

**Mark 10: 28-31; “Leaving All; and Following Christ”, Sermon # 85 in
the series – “Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by
Pastor Paul Rendall on February 27th, 2011,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

We have seen in the previous two sermons, that the issue at hand was entering the kingdom of God. God’s kingdom is a spiritual and eternal kingdom. Jesus Christ, as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is the One, and the only One who knew how to live righteously, and did live righteously, so that we might inherit eternal life. His pursuit of righteousness led Him to the cross where He died for our sins. The good news of the gospel is; that if we believe in Him, He becomes the Prince of life to deliver us from all of our sins and to rule and reign over us in righteousness. Since His exaltation by God the Father, He now resides as King in heaven, and from that vantage point, He rules over all the people on this earth. In heaven His glory is clearly seen, and His will is instantly done. On earth, it is not always the case. But the person who would have eternal life must trust in Jesus, and follow Jesus, as the Lord teaches him and gives him grace. When this rich man came to Jesus, he was eager to know what he should do to inherit the kingdom of God. Jesus spoke to him very directly and very definitively about what He needed to do to be saved and to enter the kingdom of God. It was to believe His word to him. His command to that young man was to trust in His Word instead of trusting in his riches. He was to trust in Jesus when Jesus said to him that in giving all that he had away, that he would find greater treasure in heaven, and in following Him. But the rich young ruler did not believe this. He could not part with his riches. I hope that you will understand that he did not need to repent of his riches; although he was commanded to give them away. He needed to repent of his trusting in them and holding on to them so tightly, so as to only spend them on himself. This, the young man did not want to do. He did not want to be generous and give, because he was a covetous man. A covetous man cannot inherit the kingdom of God. After he went away sad, Jesus showed his disciples the great difficulty of entering the kingdom of God, being a materially rich person. The disciples knew what he was saying when he told them that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, because they said to Him, “Who, then can be saved?” They knew what you and I should know, if we don’t already know it; that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they give to Jesus everything in this present life.

We have already seen that the disciples’ leaving all for Jesus was their giving themselves to Him, both to be saved and to follow Him as disciples. This is what He is asking each of us here to do as well. But in Matthew Chapter 19, verse 27, in the parallel passage to this one; Peter asks a question which is not recorded for us here in Mark. He says, “Therefore what shall we have?” Since we have left all; what shall we have? So the verses that follow are Jesus’ response to Peter’s question. He is telling them about the rewards which will come to those who do give everything to

Jesus. This morning we want to look first at what it means to leave things or people, for Jesus' sake and the gospel's. 2ndly, we want to look at what the "hundredfold" statement means, both in relation to the here and now; and also in the world to come. And then finally we will look at the statement of "the first being last, and the last being first".

1st of all – What does it mean to leave things or people for Jesus' sake and the gospel's? (Verse 29)

When you are saved from yourself and from the guilt of your sins, by exercising faith in Jesus Christ, you begin that journey of discipleship with the Lord, that will lead you all the way through this life and into the next. He will be faithful to teach you the many lessons of truth regarding how you should live. And having trusted in Jesus, living upon the riches of His grace; if you are rich toward God, you will inherit all things purchased by Christ's obedience and sufferings on the cross. You will indeed end up in heaven when you die; you will enter Christ's heavenly kingdom. You will on the day of the resurrection from the dead inherit eternal and everlasting life in the New Heavens and New earth. But everyone should understand that their entering in to the eternal kingdom all rests on their really and truly giving everything to Jesus now. We must give to Him our soul, our body, our resources and strength, and our whole future in order to really enter in to the kingdom of God. You enter spiritually into the kingdom of God when you take Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior. Then His grace and strength are there for you, to help you to repent of all of your sins, and learn to live for His glory. He gives you grace as you trust in Him, and He saves you from yourself, and He gives you a new heart to live for Him. He gives you the grace to begin, and to continue to follow Him, by keeping His Word. When I say that He saves you from yourself, I mean that He saves you from what you would do to yourself because of your own innate sinfulness; you would ruin your own life. This is what the rich young ruler did, even though he did not think so when he walked away from Christ.

