

Mark 10:17-31

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[0:00] I'll just open this up by praying for us tonight. Lord, those are great words for us to recite and to sing, that we would surrender all to you.

And I just pray that that would sink from our mouths into our minds and right down into our hearts as we look to love and to serve you, Lord, to surrender all things to you, and that we may find true joy, true satisfaction, that you would truly be all that we need.

In Christ's name, amen. Tonight we'll continue to look at the book of Mark. We'll be in chapter 10, starting in verse 17.

We kind of see in this section of Mark, Jesus continues to teach his disciples and to show them the nature and the character of the kingdom of God. So, and right here in this passage, we'll begin with verse 17 and go through verse 31.

And I'll read that for us as we start. And as he 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?

[1:25] And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God, God alone. 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. And he said to him, teacher, all these I've kept from my youth. And Jesus looking at him, loved him and said to him, 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. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.

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, children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter in the kingdom of God.

[2:24] And they were exceedingly astonished. And he said to him, and they said to him, then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man it is impossible, but not with God.

For all things are possible with God. Peter began to say to him, see, we have left everything and followed you. 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.

Who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life.

But many who are first will be last. And the last verse. Hmm. There was this missionary.

He left his home. He gave up his culture. He gave up his language. He buried three of his family members in one year. He was robbed for almost everything he had.

[3 : 32] But except send the guy to jail. Because of the harsh penal code, he writes him a letter. In the midst of all this, I guess he's in China, by the way.

And in the midst of all this, there's the Boxers' Rebellion. In the missionary agency he's working with, they lose 58 of their people and about 21 of their children.

And in the midst of that, he takes no reparations. He takes no action to defend them against that. But yet, his whole goal in that is to reach the people of this country and to see that they know Christ.

And towards the end of his life, he makes this statement. He says, I never made a sacrifice. Wouldn't that be kind of odd or strange? Maybe for some of us, kind of romantic, that kind of thing where I never sacrificed anything.

And can you imagine that? Everything you've been through, every agonizing decision you've made, everything that you've given up, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, of course we were like, that's a sacrifice.

[4 : 41] We've given this up. We've let this thing go of value that we've treasured for so long. And could you make that kind of statement at the end of your life?

You said, I've never sacrificed anything. But what does he mean by this? What does his life say about this? In kind of interpreting life, it seems to say, it means living a life of following Jesus brings a certain fullness and a certain satisfaction that comes by no other means.

It doesn't come by staying in the comfort of your own home or your own country, in his case. It only comes by following Christ and knowing his will and treasuring just the fullness and the joy that comes in him.

So as we look at this rich young ruler tonight, we see certain things about him. Not all of these are bad things.

Not all of these are good things. But we definitely see here him being sincere. As you kind of look in verse 17, it says, And as Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

[6 : 02] So Jesus is on his way, and this guy just kind of runs along and kneels before him. From the different, from the gospels, we kind of see that he's wealthy, he's rich, he's a ruler, so he runs out and kneels before Jesus, this teacher.

And that to be kind of a strange thing for him to do during that time, being in his kind of position of authority, him being a ruler, him having that status in society.

But we see him running out before Jesus. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? So we see a sincerity there, him not just thinking about himself, but what's to come, him thinking about eternal life.

Wouldn't that be kind of a noble thing for him to earnestly to be seeking about what will happen in his life as it comes to an end? And what if we kind of all thought that way?

Like, if I knew what was to happen when I die, like, would that change how I live now? And I think he was kind of in that same mode here. He was wondering, like, if I die, what is going to happen to me?

[7 : 08] So, he's sincere, he's earnest, he's anxious to know where his life is headed. And Jesus says to him, why do you call me good?

No one is good except God alone. 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. And just considering this, Jesus starts off, why do you call me good? God is good. Only God is good.

So, he gets the mind of this rich, young, little working. He gets him to kind of see how he's defining good. Because either, right here, he's going to say, well, if only God is good, then who is the good teacher I'm talking to?

Is he defining Jesus as being good? And in that, defining him, making him to be God? Well, his view of goodness is merely from a human standpoint, where he's subjectively comparing himself to others around him and coming up with his own moral standard, where he's kind of saying, well, according to these things, he's good.

[8:34] He teaches people. I'm good. I'm rich. I'm a ruler. People respect me. So, how's he defining good here? And of course, he doesn't take the Peter approach.

He doesn't run up and say, you are the Christ. We don't see that here because we see how the rest of the passage goes. We see it doesn't go in that direction. It takes another turn.

Because his response is, teacher, all these I've kept from my youth. Hmm. What does he mean by this? He's kept all these things from his youth.

