

Mark 10.17-31

Things Money Can't Buy

9th C Frankish king, warrior and Christian Charlemagne had a problem

About to go to war, and he was concerned for the eternity of his soldiers

> had them all baptized

instructed to hold their sword above water > arm and sword out of water >

they then rode off to war

Charlemagne's theology > baptized person was saved

un-baptized sword and arm could still serve Charlemagne's war

we often hold our checkbooks out of the waters of baptism

afraid to put money God has given us under Lordship of Christ

afraid to live financially in the kingdom of God

Man in our Text – If Possible – Would have liked such a Baptism

1. Potential Religions 2. Impossible Relationship 3. Unimaginable Results

Story FOUND in ALL 3 SYNOPTIC Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke

v. 17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him...

All 3 > **RICH** / Matthew > **YOUNG** / Luke > **RULER** – i.e. of SYNAGOGUE

RICH, YOUNG, RULER > IMPRESSIVE to POOR Galilean DISCIPLES

Belonged to SOCIAL GROUP Largely UNTOUCHED by GOSPEL at that Point

1. Potential Religions: *"all these I have kept"*

a. Respect for Jesus

v. 17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

EAGERNESS > RUNNING and FALLING on KNEES on PUBLIC HIGHWAY

Came to Consult Jesus > DISTINGUISHED RABBI > Shows Proper RESPECT

Spiritual INSIGHT: Sees Jesus as GOOD & Seeks His Advice for ETERNAL LIFE

EVERY Major Religion has SOME Place for Jesus > None DENY Him Completely

Jesus of Nazareth is experiencing an extraordinary popularity boom...in some places his rating is higher outside the historic churches than inside... Humanists and Hindus, Moslems, Marxists and Jews all in their different ways are attracted by Jesus.

John Stott

b. Respected by Jesus v. 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him.

Jesus SAW Noble Qualities in him – SPONTANEOUS, EARNEST, OPEN

NOT a ROGUE > Jesus NOT trying to SHAME him

If we MET HIM we would ADMIRE him GREATLY > Welcome in our Church

Probably Most SPIRITUALLY INSIGHTFUL Man in Gospel of Mark till Now

v. 18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good - except God alone.

Jesus CHALLENGES Good Man to become EVEN BETTER > SPARS with him

Jesus DRAWS OUT the FULL Implications of his words

Jesus has come to HONOR God > JEALOUS for UNIQUE GOODNESS of God

Is Jesus ONLY GOOD or is He TRULY GOD?

ONLY GOD can know HOW to get SOMEONE into GOD'S KINGDOM

INSEPARABLE Relation between JESUS and FATHER

No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

1 John 2:23

v. 19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

Jesus had ALREADY taken MEASURE of the Man > Begins with Questions

SECOND Table of Law (Comm's 6-10) > Duties toward NEIGHBORS

If Cannot OBEY These how much more DIFFICULT > FIRST TABLE to God

c. Self-Righteous before Jesus

PRIDE in Man's Question: v. 17 "what must **I** do to inherit eternal life?"

In calling Jesus GOOD > Reflection of SELF > **One GOOD Man to Another**

AUDACITY to Stand Proudly: Head Held-High BRAGGING of his PERFECTION

v. 20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Bar Mitzvah Jew – Since Age 12 – SON of the LAW > GOOD BEHAVIOR

Like SAUL the PHARISEE: ...as for legalistic righteousness, faultless...

Philippians 3:6

Man's FOCUS > OUTWARD Conformity NOT INWARD Conviction of Law

UNLIKE Paul the APOSTLE > Did NOT Understand SPIRITUAL Aspect of Law

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. Romans 7:16

DESPITE this RITUALISTIC RIGHTEOUSNESS – Something was MISSING

IF he'd KEPT Law FULLY – WHY does he ask Jesus for ETERNAL LIFE?

BASIC ERROR > Saw SALVATION as result of HUMAN EFFORT

Common IDEA of Jews of Jesus day: They (crowd of Jews) asked him (Jesus),

"What must we do to do the works God requires?"

John 6.28

Most unsaved people think that God will one day add up their good works and their bad works; and if their good works exceed their bad works, they will get into heaven.
Warren Wiersbe

Reflects SUPERFICIAL View of GOD – JESUS – SIN – SALVATION

ONLY TWO Religions in World: 1. MAN is Savior 2. GOD is SAVIOR

1. MAKE Ourselves RIGHT with GOD 2. JESUS makes us RIGHT with GOD

FATAL Flaw in ALL Other Religions > **SELF** – **Our** Gifts, Prayers, Works

Jesus uses LAW not to PRAISE this man's RIGHTEOUSNESS

But to Point out his NEED for Humble REPENTANCE

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

If we're Honest we'll ADMIT – OUR Best is IMPERFECT – God IS Perfect

**Every OTHER Religion COMPROMISES God's JUSTICE
and Lower's His Standard of HOLINESS**

ONLY the SACRIFICE of SINLESS Jesus can MEET God's Impeccable Standard

d. Refused to Repent before Jesus

v. 21 "One thing you lack," Jesus said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

His MORALITY and MANNERS CONCEALED a COVETOUS HEART

SAME Gospel Jesus Preached from BEGINNING: "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1.15

GOSPEL = REPENT and BELIEVE // SELL – REPENT / Follow Me – BELIEVE

1 thing MISSING: Centered on SELF, NOT JESUS – One Thing was Everything

Jesus' Words CUT Through him like a SURGEON'S KNIFE > FLAYED Open

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6.10

Money is a marvelous servant but a terrible master. Warren Wiersbe

v. 21 "One thing you lack," Jesus said.

