

With Man, It is Impossible!

Mark 10:17-31

Series: Christ our Focus

1. Introduction:
 - a. We have been learning that the call to discipleship comes with a price.
 - i. Disciples had to abandon all
 - ii. A tax collector must leave his lucrative but disreputable business.
 - b. Jesus has called all disciple to self-denial and cross bearing.
 - c. Jesus has instructed to the disciples, and consequently ourselves, that a true disciple encourages others and has a heart for the weak and powerless.
 - i. Christ has taught that in order to be granted admittance to the kingdom of God, we must come as helpless children unable to stand on any merit or worth.
 - d. Jesus, therefore must become the key subject matter for the Christian's life.
 - i. Everything is brought into subjugation to the knowledge of Christ.
2. Verse 17 – A Man runs up
 - a. The other gospels
 - i. Matthew calls him young
 - ii. Luke calls him a ruler
 - iii. Hence The Rich Young Ruler
 - b. Eager for eternity –
 - i. He runs up to Jesus
 - ii. Falls on his knees
 - iii. He wants to become a disciple
 - iv. He is eager and earnest
 - c. He asks a question that no one had ever asked.
 - i. This is the essential question that must be asked.
 - ii. Jesus answers the question eventually.
3. Verse 18 – God alone is good
 - a. The question is of goodness
 - b. The man identifies himself as good and Jesus as good

- c. Jesus points him that goodness is only found in God.
 - d. Jesus is not saying that he himself is evil or touched by sin but gets to the point that complete goodness is found only in God.
 - i. Then Jesus beckons the man to follow him as the standard of God's goodness hence declaring himself to be God the Son.
4. Verse 19-20 – The cure for goodness – The ten commandments
- a. To counteract every man's belief in his own goodness, Christ refers this man and all humanity to the moral law – the Ten Commandments
 - b. Moral rectitude is the measure by which we can inherit the kingdom of God.
 - i. This young ruler had devoted his entire life from a very young age to God's Law and had kept most of the commandments better than the majority of the people and religious leaders in his time.
 - c. Self-justification is a terrible thing.
 - i. We see ourselves as being good because ultimately, we compare ourselves to others.
 - ii. Again, the standard of goodness is in the perfection of God and not in our success or failures of others.
5. Verse 21 – Jesus' love for the self-righteous
- a. Notice that what is about to be said is said out of love.
 - i. What is at stake is this man's soul and therefore Jesus will rip away any self-assurance that this man might have.
 - b. Greek word –
 - i. Greek—*emlepein*—to look at intensely, scrutinize
 - 1. Jesus was seeing into his very soul
 - ii. Greek—*agapan*—is the highest form of love in the New Testament—Love which characterizes God and the love that God is worthy of.
 - c. A three pronged command
 - i. Go sell everything you have and give it to the poor –
 - 1. Exodus 20:3-4 "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth."
 - ii. You will have treasure in heaven

1. **Matthew 6:33** But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
 - iii. Come, follow me
 1. Make Christ the object of your affection and the goal of your life.
 2. **Mark 8:33** But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."
 - d. True adherence to the law drives us to Christ
 - i. He must come as a vulnerable child.
 - e. Jesus offers himself in substitution to all of that man's possession.
6. Verse 22 –Sorrow
- a. This man did not see the worth of Christ as compared to the worth of his possession
 - i. **Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.
 - b. Where is his self-righteousness now?
7. Verses 23-25
- a. To leave Jesus is to forsake the kingdom that this man had originally approached Jesus about.
 - b. The focus shifts to the disciples
 - c. Twice Jesus warns about the deceitfulness of riches
 - d. Idolatry will keep any man from the kingdom of God
8. Verses 26-27 -Astonished
- a. If wealth is not the measure of blessing, than what is?
 - i. They are offended
 - b. Their question is an essential question
 - c. Jesus response is amazing
 - i. With man it is impossible –
 1. Man is utterly unable and all his good works and deeds are a futility.
 2. **Isaiah 64:6** We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

- ii. With God it is possible –
 - 1. It is not they who will do something for God or accomplish his word, but God who will accomplish his word within them. What God commands, he also gives.

9. Verses 28-30 – Christ as center

- a. Any sacrifice to follow Christ will be rewarded 100 times fold in eternal glory
- b. We cannot follow Jesus while holding onto all the things and relationships of this world.
- c. It is all or nothing with Christ
 - i. **Matthew 12:30** Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.
- d. The blessing of the kingdom come through persecution
 - i. It will not be easy

10. Verse 31 – First and last

- a. Irony of discipleship – the kingdom of God topples our cherished priorities and demands of disciples new ones

11. Benediction –

- a. **Matthew 25:21** His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'