Some people, I said to you last week, want to hold on to everything they have made and done for themselves when they enter the kingdom of God. They want to have control of everything, and never let the Lord Jesus Christ really direct them as to how they should use it; whether it pertains to their thoughts, or their activities, or their money and possessions. If that is the case, then I question whether Jesus is really your Lord. You should not fool yourself. If you are not willing to give all of what you have to Christ, to let Him direct you as to how you should use all that you are and have; then you have not yet come to know Him as you ought. How else can we explain the passage that we are looking at this morning? "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!" Listen to what Jesus says in John 7, verse 16: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me." "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God, or whether I speak on My own authority." You need to ask yourself whether you are willing to do the will of God. What Jesus is expecting is that when we own Him as our Lord, that we will go about to do and to keep His Word and His commandments.

Turn with me over to Luke 6: 46 – “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you what he is like; He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock.” “And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.” “But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell.” “And the ruin of that house was great.” So you should be able to see from these verses that you will be tested in life to see whether you are building on Christ’s sayings, or whether you are choosing to disregard them. If you are building on His sayings you are laying a deep and good foundation to build your life upon. Ask yourself if you are doing this? Do you regularly peruse the Scriptures to see what Jesus would have you to do, and how He would have you to think and to live? This is basic to living the Christian life.

But if you examine your own heart and life, and you find that you are really willing to do God’s will; and if you are willing to follow Jesus in relation to the things which He said are true; Ask yourself this morning, what is it, then, that He wants me to do and to accomplish with my life? The answer to that question will determine what glory will come to Christ, and what kind of a reward you will have, both in this world and in the world to come. Our text plainly states that there will be some among Christ’s disciples who are willing; and they actually do, “leave house, or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s.” Among those who have given everything to Jesus, there will be some who will actually go farther in their labors for Christ than others. They will leave everything which is precious to them; their house and lands, their close relatives and friends; to attempt to do something for Christ and the gospel. That is specifically what Jesus called His Apostles to do. It is not what He calls every Christian to, but I believe that Christ is teaching us that every Christian ought to be sensitive to the Lord’s leading in this regard, and how they might help forward His kingdom; how they might help those who do leave all for Christ. The Christian life is not your being forced to give up anything for Christ; it is willingly searching and seeking how you can offer your life to Christ; how you can give of yourself and your substance to promote everything about Him, and what He would want you to do in relation to the gospel. Whenever you have the desire to do something great for Christ; then holding on to something of what you have worked for in this world, and holding on to the good approval of your relatives, will always be challenged. Is your job such an all-consuming concern to you that you do not think of what God would want you to do outside of it to serve Him? Are your house and lands something that you are building for yourself alone, or can Christ be better served by your spending your money for things which will bring eternal dividends? If you do have a large house; how can you use it for his glory? This is exactly what some of the people in the early Church began to consider. In Acts 4: 32 it says, “Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any

of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.” “And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.” “And great grace was upon them all.” Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostle’s feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” You say, “That sounds kind of scary; kind of like communism or socialism.” No, my friend; this was something that was done on a completely voluntary basis by people who were thinking of their Lord and how to help forward His kingdom.