He's never stolen. He's never lied. He's always honored his father and mother. He's never murdered. He's never bore false witness. Not in any aspect.

Between the law and the Talmud, he's been able to keep himself holy and pure and undefiled in every way. The holiest guy I know.

[9:33] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So, what are we seeing here in his response? Could it be self-righteousness?

Is he truly that genuine, that he's never sinned, that he's never done anything wrong in his entire life? And as we get to his response, we're going to see that, that this is all self-deception.

He's blinding himself in, and thinking he's obtained some type of perfection in this life that he can kind of hang his head on. And we can see that, that we were all born into sin, that not outwardly, we tend to do these things a lot, but in our minds and in our hearts, we can, we can see us, ourselves, hating our brother, and Jesus calls that murder.

And can we somehow undo this nature? No. And yet, we see this guy here, he's, he's externalized the law that was given to him.

It's by saying, what must I do? In all his, in all his life, these are just things that he's been doing. He's kind of building his checklist up. He's doing all these things, and he's considering himself good.

[11:02] And we kind of see that every wrong thought, every misplaced emotion, every thoughtless action judges us guilty before God. God in his holiness is unique and perfect and moral in every way, and we can't measure up to that standard.

He can't even tolerate a single sin. As we kind of, as we see where sin kind of derived from, we see Adam, we see Eve, we see this one sin separates man from God completely.

So he's, in his holiness, unique and perfect and set apart from us. He's not ordinary, he's not casual in any way, shape, or form.

He's, he's not us. He's holy, he's perfect. And all of us have been tainted in some way. And a quote from, from J.C. Rowe says, so long as we think we can keep the law, Christ profits us nothing.

And we're going to see this in, in the life of this rich young ruler. So his, his ignorance, he's searching for this other, this other tool, this other thing that he can kind of add to his arsenal of, of his to-do list, where he said, I've done this and this and this.

[12:20] And these things have, have caused me to gain eternal life. But it all just boils down to a trap. It's, it's become a trap from him because he doesn't, he's not seeing where, where those things are leading him.

And, we kind of go on. And it says, Jesus looking at him, 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. Come, follow me. So we see here, he's kept all these things, yet, yet he's lacking.

And, and I think when Jesus tells him he's lacking, he's probably not thinking in the same way that, that Jesus thinking. Because in his self-righteous state, he's, he's thinking that he's done all that he can do.

And he just kind of needs a, an extra piece of that. He just needs kind of a bonus to, to boost him along a little bit. So Jesus kind of tells him, or, or better yet, reveals where, where this rich young ruler's heart, heart is at.

[13:33] And we see him go away. It says, disheartened by this saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. He loved money better than he loved his soul.

He loved his possessions more than he loved himself. It's not much the fact that he had money.

The fact is that he trusted in it. He took comfort in it. He made it security for himself. It was the one thing that Jesus wanted him to give up that he, he couldn't live without.

Isn't this kind of the, the story that we all face? A little raise here, a raise there. Maybe paid a lottery a little bit and get a little extra money and, and that'll bring comfort into our lives.

We can take all the trips that we were thinking about taking. We can pay off all the debt that we have and, and that will somehow kind of put us in a position where we, where we no longer need anything.

[14:44] And does God kind of fall under that category in our comfort? Do we, do we really need him? Do we really seek him out? Is he really the one that we're trusting in and trusting to provide for us in that when we have all that we need right here?

So what do we do to, to keep our good intentions good? How do we, how do we fend against this? I think it's just knowing that, that Christ is Lord and just knowing that he's Lord over all that we have, whether it's our lives, our, our time, our talents and gifts, our money, not just 10% of those things, but all of it, he calls us to be good stewards in the way we handle our time, the way we handle our money and all these things.

So, just with that, I love your soul better than you love your possessions. and, and next, Jesus, Jesus responds to him.

It doesn't just kind of, in there, he just doesn't, doesn't walk away disheartened. It says, Jesus looking at him loved him. Hmm.

so this guy, he, he's overwhelmed by this demand that Jesus makes on his life. He, he's about to go away disheartening and, and Jesus looks at him, loves him, and, and tells him what he needs to hear.

[16:41] And, you may think this is, this is kind of unloving. He's, he's putting too high a demand on this man. Or, we may think it's pretty reasonable.

This guy's pretty wealthy. He can afford to give it away. He's in the one percent. He can do a little bit more for society, pay some extra taxes or something.

And then we get to, then we continue to look at verse 21. Maybe it's unreasonable because we look at this verse and, if he has to do this, then I have to do this too.

