

Mark 10:17-31 - Part 2

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[0 : 00] Continuing our verse-by-verse exposition of the Gospel of Mark.! And last week we dealt with verses 17-31 in some part,! And this week we're going to look at the other part, the second part of this text.

Let's begin by reading it. Beginning at verse 17 of chapter 10. 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?

And Jesus said 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 he said to him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. And Jesus said, looking at him, I'm sorry, 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.

[1 : 19] 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. 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 they were exceedingly astonished and 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 houses 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 and 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 first. This is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good.

We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Let's pray together. Father, I have no good thing in me apart from you.

[2 : 38] The gifting that we would call natural only has its proper effect when you work powerfully in me. The gifts that you have given me were ultimately given for the church, and so I would pray that you would use them this morning.

Use me beyond my giftedness to speak your word with clarity and conviction to your people. Father, we would ask this morning that you would have the word properly work in our hearts, convict us of sin, turn us to repentance and further belief.

Make us this morning long for Christ all the more as we hear the preaching of your word. And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Now, as I mentioned, this is part two of us dealing with this text. Last week we dealt with the more evangelistic aspect of the text. You remember that we have here, aptly subtitled in most of your copies of the word, the rich young man or the rich young ruler, a man who comes up and interrupts Jesus as he's setting out on his journey, his journey towards Jerusalem.

We're in the months leading up to his crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. And he's trying to pack in the last bit of teaching that the disciples need to receive, the things that he's trying to build into them that he promised he would bring to their remembrance by the power of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

[4 : 07] So he's setting out on this journey and he's interrupted. We get from the context of the parallel passages in Luke chapter 18 and in Matthew chapter 19 that he's this rich young ruler, likely a ruler of the synagogue, which would have been a very esteemed religious position.

As a young man, he would have had to be incredibly pious by the culture standards to be able to hold this position at that age. And it was also a position that came with a lot of wealth.

He would have had great possessions. And we see that in verse 22 of our text. He had great possessions. He knows, though, that he's lacking something.

He gets that the equation is not quite completed as we see him come in an apparent act of humility and come to Jesus and say, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And in fact, he runs to him, which is a thing that rich people did not do in this day, and he kneels down before him. But Jesus gives him a curious response.

[5 : 13] Most of us would have wanted to just preach the gospel to him, give him the very clear repent and believe. But Jesus instead gets at his very heart. And he knows where this man stands as he calls, he throws around this term good.

He uses it very flippantly of a man who he knows is a teacher, but he doesn't know that he's the Son of God. He does not know that he is the Christ. And so Jesus sees that his intention is not really a humble intention, but what he wanted to do was to add to the things that he already had. He didn't come to him seeking God himself. He came seeking what could be added to his account. He wanted to see what he could gain from God.

This is evidence in the way he responds as Jesus tells him the thing he's lacking. This is what you lack. The thing that you treasure, the thing that you are holding so dear to, is your material possession.

And if you're to worship the one true God, you have to stop worshiping this thing, and the command he gives to him is, therefore, get rid of it. Prove it. Prove that you don't worship the things that you have by giving it away to the poor.

[6 : 25] And come follow me. And the young man we see goes away disheartened. So we dealt with that primarily last week. Jesus' evangelistic strategy in this case.

Today we're going to look and see what true wealth is in God's economy. What true wealth is in God's economy. Now we have to be really, really careful, I think, when we talk about money. The scriptures have a lot to say concerning the matter. And it's very easy to get on the pendulum and swing from one extreme to the other and not walk the proper balance of the doctrine of money and how it is we're meant to deal with it as followers of Christ.

Because the Bible does not condemn the right of private property. The Bible has been used throughout history to make claims of socialism and more severe forms of the same.

But the Bible doesn't condemn the right of private property but actually assumes the rightness of it. In the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20.15 says, You shall not steal.

[7 : 31] Why? Because those are other people's possessions, not your possessions, right? They rightly own those things. Therefore, don't take it from them because it's not yours. Another wonderful example of this, if you'll turn to Acts chapter 5, is the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

This is early days of the church. And we see at the beginning of chapter 5, verse 1, But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property.

And with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. If we were to stop here, it would seem that the right and proper thing for all Christians to do is to sell things we have, give to the poor.

I'm going to make a case to that later, but not on this text. Look at what Peter says in verse 3. But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?