What about your relatives? Do you find that your relatives are trying to keep you from doing what Christ would have you to do; or are they helping you forward in what Christ would have you to do for Him? Often you will find that there is a competition between them; those interests and the things which your unbelieving relatives may want you to be doing; versus what you know that Christ would have you to do. Your relatives might want you to serve your own worldly interests or theirs, so that you never really do come to terms with the things that Jesus would have you to do. What is the answer? Is it to leave your relatives and their concerns behind? It may be so, if you are to become a missionary and your mother or your father, or your brother and your sister think that you should not. But Jesus is not saying here that you should become some kind of a lone-ranger Christian and deliberately leave your real responsibilities to family or relatives, or to fail to keep up your house or lands because you are more interested in promoting Christ’s kingdom. No, the real issue is whether you are concerned with doing the will of the Lord and following Jesus, actually thinking through what He would have you to do, where you are; considering His Word to be of more importance than all the claims of your closest relatives around you, and the business that you are engaged in day by day. Missionaries are needed, around the world today. But pastors and missionaries are needed here at home too. What can you do to support the advance of the kingdom of Christ? You can support the work of missionaries abroad who will stick by the preaching of the Word of God; and pastors who will faithfully proclaim it at home. If you will faithfully support the work of Christ in regard to the spread of His Word where you are; and also in connection with your church; then you can selectively choose whom you will financially support in the mission fields of the nations of the world. You do well when you do this. God does all good things spiritually through, and in relationship to the preaching of His Word. If you are interested in doing all things well for Christ, you are also desirous to promote the good things of Christ on every level of your life, and in every relationship that you have, with every one of your relatives. Jesus is not saying here that everyone in this generation who is a true Christian should leave their house, or their family, or their wife and children, or their lands for His sake. He is saying that for those who have done so, for His sake and the gospel’s, they shall receive a great reward. And He is also implying here; I believe, that for those who will help the missionaries of the gospel forward in their work, they

shall be a part of the reward of the one who has so sacrificed themselves for Christ's sake and the gospel.

Now 2ndly – We need to ask ourselves – What is this “hundredfold” reward which Jesus is speaking of here? (Verses 29 and 30)

“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.” Now it is very interesting when you read the parallel passages in the other two gospels of Matthew and Luke, what they add, and what they do not add, to what is said here. Let me read them for you. Matthew 19: 27 – “Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘See, we have left all and followed You.’” “Therefore what shall we have?” “So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and inherit eternal life.” Luke's passage is an abbreviated form of both Mark and Matthew. Luke 18, verse 28 and following – “Then Peter said, ‘See, we have left all and followed You.’” “So He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.” In Mark's gospel persecutions are added. In Matthew and Luke they are not added. In Matthew's gospel, “the regeneration” is added and the explanation of the Apostles judging Israel on twelve thrones with the Lord Jesus on His glorious throne. In Luke's gospel the words, “shall receive many times more in this present time are substituted for “a hundredfold”. The hundredfold is one hundred times what you presently have.

Let's think about the meaning of the reward for the believer who has left all to follow Christ. I have told you that the missionary, or the one “sent” by Christ and the local church in our case today, is, for the most part the one being spoken of here. But the principle of leaving behind or giving up anything for the sake of Christ and the gospel needs to be thought through by each one of us. It needs to be thought through in relation to the rewards which will be given in the regeneration; in the time when Christ will return and make the world over again. There will be a New Heavens and a New Earth. Let's think now, of the practical example of a rich man who was thinking of the eternal reward. One of the most conspicuous examples of a man who did what the rich young ruler failed to do was an Englishman named C.T. Studd. Charles Thomas Studd was born into a wealth family in England in 1860. His father was converted to Christ during a Moody-Sankey campaign in 1877. One of his father's friends who had come to Christ managed to lead C.T to Christ shortly after this, but he was what he termed “terribly backslidden” over the next six years. C.T. was one of the best cricket players in England in those days and he went to Eton

College and Trinity College Cambridge where he gained a great reputation for himself in this sport, along with his two brothers. The three brothers created a record at Cambridge which has never been equaled. He began to see the vanity of fame at that time when his brother G.B. was thought to be dying. As he was watching over his brother at his bed-side, these were the thoughts that came to him. "Now what is all the popularity of the world worth to George?" "What is all the fame and flattery worth?" "What is it worth to possess all the riches in the world when a man comes to face Eternity?" "And a voice seemed to answer, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.'" "All those things (he said) had become as nothing to my brother." "He only cared about the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ, and God taught me the same lesson." "In His love and goodness He restored my brother to health, and as soon as I could get away, I went to hear Mr. Moody." "There the Lord met me again and restored to me the joy of His salvation." "Still further, and what was better than all, He set me to work for Him, and I began to try to persuade my friends to read the Gospel, and to speak to them individually about their souls."

