

**Introduction:** In Mark's Gospel, after Jesus' third healing on the Sabbath, Pharisees and Herodians (Jews and Romans) plotted to kill Jesus (Mark 3:1-8). From this point on the Gospel continues to focus on how Jesus will save people by His death on the Cross which He predicts three times (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34). \*\*\* He also came as a servant to give His life to ransom sinners (Mark 10:41-45). In this way He fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies of the Suffering Servant (Mark 1:2a; Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). \*\*\* And, just as Jesus went to His Cross, so His followers must take up their crosses and follow Him (Matthew 10:38; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27). This is what we should be meditating on and practicing, beginning this first Sunday of Lent, and going through Good Friday and Silent Saturday. \*\*\* Our passage this morning about a conflicted well-to-do man who ran to Jesus and kneeled before Him, reflects the theme of sacrifice to follow Jesus and receive life everlasting. He thought he could DO something to inherit this gift. In one way he was right. An inheritance is transferred to the heir after the death of the giver. So, all an heir can DO is to wait patiently and productively until the giver dies. \*\*\* But, Jesus did put forward the condition. The man would have to sell all his many possessions, then give the entire proceeds to the poor and follow Jesus. But the man was so attached to his possessions that he walked away sad and still lost. \*\*\* Jesus then told His disciples salvation is impossible through human effort; but, God has more than enough power to save. He added that people who leave all to follow Him will get back more now, with persecutions! But, it will all be worth it when in the age to come they receive life everlasting. \*\*\* The Psalm encourages people to know God's Word and to worship Him reverently. Those doing this will discover God and His Word are more desirable than all gold. \*\*\* Let's go deeper in our Scripture this morning to reinforce these general truths.

**I. A man asks Jesus what he may do for lasting life; Jesus says he must give up his possessions now for treasure in eternity; but, he goes away sad and still lost. (Mark 10:17-23)**

A. A man runs up to Jesus asking what he may do that he may inherit life everlasting; and Jesus questions him concerning the second great commandment. (Verses 17-19)

1. He going on a journey in the way, one having run and having kneeled to Him, he was asking Him, 'Teacher Good, what may I be doing that life for age I may receive as an inheritance?' (Verse 17)

**One asking:** After Jesus went His way, a man ran up to Him, kneeled in worship, and made a request.

**Request:** He wanted to know what he may do so the result would be, literally: life for an (a)eon.

2. Jesus said, 'Why Me thou are calling good? No one good if not (except) one: God!' (Verse 18)

**Reality check:** With this question and following statement Jesus is saying, 'Do you fully understand who I AM?' This is a reality check for the man, and everyone.

3. 'The commandments, thou have known: not thou may murder; not thou may commit adultery; not thou may steal; not thou may bear false witness, not thou may defraud; thou must be honoring the father of thee and the mother.' (Verse 19)

**Five of six:** Jesus listed five of the six commandments that make up the second great commandment: love thy neighbor as thyself (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:38-41).

Fraud is an elaboration on lying because Jesus probably knew his massive wealth accumulation involved some fraud.

**Question:** Which of the six commandments did Jesus leave out? [Coveting]

B. The man says he kept all these, Jesus loved him; but, asked one more thing: sell all and give to the poor to have eternal treasure; he could not do so and went away sad. (Verses 20-23)

1. He is saying to Him, 'Teacher! These all I have kept from my youth'. (Verse 20)

**Kept these:** Many people think they have obeyed these five commandments. Paul used coveting as the commandment that exposed his sin nature (Romans 7:7-8).

2. Then Jesus, having earnestly beheld him, loved him, and said to him, 'One thing is being lacking thee, thou must be going, whatsoever thou are having, thou must sell, and thou must give to the poor, and thou will have treasure in heaven; and come, thou must be following Me'. (Verse 21)

**Jesus loved him:** Jesus loved him after closely looking at him, probably meaning his heart.

**One thing:** But there is always at least one area in which every human being falls short.

So Jesus gives him commands to overcome his sin of covetousness.

**Result:** If he can give all to the poor, he will have treasure in heaven. Can he give up everything for no more than sixty years to have an eternity with true treasure? Meanwhile he follows Jesus with nothing.

**What people give up to follow Jesus is temporary**

3. But he, having been saddened at the word, went away being sorrowed, because he was having many possessions. (Verse 22)

**Having many possessions:** His desire to keep his possessions caused him to walk away from everlasting life both sad and grieving.

**Jon Forman:** Switchfoot has a song with the line, 'You possess your possessions or they possess you!'

Sadly, this man was 'possessed' by his possessions to his eternal harm.

4. Having looked around, Jesus is saying to His disciples, 'How (with) difficulty, those possessions having, into the Kingdom of God, they will enter'. (Verse 23)

**Obstacle to Kingdom of God:** Possessions can keep people out of God's Kingdom!

So we must prayerfully examine ourselves concerning the obstacle of coveting.

**II. The disciples ask who can be saved; Jesus replies salvation is only in God for whoever leaves all for His sake, for a mixed return now and life later; God's Word makes people value Him above gold. (Mark 10:24-31; Psalm 19:7-10)**

A. The disciples are amazed that those blessed with riches struggle to enter God's Kingdom and ask Jesus: Who can be saved? (Mark 10:24-26)

1. But the disciples were being astonished at His words. (Mark 10:24a)

**Disciples:** Jesus' words caused His disciples to be amazed and startled. Jewish 'prosperity theology' took the generalities of Proverbs about the prosperity of the righteous, and made them promises. But, some first century Jews, as shown in *The Chosen*, said 'Life has never been easy for our people'.

