

Eye of a Needle

Mark 10:17-27

By Scott Huckaby

6/19/2022

**BIG BEND
BIBLE
FELLOWSHIP**

Mark 10:17-27 – The Rich Young Ruler

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?”

¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

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

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

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

What do we learn about this rich man?

- He sincerely wanted to know how he could have eternal life
- He ran: a humbling, undignified action for people in that society, particularly the rich
- He knelt before Jesus, humbling himself
- He knew Jesus was extraordinary calling Him good...
- He assumed that having eternal life was something a person had to do
- We also know he was a ruler per the account in Luke 18:18

What is the relationship between what you believe and what you do?

You pretty much say and do what you believe...

Proverbs 23:7 – *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.* Since the rich man believed he could earn God’s favor for salvation by keeping the Law, he expected confirmation of that.

v18 – Why did Jesus question the rich man who called Him good?

Jesus knew the rich man’s heart that he really didn’t recognize Him to be God in the flesh.

Why didn’t the rich man and other Jews expect the Messiah to be God in the flesh?

The idea that God Himself would come into our sin-fallen world as one of us was too incredible to be believed despite the testimony of Scripture:

Isaiah 7:14 – *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel [meaning: God with us]*

Isaiah 9:6 – *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

Daniel 7:13-14 – *I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.*

See also: Psalm 45:6-7, Psalm 110:1 & Isaiah 7:14 (*Immanuel* – God with us)

v19 – What did Jesus tell the rich young ruler was the way to eternal life?

Keeping the commandments

Why would Jesus respond this way? Is he saying we can earn salvation thorough our own efforts?

Jesus was simply meeting the rich man where he was at... His interaction with him was intended to help him see the fallacy of his salvation-by-works mentality.

Why didn't Jesus comfort the rich man by speaking of faith and grace instead of giving him more to do?

Jesus knew by the rich man's question that he had a salvation-by-works mentality and wasn't ready to embrace salvation by grace through faith. The rich man needed to first come to the end of himself admitting there was nothing he could do to earn God's favor for salvation and turn to God instead.

How should the rich man have known salvation is by grace through faith?

All who was honest with themselves would have to admit they could not perfectly keep the Law. And...

Habakkuk 2:4 – *the just shall live by his faith*

Old Testament saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today.

Job 19:25 – *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.*

v20 – Why do you think the rich young ruler must have thought of the idea that keeping the commandments resulted in eternal life?

This is what was taught by the Pharisees and it made sense from a human perspective... there is no free lunch. Apparently, he was satisfied with his achievement in keeping the commandments but knew he was missing something here.

What could the rich man have been missing that was not satisfied by his self-righteousness?

- Certainly, he was missing out on a relationship with the Savior.
- Also, in his heart of hearts he knew he was not perfectly keeping the commandments all the time
- He was probably measuring his righteousness against others and considered himself to be above average but there was doubt that this meant anything to God

How would you describe a person who lives consistently in the truth that Jesus' love for them supersedes anything they might do to earn it?

This is a follower of Christ, someone who is so grateful for what Jesus did for them that everything they do is to glorify Him.

How do people see their identity in our culture?

It is human nature to see your identity in how you contribute to society such as what you do for a living. However, our identity as a child of God or even better, a follower of Christ is infinitely more important.

v21 - How did Jesus respond to the rich man's proclamation of righteousness?

Jesus challenged his righteousness claim pointing out how he could achieve greater righteousness.

What is the significance of the Scripture saying that Jesus loved the rich man?

- It is interesting that it says that Jesus loved the rich man even before he responded to his claim of self-righteousness.
- Jesus loved the man even though he was rejecting a relationship with the Savior and was trying to earn eternal life through his own efforts

What is treasure in heaven?

Jesus told us to “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20). The Bible mentions rewards that await the believer who serves the Lord faithfully in this world.

How may we store up treasure in heaven?

We are to treasure the Lord Jesus most of all. When Jesus is our treasure, we will commit our resources—our money, our time, our talents—to His work in this world. Our motivation for what we do is important...

1 Corinthians 10:31 – *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

When we live sacrificially for Jesus' sake or serve Him by serving the body of Christ, we store up treasure in heaven.

- The rich young man loved his money more than God, a fact Jesus pointed out. The issue wasn't that the young man was rich but that he “treasured” his riches and did not “treasure” what he could have in Christ. The young man was very religious, but Jesus exposed his heart of greed.

v22 - How did the rich man respond to Jesus' advice on how he may be more righteous?

