

Snared by Money

Mark 10 and 12

February 18, 2018

DAY 1: The blindly light of money

1. This week we'll look primarily at an interchange between Jesus and the man known as the Rich Young Ruler.

Mark 10:17 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?"

2. What do you think this man is really asking? What does he imply by using the word "inherit"?

3. If you had been Jesus, how would you have replied to this man's question?

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone."

4. Why do you think Jesus begins His answer in this way?

5. Then Jesus responds by quoting six of the Ten Commandments related to how we should treat our fellow man.

Mark 10:19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

6. What did Jesus hope would happen to the Rich Young Ruler upon hearing these six commands?

Mark 10:20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

7. There have been many times when I have tried to witness to a friend and have had the same kind of response as the Rich Young Ruler gave Jesus. "I'm not guilty of this thing called 'sin,' and thus I don't need a savior."

8. If you had been talking to the man where would you have gone next in the conversation?

DAY 2: Choosing the temporal and fleeting over the eternal and lasting

1. Have you ever tried witnessing to someone and become irritated at their blindness and stubbornness? I have. It's easy for being irritated to turn to anger. Notice Jesus response to the Rich Young Ruler.

Mark 10:21a Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said....

2. Why was Jesus able to love this young man, in spite of his stubbornness? What enabled Jesus to love the young man?

3. How would you have proceeded in the conversation?

Mark 10:21b"Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me."

4. Does this line of conversation surprise you? If so, why?

Mark 10:22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

5. At this point, the Rich Young Ruler becomes disenchanted.

6. At first you may think Jesus "went overboard." But, remember the man's initial question! He wanted to know how to inherit ETERNAL life. What looks to him is a trade-off: all my TEMPORAL earnings in exchange for ETERNAL life.

7. The man made his choice. If it's an either-or proposition, he chose the temporal earnings and turned down eternal life.

8. Every day, in every city, in every nation, men and women make their choices. We are always tempted to take the "here and now" though it is fleeting, then wait for the greater "down the road" blessing.

9. What strikes you about the young man? Do you see something of yourself in his responses?

DAY 3: Rich people and eternal salvation

Mark 10:23 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 a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

1. The topic of money has been a hot topic of debate for the last twenty years, or so. Generally, the debate falls along these lines:

(a) Some think it impossible to generate wealth without cheating others out of what they should make. To this group, wealth is seen as an "injustice." If the disciples believed this way about money, they would have clapped at Jesus' pronouncement that is near impossible for a rich man to enter heaven. But that is not their response.

(b) Another line of thinking is the opposite, that wealth is seen as a sign of God's blessing, as rewards for a good life or generosity or obedience. And this is the line of thinking to which the disciples believe. That is why they are dumbfounded at Jesus' statement in v. 25. Their response would sound something like this: "Good grief! If THAT guy can't be saved, then just WHO can be saved?"

2. Why DOES Jesus say it is impossible for the rich to enter heaven? First let's tick off what He is saying about money, as per other scripture on money and wealth.

a. It's not a sin to be rich.

b. Not all rich people are bad, neither are all poor people good

c. "Watch out for being greedy."

3. Jesus is clear on the issue of sin. Sin is what is wrong with everybody, but what Jesus is saying is something along this line: Money or especially a lot of money can serve as blinders to our real sin problem and the nature of what's needed to fix the sin problem. We can give a little, call ourselves "generous" and "good" and "loving" and assume "we're good to go" with God. Or, we can use money to put on such a show to others that it's easy to start to assume, "I am the show."

4. In this sense without a miracle of grace from God, we will neither see our sin problem nor call out to God to fix our sin problem. Money is not "the" problem, but it certainly can be a symptom of our deeper problem—sin.

5. Jesus said "it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven." What do you think He means? Doesn't mean?

Mark 10:26 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."

DAY 4: Temporal money vs. eternal salvation

1. Jesus gives him a test, so that the man will see what he REALLY values, not just “says” he values.

Mark 10:21 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."

2. Do you think Jesus would tell that to everyone? Do you think what He told the Rich Young Ruler is normative for everyone?

3. Imagine that the Rich Young Ruler had responded with, “That command cuts me to the quick. I am smitten with grief and conviction. That command exposes that my real “god” IS money. I need to repent of my idolatry about money. I can see my sin. I will do as You say, most gladly!”

4. How do you think Jesus would have responded? Would He have had the Rich Young Ruler go ahead and liquidate all His money?

Mark 10:22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

5. What reasons can you think of that prompted the man’s sadness?

6. The phrase “face fell,” is the Greek word “grieved.” We grieve whenever something we value or treasure is lost. The greater the value or treasure we ascribe to something or someone, the greater the grief when it is lost.

7. What does his response tell you about him? Though he claimed to be a very religious man, obedient to the commands of God, what was his real spiritual state?

8. What would have been your response to Jesus’ command to sell all?

DAY 5: A money inventory

1. The bible has many surprises in it, but here's one most will never see. We expect warning about adultery and all kinds of illicit sex. The reasons for the warnings are clearly seen on the news now, virtually every night. For what seems "innocent" to one person turns out to be abuse to another. What one considers "love" the other considers it disgusting. But as prominent as the bible's warnings are in this area, the warnings about money are **tenfold** what they are in the sexual realm!

2. The simple question is; do you have a grip on money or does money have a grip on you? How would you answer that question?

3. How do you know if money has a grip on you? Perhaps a version of the test Jesus gave the Rich Young Ruler will suffice.

a. Are you willing to tithe? To give God ten percent of your income?

b. Do you have arguments with your spouse about money?

c. Do you become distraught about your inability to "get ahead" or live "paycheck-to-paycheck?"

d. Do you chafe at those whose job pays more than yours?

4. Why are these things true? Because to you, money is not just a tool to pay the bills. It is your scorecard you pull out every day, every week, every month and every year. That "scorecard" "tell" you your worth, your value, it is THE indicator of your "success."

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

5. What Jesus asked the Rich Young Ruler to do, Jesus had already done! And even on a much grander scale!