Having prayed about what he could do with his life for Christ; shortly after that, he decided that God was calling him to be a missionary. Soon after, he became one of the famous "Cambridge Seven"; seven young men from the college who responded to Hudson Taylor's appeal for missionaries to go to China. Some of his relatives were opposed. His dear father had died a few years before. But C.T. had decided that he would not look back. He and the others sailed for China in 1885. But before he left England he decided to do something which many would say was foolhardy. "By his father's will he was to inherit a large sum of money at the age of 25, and the simple reading of the Scriptures had led him to definite and far-reaching conclusions on the matter." "The words of Christ, 'Sell that ye have and give alms,' and 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth'; the example of the early Church at Pentecost, of which it says, 'All that believed sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need'; and finally the story of the rich young man to whom Jesus said, 'One thing you lack: go thy way, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up thy Cross and follow Me,' seemed to him to be as equally binding on himself as a present-day disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, as on those to whom they were spoken." "Therefore in the light of God's Word he decided to give his entire fortune to Christ, and to take the golden opportunity offered him of doing what the rich young man had failed to do."

"So far as he could judge, his inheritance was 29,000 pounds. (If I am not mistaken, one pound in Great Britain then would be worth \$86.05 today. That means he had about \$2,500,000 coming to him in inheritance.) But in order to leave a margin for error, he decided to start by giving 25,000 pounds away. (\$2,151,250) "One memorable day, January 13th, 1887, he sent off four checks of 5,000 pounds each, (\$430,250) and five of 1,000 (\$86,050). As coolly and deliberately as a business man invests in some gilt-edged securities, as being both safe and yielding good interest, so C.T. invested in the Bank of Heaven." This was no fool's plunge on his part." "It was his public testimony before God and man that he believed God's

Word to be the surest thing on earth, and that the hundredfold interest which God has promised in this life; not to speak of it in the next, is an actual reality for those who believe it and act on it.” “He sent 5,000 to Mr. Moody, expressing the hope that he would be able to start a Gospel Work at Tirhoot in North India where his father had made his fortune.” Moody had hoped to carry this out, but was unable to, and instead used the money to start the famous Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He sent 5,000 to Mr. George Muller, 4,000 to be used on missionary work, and 1,000 among the orphans. He sent 5,000 to George Holland in Whitechapel, to be used for the Lord among His poor in London, and 5,000 to Booth Tucker for the Salvation Army in India. He gave 1,000 pounds each to Miss McPherson for her work in London, Miss Ellen Smyly’s work in Dublin, General Booth’s work of the Salvation Army, Rev. Archibald Brown’s work in the east end of London, and Dr. Barnardo’s home as well. He saved the rest back to give to his wife at their wedding. When his wife found out about it, she said to him, “Charlie, what did the Lord tell the rich young man to do?” “Sell all.” “Well then, we will start clear with the Lord at our wedding.” And they sat down together and wrote to General Booth and his wife, who was then dying of breast cancer, that they were giving the rest to them and the work that they were involved in. (These quotes were taken from the book - C.T. Studd Cricketer and Pioneer; written by Norman Grubb and Published by Christian Literature Crusade, 1974.)

Now, I did not read all this to you in order that you would give all away like they did. I did not read it to you so that the men among us might all become missionaries and go into the field in Africa and bury ourselves in the work there until death as C.T. did. I read it to you to show you that this man was not trusting in his riches. He saw his riches as a real hindrance to his trusting Christ and serving Him. His wife being in full agreement with him, he did not take her into the field with him. They had four lovely daughters which he did not see much, in the remaining time of their lives. He did not see his wife all that much either. His wife raised those daughters and kept up the organizational work of the mission that he founded in Africa, back in England. She was content to do this. His daughters all came to know the Lord and some of them became involved in missions. As I think of his life, I am sure that I could not agree with his doctrine on some points and his methods at other points. But I find very commendable his zeal to give all for Christ, his love for the salvation of the lost everywhere, especially in Africa where he spent most of his life. He did see many natives come to Christ. He did receive his hundred fold now in the financial investments that he made. He saw it in this present time in houses and spiritual family raised up to Christ, both in England, the United States in those other missions that he helped. But in his mission in Africa it was not seen in material wealth and riches. It was seen in spiritual riches and family and fruit born to the glory of Christ. The reason that I read this to you is to show you that God does give some men the zeal to leave all and go to foreign countries with the gospel and live among them and bear fruit to his name.