Jesus is commanding him to do this. See, he's also commanding me to give up everything I have. Don't we kind of think that way? We'll end up selling off all our possessions, moving to some deserted island where we read the Bible to cannibals or something like that.

But Jesus looks at him and he loved him. He had his best benefit in mind.

[17:47] He wanted to see this man prosper, not in the way that the rich young ruler wanted himself to prosper, but in a different way. He sees this guy caught up in his self-righteousness and the comfort that his wealth kind of brings to him.

And we see that's why he experiences this anguish. He's holding this thing so tightly that he just can't let it go.

And yet Jesus knows this already. He's God. He knows that this man is coming to him. We kind of see that in his dialogue with the Syrophenician woman.

Well, the Samaritan woman at the well, we see that there, him knowing and poking and prodding and asking these questions. But yet here, he still extends love to this guy, even though his affections are elsewhere.

Not only does he love him, he promises him treasure. And he says, and you will have treasure in heaven. Come and follow me.

[19:12] And I guess this isn't the treasure he wanted. And we see in this statement that Jesus is offering him this treasure, this treasure of eternal life that he's so desperately looking for.

but yet, he's so, so tied to his earthly possessions that he's unwilling to let this go. And this idol in his heart just dethrones God and it draws his affections away from this good teacher who, who he's running to for, for this great answer that he thinks is going to impact his whole eternity.

And we kind of respond to our, our idolatrous actions in, in the same way.

God couldn't possibly want me to get rid of that. It's just so near and dear to my heart that I really can't let it go. And then we kind of justify, justify when people try to hold us accountable.

God knows my heart. I mean, indeed he does, but, but do you know your heart? Are you deceived like this rich young ruler? And have you confronted the, the things in your heart that, that pull you away from Christ?

[20:32] And going back a few chapters to, to Mark chapter four, he's, he's telling the parable of the sower here and, and I definitely think it, it applies, applies to the rich young ruler here when, in verses 18 and 19, he says, and others are sown among thorns.

There are those who hear, who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the, the see, the seedfulness of riches and the desires of other things enter in and choke the word and it proves unfruitful.

so this, our fruitfulness leaves him kind of, kind of useless.

He, he goes away and we never know if this ever comes back and he ever thinks about it again but he walks away disheartened and sorrowful.

you see Jesus here lovingly offering truth and this great gift that should be satisfying this young rich ruler's soul but yet he couldn't give himself fully to Jesus because, because of these possessions and we see here Jesus' verdict on the love of money and Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, how difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God and his disciples were amazed at his words but Jesus said to them, children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God it is easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God and they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, then who can be saved?

[22:25] through this account Jesus just continues to preach that the demands of the kingdom of God are so, so radically different than our expectations and the bar is set high.

If the gate was broad then we all would enter. If everyone could follow their own path to God then why would he be so strict here as to say that it's harder for a rich to enter the kingdom of God than the camel to pass through an eye of a needle the biggest animal they ever seen in Palestine at this time.

Not only was he saying that it was a difficult puzzle that could be sometime someday eventually figured out this was an impossibility and the same holds true for the rich who merely trust in their riches who are merely satisfied by the riches that they have.

Their difficulty turns into an impossibility at this point. And we're quick to point out the explicitly bad things that we see in our own lives and around us murdering stealing lying and all of these things but what about our idolatrous attitude towards good things the good things in our lives that we desire and hope for what is our attitude like towards those things?

Are we merely trusting God because he's going to get us those things or are those things just kind of icing on the cake?

[24:19] Are they extra? Are we truly satisfied in Christ? And as we continue to move through this passage we see here we see him here with his disciples and 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 with God for all things are possible. You can almost hear them gasp here because as he says this twice they were amazed they were astonished if this guy comes to him somehow has a leg up on them on the highway to heaven then what are their chances?

How can they get there? And this is right in line with first century Jewish thinking that wealth and prosperity those things were signs of blessing from God that people that had these things were blessed they had favor on their lives and somehow that status showed that God delighted in them in a sense so these bunch of fishermen were together and they were wondering if this guy who's followed the law who's has this status who appears to be blessed by God can't answer the kingdom then what about us?