LACKING – Word NOT Familiar to him – Could BUY ALL he Needed in World

BUT This POOR RICH Man was DESPERATELY EMPTY

He was POSSESSED by his POSSESSIONS

Jesus to Church in Laodicea: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." Revelation 3:17

v. 22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

MOST Often SAD People COME to Jesus and LEAVE JOYFUL!

ONLY man in NT who WENT AWAY SAD from Presence of JESUS

Of all the people who ever came to the feet of Jesus, this man is the only one who went away worse than he came. Warren Wiersbe

Jesus: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Mark 8:34

Jesus LOVED him – Came for HIS BEST – but did NOT RUN after him

Jesus NEVER LOWERED his Demands to make an EASY CONVERT

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person - *such a man is an idolater* - has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Ephesians 5:5-6

Man Turned BACK to IDOL Worship from which he ALMOST ESCAPED

RESPECT for Jesus NOT ENOUGH > Only way to be Received is REPENTANCE

2. Impossible Relationship: "Who then can be saved?"

a. Amazing

vs. 23,24 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words.

Disciples must've THOUGHT Jesus – Made BIG Mistake – Let him GET AWAY!

Jesus BRASH Answer to Important Man > DISAPPOINTED DISCIPLES

They LOOSE Big FISH > Having HIM would CLASS-UP their OPERATION

Jesus ALLOWED him to WALK AWAY > DID NOT Chase AFTER him

RICH People can DO ANYTHING > NO LIMIT to POWER & POSSIBILITIES

The disciples were thunderstruck at what they heard, they had assumed that just as all other things in this world were easier for the rich, so entry in the kingdom must also be easier for them.

R. Alan Cole

Rich had PLENTY of TIME to attend to RELIGIOUS Activities and Thoughts

Kingdom SURPRISES: LITTLE Kids Enter / Rich, Young Ruler ESCAPES

b. Impossible

v. 23,24 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" ... *Jesus said again*, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Must have been DEEP SADNESS in Jesus Voice > 2 X's with EMPHASIS

Lit. "How hard it is for those who HAVE THINGS" > Our AGE of GADGETS

All of US Here – Even the Poorest – Many more Gadgets than Rich, Young, Ruler

NOT TRUE to say GOD'S BIAS to POOR > Salvation NOT Economic Basis

WEALTH in NT is NOT SINFUL > but it is HIGHLY DANGEROUS

v. 25 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."

CAMEL was BIGGEST Animal in PALESTINE

Modern: **You cannot DRIVE a HUMMER thru the TAILPIPE of a TOYOTA**
NOT reference to SPECIAL GATE Called "Eye of the Needle" > DEFEATS Truth

Jesus' POINT > ***IT CANNOT BE DONE!***

Jesus is saying, in the most vivid fashion possible, that in terms of natural ability it is utterly impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Sinclair Ferguson

The violent contrast between the largest animal and the smallest opening expresses what, humanly speaking, is impossible and absurd. William Lane

v. 26,27 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible..."

Disciples: Complete LACK of REALISM on part of JESUS > i.e. YOU'RE NUTS!

We LEFT EVERYTHING & FOLLOWED YOU > Movement NO ONE Qualifies
Planning to be KING of EMPTY KINGDOM??

Some DISCIPLES of Obama not seeing CHANGE they Counted on

c. Possible...with God

v. 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, *but not with God*; all things are possible with God."

Disciples – LIKE US – Overly Impressed with MAN --- ***Rich, Young, Ruler***

No Matter HOW RICH – How YOUNG – How POWERFUL

Another > OWNS Everything – NEVER AGES – and Possesses ALL POWER

Sunday, July 6, 1924 Eric Liddell preached from Isaiah 40 in Scots Church in Paris

At that time Starting Guns for 100-meter Olympic heats were Sounding

100 meters > Olympic Event most believed Liddell CERTAIN to WIN

Eric REFUSED to Run > Event held on Sunday – for him was SABBATH DAY

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way?

Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust...

Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. To whom, then, will you compare God? Isaiah 40:12-19

GOD is BIGGER than our SUPPOSED Greatness and our BEST PLANS

Few days later that week in July 1924 > Liddell entered 400 meters > Not his BEST

As Liddell went to the starting blocks, an American masseur slipped a piece of paper into Liddell's hand with a quotation:

"Those who honour me I will honour." 1 Samuel 2:30

Liddell ran with that piece of paper in his hand: Won Race & Broke World Record

Born & Died in China as M > Pride of Scotland also China's 1st Olympic Medalist!