So the lie here is against God, against the Spirit. Verse 4, while it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? It was yours. It was your property.

[8 : 49] Was it not yours? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Was it not your possession to do with it as you please, is what he's saying? Why is it that you contrive this deed in your heart?

You have not lied to man, but to God. We see shortly after, the two of them dropped dead in the presence of Peter. The issue at hand was not that they didn't give all of the proceeds, but that they lied about giving all of the proceeds.

That they did this good act to mount on themselves a claim for being so devoted to the early church, when in fact, they sold it, kept some for themselves, and said, here's the proceeds from the selling of that land.

So Peter affirms that they had a right to the personal possession. Now there are other teachings, of course, in the Scriptures about this.

Let's look together at what the Proverbs, just the Proverbs, right? The challenge of preparing for this is narrowing down what text we're going to use. Let's look just at the Proverbs together, what they say concerning possessions, because they both commend the having of wealth and give strong warning concerning the having of the same wealth.

[10:01] They do both. There's a balance struck here. Proverbs 10, verse 15. A rich man's wealth is his strong city.

The poverty of the poor is their ruin. So wealth has a place. It serves a purpose. It gives to us security. It is the way in which we deal in the world.

This is what this Proverb is saying. Proverbs 10, verse 15. However, on the other side of the coin, Proverbs 18, verse 11, says, A rich man's wealth is his strong city.

Notice the same phrasing. And like a high wall in his imagination. So this Proverbs says that it would seem to those who have wealth that they are in fact secure when the reality of it is that their security comes from a higher place.

God uses their wealth as a means for their provision. So you see the two sides there. The proper way to think about wealth as a security. All right.

[11:05] Again, chapter 10, verse 4. A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. Here, a positive thing for working hard, for not being lazy, because if you are, you will be impoverished.

But if you're to work hard, you will be rich. But, Proverbs 11, verse 4, So, we're being commended to be rich.

However, 11, verse 4 says, but they're not going to profit you in the end. But righteousness is what delivers us from death. And the Proverbs go on. And again and again and again, the Proverbs are full of encouragements to generosity.

Chapter 19, verse 17. Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed. Proverbs 11, verse 24.

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer. Another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. They're being commended to give, not necessarily to receive monetary wealth, but that will be richer in another way, which we'll talk about shortly.

[12:21] Right? But the ones who withhold only suffers want. It's lacking. Proverbs 28, verse 27. Whoever gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse.

So there's a proper balance to strike here, especially as we look at our text before us today, and see that Jesus gives a very pointed, unavoidable command to the rich young ruler.

In his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, James Montgomery Boyce, who was a 20th century Presbyterian pastor, commentator, as I mentioned, wrote this, Now someone will ask, Aren't we to sell all that we have and give to the poor?

After all, this is how Jesus instructed the rich young ruler. Boyce writes, Yes, he did. But we must also note that he did not say it to Mary or Martha or Lazarus or to John the Evangelist or to Zebedee.

He said it to the rich young ruler because his chief obstruction to a life of following Christ lay in his possessions. He proved that by turning away.

[13:28] For such a person, and there are many today, don't catch, miss that phrase, for such a person, and there are many today, many in this room, the loss of their possessions would be the most significant blessing of their lives.

The best thing they could do would be to give them away. This does not mean, however, that possessions in themselves are wrong. It's the people and the way we use the possessions that's wrong, not the possessions themselves.

They're amoral. Or, for that matter, that poverty is a particularly blessed form of Christianity. God has not called us to poverty, but he has told us how we should deal with our wealth.

In a very particular way. So let's look together first in our text at the poverty of possessions.

Beginning in verse 23. Jesus looks around after this encounter with the rich young ruler, and he makes some very big statements. How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom.

[14:38] Right? They're amazed by this. Verse 24. Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. 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.

He keeps raising this. He says in verse 24 how difficult it is, and he goes on to use this analogy of a camel going through the eye of a needle, which was a popular saying of the day, and it meant, simply, it's impossible.

There are many people that try to get around this, many commentators that make up all sorts of things about there potentially being in Jerusalem. A gate called the needle gate that they took camels through that they just barely fit through.

There's no archaeological evidence of that. It's absolutely insane to think that anyone would try to stuff a camel through a small gate rather than taking them through the big gates that were conveniently located around the exterior of the city.