How can we be saved? And we see here the disciples having to unlearn some of the things they grew up with in their society and in their culture they had to unlearn the things that they were hearing about salvation they had to unlearn the things that they were learning about deliverance from their sin and what they would look like their good works were becoming useless their ethnicity was pretty much awash and high social standard high social standing was becoming meaningless as they began as they continued to hear and to learn and to follow Jesus' teaching God but surely there can be something they can cling to but Jesus continues to tear all this down he continues to remove all of these other things and deconstruct everything that their worldview kind of brought together for them so who can be saved and he looked at them and said with man it is impossible but with

God for all things are possible with God so in this the rich young ruler sheds light on what we should hold dear to our hearts he gives us this picture kind of contrasting what comes in the passage before where the disciples are kind of holding the little kids off from coming and like Jesus is like no let them come to me but we see the rich young ruler coming here he seems to have access he comes he kneels and Jesus in this shows us that the rich who value their treasure who value their possessions they're more far off than those little children that you've seen before and we see here the gospel isn't gained it's received and this is just a valuable lesson right here that by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone that's where our salvation comes from that's that's where we're saved he says with man it is impossible but with God all things are possible and yet in that he makes a promise to them as well we see we see

[29:02] Peter here maybe a little antsy after this he sees this rich young ruler coming he he's observing what's going on he's he's seeing he's he's hearing and Peter says see we have left everything to follow you and Jesus said truly I say to you there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mothers or fathers or children or lands for the sake for my sake and for the gospel who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life and in this we see Jesus kind of going back to what he was saying to the rich young ruler come and follow me he's promising these things as they follow him the rich young ruler leaves this heart and then we see the disciples here they're still persevering they're following

Christ and Peter interjects like we've left everything he seems to be searching for an answer from Jesus to give him some hope like this guy he's not leaving anything behind but we've left everything and for the present he says they'll receive a hundredfold and we don't see them we don't see the disciples going back to their homes we don't we don't see them obtaining great wealth throughout the history that is to unfold after this they're moderate for their faith so how is this true and Christ gives us such a marvelous family of brothers and sisters of mothers and brothers as we as we as you kind of think about Mark 3 verse 35 where he says whoever does the will of God he is my brother and my sister and mother so we see so we see here manifested in our day the church the body of Christ knitted together all of us being many members being this family that he's talking about here but yet he also says persecutions that may turn some of us off but he says persecution will come with these things and I just kind of think about the book of John right before his high priestly prayer and at the end of chapter 16 he says

I have said these things to you that in me you may have peace and in the world you will have tribulation so he continues to promise them suffering persecution knowing what's in store for them once he leaves and suffering can be an ugly thing it can break the strongest of people that we know in Tim Kell's book walking with God through pain and suffering he says while the world views lead us to sit in the midst of life's joys foreseeing the coming sorrows Christianity empowers its people to sit in the midst of the world's sorrows tasting the joy to come and at the end of the day persecution it makes us more like Christ we see the apostles in jail we read

Paul's letters where he's always talking about this identifying with Christ and his sufferings and as we read Hebrews the joy set before him that came of suffering so persecution is just another thing that we as Christians have to face and to embrace as we walk this journey and in the age to come he promises eternal life and Keller also says in this book but resurrection is not just consolation it is restoration we get back all the love the loved ones the goods the beauties of this life but unimaginable degrees of glory and joy and strength can you imagine that unimaginable glory and Paul talks about this weight of glory that is to come that whatever we lose here whatever we gain here in the life to come there is there's just so much more waiting for us my friends this is eternal life

Jesus promises abundance only found in him that he's not a means to joy he's not a means to happiness he's not a means to great possessions he's the end of all those things joy is Christ is joy he is happiness he's everything that we are looking for and jumping back to verse 17 we see here Christ is setting out on a journey in all three of the synoptic gospels Matthew Mark and Luke we see this story in the same place in all of them he's setting out on his journey with his disciples and they're heading to Jerusalem and we all know what happens there it's kind of a final showdown of sorts and we see this rich young ruler kind of meeting him on the way to that and Christ is giving him a glimpse of that and the things that he's telling them and the instructions that he's giving them as he's heading to the cross at this point and he's teaching his disciples and preparing them for that very thing to come he's continuing to disciple them and teach them and give them this hope for the rough road that is to come and about the nature and the character of the kingdom of God that they will have something to hope in and even going back to chapter eight he continues to he starts to instruct them this way and in verse 34 he says if anybody will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul wealth and possessions are fleeting marriage and family those things aren't ultimate the idea here is to take hold of

[37 : 13] Christ daily treasure him above everything because he's worth more than all those things and I just want to leave you with one thought from 2 Corinthians 8-9 and though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you might so that you by his poverty might become rich I'll pray for us Lord Lord that we would give you all our affections that we would lose the illusion of power that we think we have over our lives and all the hard work that we put in to claim the things that you've blessed us with that we would come to you to surrender ourselves and our lives to give back all the things that you've given us and that we would treasure you as the giver rather than the gifts that with our whole hearts we would seek to love you and to know you and to follow you and it's in your name that I pray
Amen