Liddell gave BEST Effort > But Cannot Enter Kingdom by HUMAN EFFORTS

It is not merely hard to be saved; it is quite impossible. But God is God of the impossible, as so, for Him, the impossible can become the possible. R. Alan Cole

SALVATION is ABSOLUTE TRUST in God > NOT what we HAVE or ARE

v. 27 Jesus *looked at them* and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

LOOKED at THEM > Hey Guys WHAT got YOU Here? ONLY Grace & Mercy

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Eternal Life: God is GOAL & SOURCE & BEGINNING > ONLY He can Give

NOT TRUE to say GOD'S BIAS to POOR > Salvation NOT Economic Basis

God's Bias is to those who FEAR and FOLLOW Him

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5

LEVEL Ground at FOOT of CROSS > ONLY the HUMBLE Welcome

They (crowd of Jews) asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: *to believe in the one he has sent.*" John 6.28,29

3. Unimaginable Results: "*a hundred times as much*"

a. Cost

v. 28 Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"

Peter OFTEN SPOKE what ALL 12 were THINKING – but Dared NOT Say!

Peter – and Others – may be JEALOUS at Jesus ATTENTION to RICH MAN

Did Jesus FORGET they LEFT their SHIPS and NETS to FOLLOW HIM?

Peter shows COMMERCIAL View of Salvation > **What can I GET OUT of It?!**
 Many Come to Christ or Church for SELFISH REASONS > NEED SOMETHING
 SICKNESS / SCHOOLING / SOMEONE to Love / Improve STATUS

At age 16 saw BEST LOOKING GIRLS in CHURCH Youth Group > I WENT!

After twenty-one years of evangelistic ministry with non-Christians, I have come to the conclusion that most people *come* to Christ in order to have a felt need met, but they *stay* with Christ because they have come to believe that the gospel is true.

Ajith Fernando

MATURITY in Christ > UNDERSTANDING our CALLING to SURRENDER:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar...If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, *the God we serve is able* to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. *But even if he does not*, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."
 Daniel 3.16-18

KNOW God's POWER but we do NOT KNOW God's PLAN

If you give because it pays, it won't pay!

R.J. LeTourneau

ALL who Follow Jesus make SAME SACRIFICE > EVERYTHING!

Ugandan Story – MAN who finds something in SHOP

Rode into Town on Bike – Sees something very wonderful - must have

Owner “you can't buy it, too expensive” / Man “I must have it”

Owner - How much in pocket? Bicycle? House? Things? Family? Self?

ETERNAL LIFE - CANNOT BE BOUGHT - COSTS US EVERYTHING

b. Compensation

vs. 29,30 "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to

receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields-and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.

One of GREATEST Words of ENCOURAGEMENT found in SCRIPTURE

Millions of Christians throughout the ages could testify how this promise has come true in their lives. Christ has never been their debtor. He has supplied all their needs...It is one of the most stubborn facts of history that his promise has been fulfilled.

Sinclair Ferguson

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3.20,21

- 1) He is able to do
- 2) He is able to do what we ask
- 3) He is able to do what we imagine
- 4) He is able to do all we imagine
- 5) He is able to do much more than we imagine
- 6) He is able to do much more than we ask
- 7) He is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine

God is able to make *all* grace abound to you, so that in *all* things at *all* times, having *all* that you need, you will abound in *every* good work. 2 Corinthians 9:8

v. 29 for me and the gospel

ONLY Mark includes Phrase: Clarifies GOAL of SACRIFICE – **Not Selfishness**

v. 30 with them, persecutions

Don't MISS the LITTLE WORD > PERSECUTIONS – part of the PROMISE

FELLOWSHIP with others finds DEEPEST Expression in PERSECUTION

To every Christian worker this verse comes with a ring of triumph, but to none more than to the cross-cultural worker, of whatever race, who finds countless ties of love in a new land of service to take the place of those sundered in the new homeland.
R. Alan Cole

c. Choice v. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Before THIRD Teaching about CROSS > SHARPENS Demand to Follow Jesus

Jesus NOT CONDEMN Wealth > But does WARN of its DANGERS

RICH Man may be FIRST in EYES of World, not Necessarily in GOD'S SIGHT

PUBLIC Opinion: Rich, Young, Ruler had EVERYTHING

RAG-TAG group of GALILEAN DISCIPLES had NOTHING

GOD'S OPINION is based on Different CRITERIA – UPSIDE-DOWN Kingdom

God takes nothing away from a man without restoring it to him in a new and glorious form.
William Lane

IRONY > SMALL WEALTH he walked from ETERNAL & ABUNDANT Wealth

Rich Young Man – like all Devout Jews – must of GREATLY ADMIRED Moses
But he did not THINK DEEPLY about the EXAMPLE of Moses

Moses...chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.
Hebrews 11:25-26

Moses calculated on the basis of eternal arithmetic. This young man relied on the inaccurate calculator he had always used: wealth. He stands as a perpetual monument to the fact that if we have everything, but have not Christ, we ultimately have nothing.
Sinclair Ferguson

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