

Diver & Sailor with sack of gold-

The tragedy of the man in our passage today isn't that Jesus rejected him.

It's that he wouldn't release what was pulling him under.

Title: **Who can be saved?**

It's been said, *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."*

There is nothing worth holding on to if it means not taking hold of Christ

Mark 10:17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

In Luke's account (ch18) this man is identified as *a ruler*

In Matthew's account (ch19) he's also identified as *a young man*

He started off well- he came to the right person, took the right posture and asked a fair question;
but will he have the right response?

You may be here today, in the right place at the right time, but will you have the right response?

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

This seems like an odd response from Jesus- it doesn't even address the man's question..... or does it?

A running theme in Mark is the blindness of people to see who Jesus is and what the Kingdom of God means

In light of this, Jesus' words are like an eye chart- how well does he see, or how blind is he in reality?

Jesus doesn't say '*don't call me good- only God is good*'.

He says '*Why do you call me good? No one is good but God*'

There are 2 things the man is blind to:

- Jesus is indeed good because He is indeed God- but the man missed it
- The man, as we'll see, thinks *he* is good...good enough

Isaiah 57:12 I will announce your righteousness, and your works—
they will not profit you.

Mark 10:19-20 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.**" ²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth."

The commandments are not intended to be a ladder to get to heaven by our obedience (Romans; Hebrews); they serve as a mirror to show us that none of us are good enough- only God alone.

Did you notice something odd about Jesus' list of commandments?

Jesus is listing from the ten commandments, and only quoting from the 'horizontal' ones(1-4;6-10), but Jesus seems to add one in that isn't in there...

'Do not defraud'- 2 explanations are possible:

- Jesus is simply rephrasing 'do not covet'
- I submit to you that Jesus knows something of how this man became rich (v.22)

I propose that it's possible it was by defrauding the poor- look at the next verse

Mark 10:21-22 Looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, “You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²²But he was dismayed by this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

The man has great wealth, and claims to have great obedience- but his view of the kingdom of heaven is that it's something he can earn (what must I *do*?)

This is a contrast to the previous passage (receive it childlike)

Jason Meyer- *“What a contrast is found here between the little children and the rich young ruler. The children possess nothing but received Jesus’ blessing- the kingdom of God belongs to them. The rich young ruler seems to possess everything (both financial attainment and moral accomplishment), yet he walks away from the kingdom.”*

He wanted eternal life, but he wanted his wealth more. He loved his money more than he loved his soul. His possessions have taken possession of his heart

We ought to examine ourselves and ask, ‘*where is my love; what has taken my heart captive?*’

‘he was dismayed...went away grieving’

Dismayed (from Greek verb: *stugnazó*)- metaphorically, of the sky being covered with storm clouds

Only used one other place: Matthew 16:3 translated as ‘threatening’

Grieving (from Greek verb: *lupeó*)- conveys a sense of deep sorrow

Same word used to describe Jesus in Matthew 26:37 while in the garden of gethsemane

What would grieve Jesus is the impending separation from what He loves most, the Father-

What grieved this man was the thought of separating from what he loved most, his riches.

Many modern pastors may have sought to do anything to have this influential & wealthy man stay as a supporter. Jesus wouldn't just tell him what he wants to hear- and Mark explicitly reveals to us the reason-

The motive for Jesus' words is not judgment, or disappointment or annoyance-

‘Jesus loved him’- the piercing words come from a loving heart.

It was loving of Jesus to expose this man's blindness and idolatry; unloving not to do so

It is the loving thing to call out sin and whatever entangles others

Proverbs 27:5 Better an open reprimand than concealed love.

And when we are the ones being called out, we ought to remember that love may be behind us being confronted; be slow to react in anger, but quick to repent if they are right

Proverbs 27:6a The wounds of a friend are trustworthy....

Mark 10:23-26 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴The disciples were astonished at his words. Again Jesus said to them, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁶They were even more astonished, saying to one another, “Then who can be saved?”

In **v.23** Jesus takes the common belief of that time (and still now), that wealth is a sign of God's blessing and favor, and turns it on its head.

