

31- The Reward of a Servant

Mark 10:17-31

Mark 10:17-31 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. 28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

There are a lot of different angles that we can approach this portion of the gospel of Mark from. We could focus on the rich young ruler and the struggle he had of not allowing his riches to stand between him and God. I recently approached it from the angle of how close the young man was to faith but still so far away. We discovered that close was not good enough. Someone who is close to being saved is still lost.

We could also focus on the commandments that are mentioned here and how to do better at obedience. Or the focus could be the teaching of the camel going through the eye of a needle and the things that are possible with God that are impossible for men.

All of these are good and worthy thoughts that are contained within these verses. However, I wish us to return again to the servant thought that we have looked at in this series of Mark. Lets look at the reward of a servant and let the other things set the stage for this.

I- The Question:

Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? This is possibly the greatest question that could be posed by the human mind. It is one that is eternal in its scope and critical in its answer.

As we look at the answer that Jesus gave this rich young man we must quickly resist the temptation to make the answer given here the reason for us to formulate a works based salvation. The entire content clearly is to show that which was standing between the young man and a simply placing his faith in Christ.

Mark 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. 19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

Jesus took the young man back to the commandments and the law. I remind us all the purpose of the law was to be our schoolmaster or teacher. *Galatians 3:23-24 NASB But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.*

The second thing about this teaching is that Jesus showed him that salvation is more than an emotion. Notice how the young man charged into the story. He came running up and kneeled at Jesus feet, perhaps even clinging onto His legs, and clearly caught up in his emotions.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. 21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Jesus never disagreed with this man's self-assessment that He had kept the law as best he could. However, the great question left unanswered for the man was what have you done with the wealth you have been given.

May I say to all of us that we are only stewards of the possession that God gives us. The same question could be asked, what are we doing with what God has entrusted us with?

The truth of the matter is that giving up what we have worked and earned is hard for most of us and our emotions are many times like this man in **Mark 10:22** *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

There is one other little word that we need to address a bit before we move on. The little word, "do." The man wanted to know what he had to do, what work he needed to accomplish in order to earn eternal life.

II- Salvation Possible Through God:

This allowed Jesus to have another teaching moment to the disciples and those traveling with Him. He wanted them to understand that this was a work of Grace by God and not a work of the hands of men.

Mark 10:23 *And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!*

Jesus asked this question two times. How hard is it for a rich man to enter heaven? He then tells them how hard. **Mark 10:25** *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

Someone said that we should not be amazed when someone goes to hell but we should be amazed when God in His mercy and grace allows someone who is a sinner and an enemy to go to heaven. This man had done well and still did not measure up. I remind us that the Pharisees legalistically kept the law as well. This had the disciples confused. So they asked.

Mark 10:26 *And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? I can see them pointing toward the young man as he moved off from them in the distance. Saying with their voices infliction and body language unspoken words, "if this man cannot be good enough to be saved than out of their mouth comes, "Who then can be saved?"*

My what a question, dripping with self-doubt, self-worthlessness, hopelessness. They knew that they were not reaching the heights even that this man had. The good news was on the way.

Jesus told them that it was impossible for anybody to be saved, to be good enough, to be right with God in their own actions and flesh, but with God He could make it possible. **Mark 10:27** *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

III- The Promise of Reward:

In comparison to what Jesus had asked the young man the disciples had given up more. They had in fact turned their back on their life to follow Jesus.

Mark 10:28 *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*

From this statement Jesus would give the promise of reward to those who give and sacrifice for the kingdom. Not to be saved but because they are saved.

Mark 10:29 *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.*

No reward is lost, not deed left unnoticed. No matter how obscure and out of the lime light they may be done God still sees. This promise is for a multiplied reward not just one to one compensation. So lets us do the math, God's way, if we give us anything for the sake of the gospel in this life, from which we can take nothing, we will be reward for eternity 100 times greater. Now that is a good return on investment. This rich young ruler looked like he had finished first and the disciple, poor in the eyes of the world, had finished last, but Jesus did not see it that way.