No, what he is saying is that it's impossible. That is what he is saying to them in our text so far. Why is it particularly impossible for wealthy people to enter the kingdom of God, which is his address?

[15:41] And that is because it is easy to love the things that you have. It's particularly easy to love the things that you hold in your hands. You can love things either way.

Don't miss that. You can love and worship stuff and not have much at all. But it's especially easy when it's in your hands to love it. A number of years ago, I don't remember how many exactly, but we were preaching something similar about wealth and holding on to material things in this world. I've come to a place in my life where I'm pretty open-handed with the things that I have. And I can't say to you this morning that I always am. I struggle just like you do, loving stuff too much sometimes.

But for the most part, I'm pretty open-handed. I have plenty of things taken from me. I've lost things. I've come to realize that my goal is to be eternal and not temporal here.

But there's one thing in this world that it would just break my heart to lose, and that's my wedding band. My wife gave me this wedding band. I really can't replace it. I could get another wedding band, sure, but it wouldn't be this wedding band.

[16:49] I really, really like this. It's not worth a ton of money, right? Maybe you could sell it for \$100, right? But it's really precious to me. And after we had gotten done with this sermon, I talked quite a bit about holding so tightly to Jesus that we didn't have anything else, no other room in our hands for anything else.

We went out, and it was the 4th of July, with her parents out onto the lake to watch the fireworks. And we pulled around the front of this island close to the dam where the waves are three feet tall because everyone's out on the lake renting their massive houseboats and causing quite a commotion out there.

And her dad, who has this old pontoon boat and doesn't have a proper anchor that drags and catches you in the sand when you're trying to sit in those kinds of ways, you boat people know what I'm talking about, but instead had an old set of barbells with a rope tied to it, which would roll along the bottom because they were round, was trying to get us off the bank, and we were smashing into the bank, and so I thought it'd be helpful.

I hopped up on the back of the boat, pulled the rope up, and gave it a good heave-ho out there. And the rope actually made my ring spin on my finger, and it spun straight up right off my finger and then dropped, I mean, an inch from the edge of the boat.

And I was standing on the edge, I mean, you know, phone-in pocket and all that, and I didn't catch it, and it went into the bottom of the lake. I promptly threw everything out of my pockets and jumped in after it, but the water was so murky, and I'm really not a fantastic swimmer, that I spent 20 just desperate minutes trying to find my ring on the bottom of the lake and finally had to say, well, oh well.

[18:19] And as I gave up and got out, climbed up out of the water onto the boat, the thought that went through my mind was, prove it. Everything that I had been saying that very morning, God was saying to me, show it to be true.

Even your wedding band, you have to be okay. With this. Praise God, two days later, actually it took me a couple days to kind of settle on it all and say, well, it is just a thing.

It is temporal, right? It's fading away like everything else in this world. It is, in fact, a temporal thing. Just about the time I had become okay with that, her dad had really graciously gone back out with a triathlete from his church and a much better swimmer than myself is the point I'm making, and he dove a hundred times and found my ring.

So I got it back. I got to tell the story the next Sunday, and I had it off my finger as I'm telling the story, so people are having heart attacks, and then I put it back on my finger. So this is the ring, still on my finger. Here, I have it back. Right?

But are we willing to let go of all those things that we have? And it's just so easy when it's in your hands to love it. To absolutely love it. And to not want to give it up for the sake of Christ.

[19 : 30] 1 John 2, verse 15-17 says this, Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires.

But whoever does the will of God abides forever. And a lot of people want to stop at this point. And they want to say, Yes, it's okay to have things as long as I don't worship those things.

And if I were observing a life that seemed properly oriented, that in all ways said, I love Jesus more than these things, I would say, Amen, I think you've got it right. I think you're walking the balance just so.

But most of the people who will say that, don't live that way. By all appearances, they love their stuff much more than they love Jesus. John goes on to say in 1 John, in chapter 3, verse 17-18, But if anyone has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

[20 : 43] Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and truth. We live in an incredibly broken world.

Sin is ravaging across the face of our planet. One of the major ways it does this is in poverty. And there's a lot of factors that go into poverty there's a lot of factors that go into bringing people out of poverty.

