

Introduction: review of last week...Rich Young Ruler

EXPOSITION

- v.23 tells us that he became extremely sorrowful as a result of Jesus' call. But there wasn't repentance. There can be even extreme sorrow in response to the Word of God without repentance.

I. JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE RICH YOUNG RULER – vv.24-25

- Jesus sees the man's sorrow and unrepentance and states **How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!** The topic is entering the kingdom/being saved. These are used interchangeably. To enter God's Kingdom, to come under His rule and Lordship as a citizen is salvation. It is to join the host of the righteous.
- At first look, it appears that the Lord is making an absolute statement about the possession of riches. As the passage progresses, Jesus eventually states that it is actually impossible for such a one to enter the kingdom. Does this mean then that anyone with more than necessity cannot enter? **No, for these reasons:**
 - 1.) The **OT Scriptures** teach that God's blessing can bring wealth. Deuteronomy 8:19 says "It is He who gives you power to get wealth." Proverbs 10:22 says "The blessing of the Lord makes one rich." The point of these verses is not that everyone who follows God will be rich, but rather as one obeys God, and should that blessing come, it is God who has done it. This is seen in the historical examples of Abraham, Job, Joseph, King David and Solomon, and others who were among the wealthiest men of their age.
 - 2.) The **NT Scriptures** teach what wealthy Christians should do with their wealth - 1Timothy 6 (later)
 - So what does Jesus mean? He is talking about a **certain kind** of rich person. Specifically, someone who **trusts** in riches as their god. This is explicit in Mark 10:24. Jesus warns of this earlier in Luke 16:13.
 - How hard is it for one who trusts in riches to enter the Kingdom? He illustrates by saying **...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.** There have been some attempts by interpreters to diminish the impossibility of this illustration (cable/gate). But as will be seen, Jesus isn't talking about mere difficulty, but impossibility.

II. JESUS' RESPONSE TO THE DISCIPLES – vv.26-27

- We are told in Matthew's account that they were greatly astonished. They also go on to ask the question **Who then can be saved?** They don't just moan and say "wow, that will be really hard", but rather "WHAT!!! If that is the case, then who can be saved? About entering this Kingdom Jesus says plainly that a rich man, one with this world's wealth, has a more difficult, and impossible job of entering that Kingdom than a camel through a needle's eye.
- In answer to the question, Jesus **doesn't correct** their thinking. He doesn't say "wait, you have misunderstood the seriousness of my statement. I really didn't mean it was impossible, just difficult." Rather, He **restates** and makes very clear the impossibility. **The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.**
- While it is impossible for one who trusts in riches to enter the kingdom, Jesus goes on to give hope in that what is impossible with men **is possible** in the power of God.
- This is a great encouragement, and goes beyond the application that we see here. Jesus is dealing with someone who loves and trusts in money. Jesus is really dealing with the issue of idolatry, in this case with money and wealth as their **idol**, what they love in their heart.
- This isn't the only idol that we can have. Anything created (what we see/touch/taste/smell/hear) is a potential idol, and can keep us from entering the Kingdom (or depart from it). This includes our job, marriage, children, family, education, sports, physical health/body, music, technology, sex, reputation. When there is a love, esteem, trust, comfort or desire for these things above God, then it is **always impossible** to enter the kingdom of God.
- It is impossible for one who trusts/worships _____ to enter the Kingdom of God. But with God, all things are possible. It is possible in that God **changes hearts, and removes idols**. He is the one who is able to convert, change the heart, and give new priorities and affections. This includes the rich man. It also includes the one who esteems anything else above Christ.

III. JESUS' RESPONSE TO PETER – vv.28-30

- At this point we hear Peter, as he so often does, speak up. He has watched this whole scene play out. Jesus had promised the rich young ruler treasures in heaven (v.22) if he would forsake all. The young man was sorrowful, due to his love for his stuff above God, and departed. Peter says **See (behold) we have left all and followed You.**
- These men had truly done that. Their wives, children, businesses, other interests were all left behind to be disciples of Jesus. What is implied here, and explicitly stated in Matthew 19:27 is **What shall we have?** You promised that man treasures, is that what we get?
- The Lord's response comes with a confirmation.. It is a promise that moves beyond Peter and the disciples out to all who would follow Christ in that He says **no one**. There will be those who through all ages, sometimes literally, and always in the heart "leave" house, parents, brothers, wife, and children for the Kingdom of God.
- And they gain **many times more in this present time**. What do we make of this? The "prosperity gospel" folks want to tell us that this means that if you give to them your money that God will give you a lot more. But the point of the

passage is the leaving of things and relationships to follow after the Lord Jesus. It is to count all things loss for the sake of the knowledge of Christ. It is to **treasure Christ** above every one and everything.

- Even as Christians, we can so easily fall into the trap of putting too much in that which is not God. We would our hopes, confidences, and happiness and that which will disappoint. Jesus calls to cease from them and make Him our chief joy and desire. What will be the result? To receive many times more in the here and now.
- Does this mean if we leave a wife we'll get a lot more? Leave children and find a whole bunch more? Leave parents and get more? Yes, and no. Not literally in that those physical relationships are multiplied (leading to a kind of Mormon polygamy), but rather that **our possessions become truly great and our true family explodes!** Remember that Jesus puts the spiritual family in higher priority than the physical Luke 8:21.
- The benefits of following Christ are not only in this age, but he says ***in the age to come eternal life***. The Bible divides human history into two major ages: this age (as created, but fallen) and the age to come (redeemed, glorious, and eternal). Scripture teaches us that at Christ's return, when there is the regeneration (remaking of all things), those how have loved Christ's appearing will inherit the earth as an eternal inheritance. This best thing about it is that they will dwell with God, and He will be with them, being their God and they being His people. The greatest inheritance is Him.
- So Peter (and we) don't have anything to worry about. The rewards for the things we lose here are rewarded in a much greater way.

APPLICATION

- This passage is in large part a warning. We have been given in the measure of human history as well as present world population an amazing amount of resources. How do we keep from being prevented to enter the Kingdom because of riches? 1Timothy 6:6-9; 17-19
- 1.) Cultivate contentment – v.6, 8
- 2.) Remember the temporary nature of stuff – v.7
 - Ecclesiastes 5:15 "As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand."
- 3.) Beware of desires for more and more (greed, covetousness) – v.9-10; this is a threat to faith
 - This is especially so in our culture, and at this time of year; the new thing, the updated model.
- 4.) Do not trust in riches, but in God – v.17
 - One of the clearest evidences of our idolatry is our response when our idols fail us. Are we moved to trust God more, or are we devastated, fearful, anxious, etc.
- 5.) Enjoy God's gifts – v.17; they are a pointer to the Giver
- 6.) Be generous – v.18-19; it is out of this there is future reward
 - These should be embraced with a sense of stewardship and responsibility.