He knew he couldn't give up his wealth so he knew he could not be righteous enough to meet Jesus' standard for earning eternal life

Why do you think the rich man couldn't meet the righteousness standard Jesus set for him?

- No one can meet God's standard because no human can be perfect
 - Matt 5:48 - *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
 - Rom 3:23 - *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*
- He could not give up his identity as a rich young ruler
- He would have to give up the very thing that their culture saw as God's blessing on his life

v23-27 - What did Jesus think of the prospects of rich men to go to heaven?

It is impossible for anyone to go to heaven if they are depending on their own actions.

Proverbs 30:8-9 - give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Why are rich men at a disadvantage in going to heaven than the poor?

- It is more likely that rich men will come to the wrong conclusion that they are being blessed by God in their wealth and miss the need to yield their life to Jesus.
- Poor men are more likely to seek God's help for their needs... rich men don't need anything.

What hope is there for rich men?

- Recognize that they cannot do enough to earn God's favor for eternal life; that instead they must have faith in God's grace
- They need to let go of their worldly identity and yield their life to Christ

What is the kingdom of God?

Andy Woods says the term "kingdom" is always a technical term in the Jewish-authored Scriptures which always refers to the Millennial Kingdom. It never refers to the spiritual kingdom of the Church Age. Indeed, all the Church Age believers as well as pre-Church Age believers will be beneficiaries of the Millennial Kingdom.

The Millennial Kingdom will be a time characterized by peace (Isaiah 11:6-7; Micah 4:3), justice (Isaiah 11:3-4), unity (Isaiah 11:10), abundance (Isaiah 35:1-2), healing (Isaiah 35:5-6), righteousness (Isaiah 35:8), joy (Isaiah 55:12), and the physical presence of Christ (Isaiah 16:5). Satan will be bound in the Abyss during this period (Revelation 20:1-3). Messiah Jesus will be the benevolent dictator ruling over the whole world (Isaiah 9:6-7; 11). The resurrected saints of all times will participate in the management of the government (Revelation 20:4-6).

Why should we look forward to the Millennial Kingdom?

Habakkuk 2:14 – For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

The Lord Jesus will rule the world from Jerusalem, and we will rule with Him serving in governmental or corporate roles in our glorified immortal bodies.

- This will be the utopian peaceful world for which the nations long.
- Salvation hangs in the balance – there will be mortal people who need to know the Lord and we will have a role in helping them know Him.
- The Millennial Kingdom is the "front porch" of the Eternal State, foreshadowing the blessings of the future eternal new heavens and earth.

What purpose does God have for the Millennial Kingdom?

To satisfy the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. And to demonstrate to mankind for all time that even in a perfect environment with demons locked away in the abyss that people will still reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

- No one will be able to use the Flip Wilson defense: "the devil made me do it."

How does having a dispositional view of history help us better understand the Millennial Kingdom?

In classic dispensationalism, there are seven dispensations. It is important to remember that dispensationalism is a theology inferred from Scripture rather than an explicitly taught doctrine of God's Word. The value of dispensationalism lies in its systematic view of history's different eras and the various ways in which the Ancient of Days interacts with His creation.

- The seventh and final dispensation brings about the culmination of life on Earth and the closest thing yet to how God really wanted to live with us on this planet. As its name suggests, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ will last for 1,000 years.

What characterizes the Millennial Kingdom?

The Millennial Kingdom is the seventh dispensation (Revelation 20:1-10).

- Stewards: The resurrected Old Testament saints, the glorified Church, and survivors of the Tribulation and their descendants
- The Period: From the Second Coming of Jesus Christ until the final rebellion, a period of one thousand years
- Responsibility: To be obedient, remain undefiled, and worship the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 11:3-5; Zechariah 14:9)
- Failure: After Satan is loosed from the Abyss, sinful man rebels one more time (Revelation 20:7-9)
- Judgment: Fire from God; the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:9-15)
- Grace: Jesus Christ restores creation and rules righteously in Israel, with all saints assisting (Isaiah 11:1-5; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20)

What applications come to mind from our discussion today?

- We are saved by the grace of God through faith in His provision... stop trying to earn God's favor for salvation.
- We lay up treasure in heaven when everything we do is motivated to see God glorified.
- We should make our worldly identity of significantly less important than our eternal one as a follower of Christ.
- We should look forward to the Millennial Kingdom