But it's a reality. It exists. And we all know that it exists. We very conveniently hold poverty at an arm's length because we pay taxes and we have social welfare programs in place in our country, which we all know are horrible failures.

They don't do the work because they're not accompanied by love and truth. Just money. It's not accompanied by love and truth. There's all kinds of statistics out there about poverty in the world. I'm just going to give you a couple. Gallup did a world poll where they actually asked individuals these questions. And of course, it was a broad study. I think you guys all know how statistics work, though.

[21 : 53] But they say, self-reporting, 33% worldwide say they don't have money for food. They're lacking money for food. 38% say their living standards are poor. 39% say they are in difficulty.

So there's a big issue out there of poverty. And the way in which we can go and minister and love on people in difficult situations, the tool that's used to accomplish that is financial.

The means are necessary to get these types of things accomplished. And we live in a world, American evangelicals give on average 2% of their income. 2%.

Which means there's probably many who don't give at all, and there's a lot that give way beyond.

But the average, it averages out. American evangelicals, those who say that we follow Christ, and we follow Christ in such a way that we know we need to share our faith.

That we want to bring people into the church. That this is our goal. The Great Commission means something to us. Give 2% of their income. And they live on the rest. We live in a nation that's indebted.

[22 : 56] The average American household has \$15,000 in credit card debt. \$15,000. So not only, we would include Christians in that category, not only do we only give 2%, but we live beyond our means just the same.

It's a sickness. And it's the sickness of our souls. Now in these things, just writing checks and throwing money around is not the solution. And I'm not suggesting that.

We don't have time today to talk about a proper methodology of giving and therefore helping issues like this. It's not the time for that type of thing. However, there's a high calling for us in Christ to give, not just materially, but also of our time, of our energy.

To really love people out of these situations, we're going to have to enter into relationships with them and love them with the truth. We've pursued them with everything that we have.

Another case by Paul in 1 Timothy 6. He instructs at the end of his letter to Timothy, beginning of verse 17, As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

[24 : 11] You've probably heard this verse in your life. It's another one that likes to be flagged, heralded as a way of saying, See, I can have stuff. The stuff is good. The stuff is for me to enjoy.

That's why God gave it to me. He richly provided it for me to enjoy. I just can't hope in it. I've got to hope in Him and not in Him. I've got to worship the giver, not the gift. But read on. Context here.

What's the instruction that Timothy's meant to give to the rich? They are in fact rich. Be rich. But what are you to do with that? Verse 18, They are to do good. To be rich in good works.

To be generous and ready to share. Which necessitates sharing. Not just ready, but sharing. You're ready to share so you do. Verse 19, Thus, storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

So does God give us things to enjoy? Yes. He does by enjoying Him. By being engaged in His kingdom work. He gives money to people.

[25 : 17] And let's face it, even you college students in the room, we are wealthy. We are wealthy by the world's standards. And in fact, most of you, socioeconomically, from your background, are wealthy by American standards as well.

You're doing better than a lot of people. We have so that we can enjoy Christ. So we can get the thing that's ultimately enjoyable. Wouldn't God be a mean God if He is the greatest thing that He could possibly give us?

Himself, the Creator, and instead He says, Here, go play with these toys. Don't spend time with me. Don't be around me. Don't be involved in my work. But instead, go be distracted by cars and fancy vacations and clothes and stupid jewelry.

He'd be a horribly mean God if He doesn't give us Himself. Dietrich Brauhnhofer, an early 20th century German Lutheran pastor, theologian, who was an anti-Nazi dissident.

He was part of a plot to murder, to assassinate Hitler. He was also a martyr. He said, Earthly goods are given to be used, not to be collected.

[26 : 27] Hoarding is idolatry. Now there's some in our world, certainly in our country, that teach that a camel can squeeze through the eye of a needle.

Jesus is very clear about this. It's impossible. A camel cannot squeeze through the eye of a needle, but many teach that a camel can. It's most commonly called the prosperous, prosperity gospel.

And it is a special type of devilish heresy. It's being exported now from our country into other countries, into incredibly impoverished countries.

Proponents of it are false teachers. They're absolutely false teachers who say true things at times which only proves that the devil does in fact come as an angel of light. Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer, T.D. Jakes, Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, to name a few of them.

Heretics, cut off from the faith. We ought not listen to such people. If I just shattered your world with any of these names, please come talk to me. Stop. Stop listening to these teachers.