2. But Jesus, again having answered, is saying to them, 'Children, how difficult it is being into the Kingdom of God to enter: Easier it is being for a camel through the eye of the needle to go though, than a well-to-do man into the Kingdom of God to enter. (Mark 10:24b-25)

**Jesus repeats 'well-to-do' difficulty:** First, Jesus used the term '(many) possessions'. Now He says 'well-to-do'.

**Impossible image:** Jesus is actually saying they cannot enter God's Kingdom. Do not try to 'explain away' this impossible metaphor as many people have done. Jesus is saying whatever people give up for the rest of their life on this earth, will be more than worth it for eternity!

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3. But all the more they were being amazed, saying to themselves also, 'Who is being able to be saved?' (Mark 10:26)

**More amazed:** Synonyms for what they were experiencing are: bewildered, overwhelmed in practice, and struck out of one's senses.

**Question:** So they asked each other (not Jesus): who can be saved? By implying salvation to be done for people, not by people, they are on the right track.

- B. Jesus says God can do what men cannot; then, in response to Peter, He says that any who leave all for Him will: receive much now, and life in the age to come. (Mark 10:27-31)

1. Having earnestly beheld them, Jesus is saying, 'With men – impossible, but, not with God, for all things (are) possible with God'. (Mark 10:27)

**Look:** Jesus now looks at His disciples with the same look of love He had for the well-to-do man.

**Great contrast:** Jesus strongly states that men are not able to save themselves. However, God IS strong, mighty and powerful enough to do anything – including save people. We must realize no one can save himself, so we will fully trust in God's power to save us. Whatever following Jesus costs us now is nothing compared to eternity.

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2. Peter began to say to Him, 'Behold! We have left all and we had followed Thee'. (Mark 10:28)

**Peter:** Peter reminds Jesus the Twelve had left everything behind to follow Him, and they are still following Him.

3. Jesus is saying, 'Truly, I am saying to you all, no one is being, who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for My sake or the sake of the Gospel, if not he may receive hundred-fold, now in this time: houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions'. (Mark 10:29-30b)

**Truly, any who leave:** Jesus lists five relationships bracketed by two possessions that He may truly ask people to leave.

**For sake:** The reason He will ask for this sacrifice is for the sake of Him and His Gospel, namely what He will give so that anyone may be saved.

**Hundred times now:** He promises one hundred times more in this age. When a person is joined to Jesus' Church family, which has all things in common (Acts 2:42-47), they join a large forever family.

**Persecutions:** But, there will be persecutions because the world system hates Jesus and His people (John 16:33; Acts 14:21-22; 2 Timothy 3:10-13). May we accept that persecutions are part of the present day 'reward' for leaving all to follow Jesus.

4. 'And in the age coming: life everlasting'. (Mark 10:30c)

**Age to come:** Full circle! Jesus gives the full answer to the man's question to His disciples. They can understand that whatever Jesus asks from His followers now, will be more than worth it in eternity!

**What people give up to follow Jesus is temporary**

5. 'But many they will be first (now): last; and, the last: first. (Mark 10:31)

**Reversals:** Jesus concludes His parable of workers in the vineyard the same way (Matthew 20:1-16).

- C. God's Word is complete to make people wise, and through worship God makes people righteous, so they value Him above gold. (Psalm 19:7-10)

1. Torah of Yahweh is complete, restoring the soul / the testimony of Yahweh is established, making wise the simple // the statutes of Yahweh are upright, rejoicing the heart / the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Verses 7-8)

**God's Word:** David give four truths about God's Word: His instruction is complete, His testimony is established, His statutes are upright, and His commandment is pure.

**Benefits:** As a result, God's Word gives four benefits: People's souls are restored, simple people are made wise, people's hearts rejoice, and their eyes are enlightened!

2. The fear of Yahweh is pure, enduring forever / the judgments of Yahweh are true, righteous altogether. (Verse 9)

**Fear of Covenant God:** Reverent worship for God is pure and lasts an (a)eon.

This suggests the subject of eternal life in our Gospel passage.

**Judgments true:** And, by His true judgments, The Covenant God is able to make people righteous through salvation IN Jesus.

3. Being desired from (more than) gold, and much refined gold / and sweeter from (more than) honey and dripping honey. (Verse 10)

**More desirable than gold:** This poetry portion says God and His Word, perfected and completed IN Jesus and His Gospel, are to be desired above gold and all people may possess. So, worship Him!

**Reverent worship of Yahweh is more desirable than gold**

**Sweetest of all:** And, such worship will be sweeter than the sweetest honey found in all God's creation.

- Application:** Let us worship God by giving Him all He asks of us. May we leave here today placing a higher value on God than anything in this world.

**Conclusion:** A man who runs to Jesus and kneels before Him asks what he may do to inherit life to the ages. He is told he must give all he has to the poor and follow Jesus to have treasure in eternity, but he goes away sad and lost. So, the disciples ask Jesus: who can be saved? He replies that salvation is only possible IN God, so people who leave everything to follow Him will receive more now in two ways, and everything in life later. God's Word makes people wise to worship Him and to value Him more than gold.

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