. Everything I have, I want him to order. And part of the way that I try to model that or show that is by giving away money.

For the work of the gospel and for the relief of poverty. And the historic Christian guide for that is to try to move towards 10%.

God will cause some of you to give away more than that. And for many, it's too hard to go from what you do or don't do right now to tithing. But that's how you kill the idol.

[43 : 16] That's how Christ begins to help you to order your life. Just one final... Let's just read this final thing. And it'll just...

I know I've gone past my timeline, but let's just... He says this other thing, by the way. And look what it says in verse 28. Bottom of page 62.

Peter began to say to him, See, we have left everything and followed you. And Jesus said, Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel.

In other words, they've come to Christ. And as a result of that, they've had to give away some of this stuff. They've had to make... You know, they've lent out their cottage. Or they've sold... You know, they have three cars or four cars.

And they get convicted. You know what? There's only two of us and we have three cars. Maybe we should sell one and give it to the poor or give the money to the church for gospel ministry or to evangelize children.

[44 : 14] Like, why on earth do we have three cars? There's only two of us. Most of the time we even drive together, you know? And whatever. They've given up whatever. For my sake and for the gospel. Verse 30. Who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and the age to come eternal life.

But many who are first will be last and the last first. So what does Jesus mean by that very briefly? This is another call for us. It's not just a call for us to be generous in terms of our possessions, but to be open-handed and open-hearted with one another and become more of a community.

In 2002, I had the great privilege of being invited to go to Kenya for a gathering of evangelical Anglicans from all over the world.

And the gathering was in rural Kenya, about 100 kilometers upcountry and north from Nairobi, the capital. And I got there a bit early for the conference, just the way the flights worked.

And on the morning, the conference was going to begin after lunch. In the morning, I went for a bit of a walk. I left the compound to go for a walk. And as I'm going for a walk, this fellow with a purple shirt, hence a bishop, he comes up beside me.

[45 : 21] And he's there at the conference as well. And we start to talk. Here I am in rural Kenya. And I'm talking to this guy.

And as we're walking along, we come to a house not far from the college. And he sees the cross and all of that, some other stuff that's Christian. And he says to me, he says, Brother, let's go over and visit that house.

Now I get very anxious. He says, no, no, brother, let's go over and visit that house. I think it could be good. And he can see I'm very anxious. And he puts his hand on my arm and says, Brother, we're not in Canada.

We're in Africa. Let's go across. So we go across. And as he's coming up, a little boy opens the door. True story.

Opens up the door. And the African bishop. He was from Tanzania. He says, is your father in? And the little boy goes and he gets his father. And the father comes out.

[46 : 28] Maybe the bishop knew this. I don't know. But the guy, they'd met each other 20 years earlier at some event. He didn't know that. He was an elder in one of the local churches. But I got invited into the house.

And I got to sit down. Very simple house. You know, just the concrete blocks. Sit there in a very simple room. Have tea. And a biscuit.

And chat. In a house. In rural Kenya. And I was called brother. And I was called brother.

You see, you become a Christian. You give your life to Jesus. You have brothers and sisters all over the world. And not only are we to pray that we'll be a congregation of people who are very generous and open-handed with their money, but we'll be open-handed with their house.

We'll be in small groups and we'll have friends and we'll notice strangers and newcomers and we'll love them and welcome them. You know, in a sense, the richest person in the world couldn't purchase what I got for free in rural Kenya.

[47 : 38] To go into the house of a local person and be welcomed as brother and have a simple cup of tea and a biscuit. And all the money in the world couldn't buy that.

Let's stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Father, you know how much things in our lives are out of order.

And Father, we thank you that your word calls us to come to Jesus, to have him be our savior. And Father, for those of us who have trusted Jesus as savior, we just recommit that he is our savior and we want him to be our Lord.

And we thank you that he looked at us. He loved us. He still loves us. He sees the order and the disorder in our lives and still he loves us. And he'll never forsake us or leave us.

And Father, we ask that you would help us more and more and more to have your word rule in our lives so that we will trust him. And that we will trust him to bring order out of our, into our lives.

[48 : 48] And that we'll have money in the right order. And career and relationships and family and friendships in the right order. And we ask, Lord, that the Holy Spirit would move and work in our lives.

That as Jesus becomes truly our king, our crucified king, that we will be hospitable and open-handed and open-hearted about our possessions and welcoming people and including people.

And Father, that you would do this wonderful work of the Holy Spirit and of your word in our lives, Father. Because we know this is what you desire of us to be. To not be frightened and anxious.

To not be of despair and despondency. But to trust that you will see our needs met. And that you will build relationships and friendships. That you will use us to be a place of life and love.

Of grace and of mercy. And of truth and of beauty and of goodness, Father. In this city and to the ends of the earth. And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

[49 : 48] Amen.