[27 : 35] They are false. They're leading you astray. And the shame is that it's more subversive, but I think much of this teaching has crept into a lot of our evangelical churches as well, primarily in the form of silence.

We just don't talk about it that much. People are afraid to get into that area of people's lives because they know the idol that it is. As Paul says, I seek not what is yours, but you.

I want you to have the greatest and highest joy. I want you to be caught up in the mission of God and not sit around playing with toys.

I seek not what is yours, but you. The Bible's not silent on this matter and neither should we be. I want to encourage you to begin to read your scriptures with the idea of money in mind and just see all the many places it's dealt with.

And this is the case because we're all going to encounter it. This is not a situation that's unique to any of us. Not all of us will walk through cancer in our lives, but we're all going to deal with money

and we all need to deal with money rightly.

[28 : 46] Now as it concerns false teachers, whether so out in the open or more closeted on the matter, take some courage in this. 2 Peter 2, 1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people just as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

Not swift by my standard, but swift by God's standard. And many will follow their sensuality and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.

Their condemnation from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. There will be damnation for people who lead people away from the true and living God to worship things. Who say to them that if you add Jesus to your life, you will gain materially. No. You will gain spiritually. You will have joy abounding. You will have peace in Him, but it does not come with money.

If you have been given things, you have been given things to get more of Him. To get more of Him. The gospel's not cheap. It's costly.

[29 : 58] Jim Elliott, famous missionary, Christian martyred by the people he went to go share the gospel with, famously said, He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

Are we fools, beloved? Jesus in today's text is really just elaborating on the general call He made to the crowd in Mark chapter 8, verse 34 through 37.

You remember this? If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. That is to die. That is to die to our own desires. For whoever would save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?

It costs us something to follow Jesus. It costs us our self-determination. It costs us our desires. But praise God, He makes our desires into His.

[31 : 04] He shapes us into one who wants to worship Him, who wants to give up these things. Discipleship is costly. It asks everything of us.

We are to be men selling all that we have to buy a field and merchants selling everything to have the pearl of surpassing value. You recall these parables? Mark chapter 13.

Back to back, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Jesus is the treasure. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Willing to give up everything to have this greater prize, this greater treasure. That's found in Christ. Now again, Dietrich Bonhoeffer to quote, the previous quote was from his book The Cost of Discipleship that I would really commend to you.

[32 : 09] He talks a lot in there about cheap grace versus costly grace and let me read you an excerpt from that book. Cheap grace, which is what's being peddled so often today in American churches, means grace sold on the market like cheap jacks wears.

The sacraments, the forgiveness of sin, and the consolations of religion are thrown away at cut prices. Grace is represented as the church's inexhaustible treasury from which she showers blessings with generous hands without asking questions or fixing limits.

Grace without price, grace without cost. The essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance and because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing.

Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap? What he's saying is the way we tend to think about grace is that it's this free gift and because it's a free gift bought by Christ, we can just presume upon it and presume upon it and presume upon it.

We can go say some trivial, trite little prayer and never respond. We can never live in a different way. We can never say God has rescued me.

[33 : 26] He's made me a child. He's put me into his kingdom and now I'm meant to live a certain way. I'm meant to worship him with everything that I am. That's cheap grace. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance.

Baptism without church discipline. Communion without confession. Absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship. Grace without the cross. Grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate. Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field. For the sake of it a man will go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy with the wife which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ over our lives. For whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble. It is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again. The gift which must be asked for. [34 : 26] The door at which a man must knock. Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow. And it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.

It is costly because it costs a man his life. And it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin. And grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all it is costly because it cost God the life of his son. You were bought at a price. And what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.

Above all it is grace because God did not reckon his son too dear a price to pay for our life but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God. God means something. It is going to require things of us. Jesus is just further developing this idea. He very soon in our text in Mark 10 is going to once again foretell his death.

[35 : 28] And once again the disciples are not going to get it. They have been debating all along what does it mean that Jesus is going to die. How can this be? We don't want you to have the suffering. We just want you to have the glory because we want the glory.

We don't want the suffering. We don't want to have to give up anything to follow you. We want to be us like the rich young ruler to have all that we have and just add to it. Just give me a little extra for eternal life and not be willing to give away anything to gain it.