Then in **v.24** he raises the stakes- it's not only hard for those seen as favored, but also for EVERYONE.

Then again, He raises the bar in **v.25**! So high in fact, that it's out of reach; it's impossible!

“a camel...through the eye of a needle” (humorous hyperbole)

Some try 2 argue ‘camel’ ought to read ‘rope’, since in the Greek the 2 are similar
There is no textual evidence in the manuscripts for this view

Some say ‘eye of a needle’ was a small gate by which camels had to pass through on their knees after the city gates were closed for the night.

Not until the 9th century AD is there evidence for such a gate;

Not to mention this view misses the point Jesus is making anyway (it’s impossible!)

The disciple’s response is the right one- ***‘Then who can be saved?’***

SIDE NOTE: It’s important to note, Jesus isn’t condemning wealth and commending poverty

He’s simply speaking of the seduction we all recognize wealth has on us to captivate our hearts at the expense of all else (you don’t even have to be wealthy to be captivated by wealth!)

1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

So what does the Bible have to say about wealth?

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and willing to share, ¹⁹storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of what is truly life.

The question remains, who can be saved?

v.24 is the only time in the gospel Jesus calls his disciples children-

without a doubt, a call back to the previous passage, that the kingdom of God must be received, not earned

Mark 10:27 Looking at them, Jesus said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God.”

With man, NO ONE can be saved!

Not the best of us; most virtuous; funniest; prettiest; knowledgeable, etc.

We could consolidate all our morality and goodness..

(the virtue of Mother Teresa, the accomplishments of Aberaham Lincoln, the kindness of Mr. Rogers...heck let’s throw some bible people in there- the prestige of Moses, the heart of David, the servitude of Jeremiah, etc.)

...and it still wouldn’t get us anywhere near the gates of heaven!

With God, ANYONE can be saved!

The worst of us; the ones with the most vile histories; the druggies and the prostitutes; the murderers; the sinners; the mean; the nasty; the repugnant; your mother-in-law (jk)

anyone- even YOU...even your wayward CHILD....even your ATHEIST FRIEND

Mark 10:28 Peter began to tell him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.”

Oh Peter....In essence Peter is saying ‘we haven’t made the mistake of *this* man.’

Mark 10:29-30 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said, “there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundred times more, now at this time —houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions —and eternal life in the age to come.

It will cost us something to follow Jesus (not for salvation, but as collateral damage- ‘with persecutions’)

I’ve said it before; it may cost some of you more. (Addictions, toxic relationships)

But the blessing far outweighs the losses

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory.

Jesus is referring to in one sense the family of believers we enter into/ gain;

but in a greater sense:

John Piper- “Surely what Christ means is that he himself makes up for every loss. If you give up a mother’s nearby affection and concern, you get back one hundred times the affection and concern from the ever-present Christ. If you give up the warm comradeship of a brother, you get back one hundred times the warmth and camaraderie from Christ... isn’t what Jesus is saying...just this: ‘I promise to work for you and be for you so much that you will not be able to speak of having sacrificed anything.’”

Mark 10:31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

The kingdom of God doesn’t belong to those who can afford it, by their wealth, morality, or influence; It belongs to those who will let go of anything that hinders them from receiving it freely

An encouragement for those who’ve sacrificed much-

Philippians 3:7-9 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. ⁸ More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God based on faith.

A reminder that Christ surrendered more than we ever could, to give us more than we could ever gain-

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

An invitation-

JC Ryle- “... the heart of Jesus is a wide heart. He has abundance of pity, compassion, and tender concern even for those who are following sin and the world... Salvation is ready for the worst of men if they will only come to Christ. If men are lost, it is not because Jesus does not love them and is not ready to save.”

The tragedy of this passage isn’t that Jesus turned him away. It’s that he walked away from Jesus.

Some of us are not wealthy—but we are still gripping something.

What are you holding that keeps you from holding Christ?

BULPEN-

Revelation 3:17 For you say, 'I'm rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,' and you don't realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

What must I do? VS what has been done?

Picture your life without _____; is Jesus more than enough still?