Do you recognize that you can have all that this world has to offer every bit of it and still be impoverished? That this life is fleeting. You're passing through it.

It's a vapor in the wind and that your mind should be set on things eternal and not those things that are temporal. Everything you can see right now besides the souls of the people you're looking around at is finite.

It's going away. It's not infinite. It will all be turned to dust one day. It will all be tested by fire. Do you recognize that wealth has been given to you for the sake of eternal joy and not just your temporal joy?

[36 : 31] If Jesus were to say to you, 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.

Would you go away disheartened or would you gladly trade it all to gain him? Now in response to this, verse 26, the disciples are exceedingly astonished.

Exceedingly astonished. Then, who can be saved? And we have to understand why they were exceedingly astonished. The common teaching of this day, and I'll thank John MacArthur for spelling this out in his sermon on this very text for me.

Saved me a ton of time. The common misconception of the day, which was from the rabbis, the teachers that had worked through time over the previous 400 years, is that the way in which you gained redemption is through the giving of alms, which was giving to the poor.

This is the thing that Jesus has asked them to do. They said that with alms, one purchases his redemption. A couple of examples for you. One writing taken from Tobit says this, It is good to do alms rather than to treasure up gold for alms, deliver from death, and this will purge away every sin.

[37 : 45] Syriac 3 says, alms will atone for sin. The Talmud says, almsgiving is more excellent than all offerings and is equal to the whole law.

If you give to the poor, then this is an equal thing. And who was most able to give to the poor? For the rich. Here, even Jesus gave the command to this young man which he was unwilling to do. But what Jesus was telling him to do is not to do a good work that he might gain righteousness, that he would have his redemption, that he would be justified before God because of the action. He was telling him to give up an idol and to worship Jesus, to follow him.

That's the key distinction here. It's a matter of the heart. Not that we go through some works in order to gain our salvation which is an impossibility. None of us can keep the whole law. You can't

do it. Don't try to amass works in order to gain salvation.

Be saved, respond to the gospel, and then do works as a response to it. The disciples got this, but they got it wrongly. They went too far with the cultural understanding.

[38 : 53] And as such, Jesus broadens the impossibility. Look at him broaden it out. They say, then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man it is impossible, but not with God.

He doesn't say with rich men it is impossible, but not with God. He says, with man it is impossible.

You cannot save yourself. God can save you if he so desires.

If you have some working in your heart to respond to the gospel, see it as the Spirit's work on your behalf and respond to it. Jesus says to them in this that man is spiritually impoverished, whether they're rich or poor, they're spiritually impoverished.

We have nothing to offer God for the dimptive of our souls. This is why we need grace. It's why we need a Savior. We cannot save ourselves.

That's the bad news side of the gospel which makes the good news so good because Jesus did it on our behalf. He paid the debt for us that if we would believe in Him, we would have eternal life.

[40 : 00] Paul puts it this way in Ephesians 2, verse 8, 9, grace given as a gift to us. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It's the gift of God, not a result of work so that no one may boast.

So proper living is a response to the work that God has wrought in our hearts, the way in which He has changed us. So we looked at the poverty of possessions. Let's look now together quickly at the possessions of poverty.

Verse 28, Peter began to say to Him, and I really love this just because I'm musing about it. Mark seems to cut Him off. Peter was always the wordy one. You see Him constantly interrupting and opening His mouth when He shouldn't have.

So He just says, Peter began to say to Him, see if we have left everything and followed you. I would imagine that He went on to elaborate on that point. And Jesus responds to Him with His rather amazing truth.

Truly I say to you, no one is left, and I won't read all those for the sake of time, for my sake and for the gospel. Not left those things that they might gain more things, but for the sake of Jesus Christ and the good news of Jesus Christ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time all those things with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life.

[41 : 16] He says to us again, but many who are first will be last and the last first. The one who wants to leave might become a servant. The one who wants to leave the gospel of all. Look at this proper response of Peter.

John chapter 6 beginning in verse 65. Jesus just said some very difficult things to the larger group of disciples.

He's talked about drinking His blood and feasting on His flesh and they just don't get it. And He says to them, not all of you believe. Not all of you believe. No one can come to Me unless the Father sent Me and draws them.

He's using this type of language. Verse 65. This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted Him by the Father. Verse 66. After this, many of the disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.

Verse 67. So Jesus said to the twelve, Do you want to go away as well? Do you also want to leave? Is this too hard for you? And Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

[42 : 17] You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God. You can put these texts together. We have left everything for Your sake.

Right? Where are we going to go? We've left it all behind. We know that You're the Christ. Why would we leave? Look at some improper responses. Luke chapter 9, beginning of verse 57.

As they, Jesus and the disciples, were going along the road, someone said to Him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

It's presumed at this point that the man did not follow Him because of this saying. Verse 59. To another, He said, Follow Me. But He said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead.

But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord, but let me first say farewell to those at my home. Jesus said to him, No one who puts his hand to the plow

and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

[43 : 26] We must set our sights fully on Jesus Christ. Whatever may come, whatever may fall away, here you have men who are leaving Judaism to follow Jesus.

This happens in our day as well. Many of you college students experience this with unbelieving parents. You become strange to your parents. Your parents don't want to spend time with you the way they did. The decisions that you're making are counter-cultural.

They don't want you to enter the ministry. They want you to have a career. They want you to make money. They want you to take care of them in their old age. It puts you at odds with them. This is a common thing.

The gospel often divides people because people become devoted to Christ and others just don't get that. What are we to do with that? He gives us a promise.

This is the way in which we leave behind houses, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, lands. He says he'll give to us a hundredfold in this day. How is that the case?

[44 : 21] What does he mean by that? What he means is that in this age he'll give us the church. He'll deliver us into a community, a faith family, that we might love each other the way in which a family is meant to love each other.

Praise God, many of you have believing parents and this has not been the case for you. But we as a church need to do better at loving each other like a family loves. Because there are people amongst us that are hurting in that way who need spiritual fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters.

How do you have houses and lands? Because you have my house and you have my lands. Right? You come over and you can eat with me. You need a place to crash? Let me know. Not just me. There's other people in this church too that have houses and lands. I don't want to run a bed and breakfast. Look at an example of this from the scriptures.

Acts 2 is after the day of Pentecost. We have seen thousands, 3,000 is the number I believe in verse 41 recorded of people added to the early church and most of these people would have been pilgrims from Jewish settlements.

[45 : 34] They would have traveled to Jerusalem and they didn't want to go home. The only church at the time was this group of people, these thousands of people that were gathered in Jerusalem.

They didn't want to go back to their towns where there were no Christians and so they lingered. They stuck around for a little while. We see beginning in verse 42 and they, all these new Christians, devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers and all came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles and all who believed were together and had all things in common and they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need and day by day attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes they received their food with glad and generous hearts praising God and having favor with all people and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

So you see that these people crashed on the couch. They wanted to stick around and they were glad to have them. All these new baby Christians got together and they were so hungry to hear the teaching of the apostles to know more about Jesus Christ that they got really practical about it and they shared things and they sold lands.

Ananias and Sapphira, the failures in this thing, but that's what they were about doing in this process of providing for and being a family together. So for those of us, for those of you who are leaving behind these types of things to follow Jesus, giving up that kind of stuff, it's being granted to you, it's being given to you in the church.

But he includes in here also that persecutions will come. Isn't that curious? He talks about all these things but he includes all these other things in this age that are going to be given back to you, families, brothers, sisters, with persecutions.

[47 : 21] Why would he include this here? It's because he wants them to know that life's not going to just get easy. You've left behind this family, I'm giving you a different family, there's going to be limitless resources, you're going to have so much fun, it's going to be great.

No, you'll be persecuted. Matthew 5.10, Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. It's a wonderful response that the apostles are recorded for us in Acts chapter 5 after the apostles are beaten by a council of Sadducees in these early days of the church.

It says, Then they left the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. One of the ways we'll know that we're following Jesus is if we're persecuted for his name, rightly, not in some of the bizarre political ways we see in our day, but rightly persecuted for sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So how do we in this day properly manage our money? All I can say to you is what the scriptures say to you. Work hard.

[48 : 38] Gain it. Please, young people, go after it because the church needs it. Our church needs it. Other churches need it. The work of God needs your resources. Be generous.

Recognize that you're given money to live on for your needs, the temporal things, and take the excess and give it freely to the kingdom. Gain Christ.

Buy more of him with your money. Not the salvation, but the experience of him. Be involved in what he's doing around the world with your finances. It used to frustrate me that the scriptures seem to be so vague on some issues.

Like, I just want the list. Just give me the budget. I want the percentages. Just tell me exactly what it is I'm supposed to do in every area of my life. And I've come to the point where I believe that God does not do that because he wants us.

He wants to know you. And he wants you to know him. He wants you to align your desires with his desires. Right? If I was given a list, I would ignore him altogether. I'd stop asking.

[49 : 40] He already gave me the list. I know how I'm supposed to spend my money. He wants us to go to him. He wants us to go to him on our knees humbly, recognizing that nothing that we have belongs to us ultimately. It was given to us as a gift by his provision.

He gave it. He could certainly take it away. Pay attention to the story of Job on that point. And he gave it back. Why is he giving it to us? What is the point of him giving it to us?

It's that we might enjoy him forever. He also promises here that this gifting, this giving, will have some effect in the age to come.

And that is eternal life. Our grace can't be cheap. There must be a response. There's a cost to following Jesus.

And how do you know if you're a disciple of Jesus Christ? How do you know? Don't pin it on a date. Don't pin it on some card that somebody handed you, a little placard, or a date you wrote in the front of your Bible.

[50 : 37] I grew up in a church that told me constantly if you ever doubt your faith, if you're ever not so sure that you're saved, remember the date that you were saved. This is entirely anti-biblical.

It's not in the Scriptures anywhere to pin it on a date like that. Rather, pin it on the fact that you're growing in holiness, that you don't love the things of the world, but you love the things of God, and that you're growing in that way.

Test your faith. If you don't know that you're a Christian, I plead with you, repent and believe.

Repent and believe. If you are a Christian, there's room for repentance and belief as well.

Let me close by reading to you a psalm. Psalm 73. Let me ask you to turn there. I'll finish quickly. I had every intention of not going this long today.

Psalm 73 is a psalm of Asaph.

[51 : 38] He's a songwriter. Some of my favorite psalms are his. He says, Truly God is good to Israel for those who are pure in heart. And so, God is good. I'm setting that up as the very premise of this psalm.

For those who are pure in heart, God is good to us. Verse 2, But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled. My steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For they have no pangs until death. Their bodies are fat and sleek, which would have been a good thing in this day. They are not in trouble as others are. They are not stricken like the rest of mankind. Therefore, pride is their necklace.

Violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes swell out through fatness. Their hearts overflow with follies. They scoff and speak with malice. Loftily, they threaten oppression. They set their mouths against the heavens and their tongues strut the earth.

Therefore, his people turn back to them and find no fault in them. And they say, How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High? Behold, these are the wicked, always at ease.
[52 : 43] They increase in riches. So see, he's recognizing the folly and the error of these men. But that these men are followed by other people. People look to them for leadership.

They think they've got it all together because they're fat and sleek. Because they have wealth. Because they're not suffering at all in this world. He says, My feet almost slipped. I almost bought into this. I almost thought that was a better way.

We brought this into our current context. We could throw the word American in here a few times.

Verse 13. All in vain have I kept my heart clean and washed my hands in innocence.

For all the day long I have been stricken and rebuked every morning. If I had said I will speak thus, I would have betrayed the generation of your children. There's that summation of the way he was feeling and the things he was thinking.

The way he almost aired. Verse 16. But when I thought how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task. How is it that these people, these evil people, these adulterous people have everything?

[53 : 44] And those who keep their hands clean, who try to follow God, don't have things? It was a wearisome task to understand this until I went into the sanctuary of God.

Then I discerned their end. Truly you set them in slippery places. How they are destroyed in a moment, swept away utterly by chairs, like a dream when one awakes. O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.

Their eternal destruction. He understood their eternal destruction. His eternal life, their eternal destruction. Verse 21. My soul was embittered when I was pricked in heart. I was brutish and ignorant. I was like a beast towards you.

Nevertheless, I am continually with you. You hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel.

And afterward, you will receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but you?

And there is nothing on earth that I desire beside you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. For those who are far from you shall perish.

[54 : 49] You put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you. But for me, it is good to be near God. There's the wealth. There's the true wealth.

There's the possession of poverty. God himself. I have made the Lord God my refuge that I may tell of all your works.

Let's pray together. God bless.