A man like this may seem to us to have lost his mind in the way that he proceeded. He might seem foolish to some, and his actions wrong to others. He might be criticized by some for using the methods that he did, or the way he went about to plant a church. But God blessed he and his wife even so. Why? Because they actually did something. They left house and brothers and sisters and father and mother and even wife and children for Christ's sake and the gospel's sake. Let us not pick them to pieces, or disqualify their ministries. Let us rather seek to imbibe some of their spirit. Let us learn to give material things away for Christ. Let us be as Biblical we can in our approach to church planting, but let us not paralyze the efforts of those seemingly ordinary Christians who desire to do something for Christ; to lose their life in order to find it. Let us hold to our church's doctrine and let us combine it with zeal to win others for Christ. For it is possible to bring forth good order and united effort to spread the gospel as an outreach of our church. Why is it that so many in the past have felt that they have had to go out on their own to the mission field, with very little support from any local church? Is it not because some of the pastors and missionary agency leaders of the past have thought that they had to proceed in a certain way in terms of their church's conception of missions. They all had to be teaching elders who were sent out; or they all had to be trained in seminary before they went. I, for one, having read quite a bit of missionary history have a hard time believing that this is what Christ is asking for. There is a great need for missionaries who are support people to the teachers and preachers who go into the mission field. What is the primary qualification? What is Christ looking for? What He is looking for is a love for Himself; such a great love for the gospel and to see sinners brought into His kingdom, that a person is willing to leave all and follow Him. He is the One who opens doors which no man can shut. And He is the One who gives fruit to the labors of ministers and people who labor along side them. Let us pray for wisdom in this regard, so that not only teaching elders go into the mission field, but also those who can help them in that good work who have other gifts that will contribute to the cause.

And this leads us 3rdly – to our looking at the statement of “the first being last, and the last being first”.

What does this mysterious statement mean? It seems apparent to me that it has a meaning in relation to both this world and the next. It means that those who have been thought to have been last in material things in this world; they have, in the eyes of most people, apparently lost out because they were poor in this world's goods, or they gave them all away for Christ's sake; or they were persecuted and had all their goods taken away from them because they took their stand for Christ; these shall be the first to be given a reward in the Day when He returns in judgment and sits upon “the throne of His glory.” Those Apostles of Christ, who left everything and followed Christ, who were persecuted heavily and had to endure numerous sufferings at the hands of the Jewish leaders; they seemed to be last in everything. Those who were seen as first then, in Israel, in terms of their office, their power, and authority to rule against them; these in the Day of Judgment will be seen as last and will suffer the

judgment of eternal fire against them. The Apostles who had been persecuted will become the true rulers over the true Israel; all the twelve tribes, and the New Testament Church whom they gave Christ's Words to. And every one of Christ's true people who has left material things for Christ, or who has had to leave close relatives so that they could serve Christ in accordance with His call, or so that they could obey the Lord in doing or keeping some particular commandment of His; they will find that they will receive a hundred fold reward for doing so. If they stick close to His true Church in this world, they shall find many more people to be their brothers, and sisters, and mothers and fathers. For Jesus says, "Who is My mother, or my brothers?" "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12: 48-50 and Mark 3: 33-35) If they are driven away and banished, if their goods are confiscated, and they die a violent death; still, they will have lost nothing of lasting value. They shall be first in God's sight to be ushered into eternal life and to be blessed abundantly, and rewarded abundantly according to their works. Those who have trusted in their riches, those riches will not help them to be first any farther than this fleeting life will take them. They shall be the tail and not the head in terms of the Lord's judgment upon them. I suppose that it is also true that some Christians who think that they will be first in terms of rewards in the next life will end up being last, in proportion as they lived for their own glory instead of Christ's. There will be degrees of reward in heaven, and there will be degrees of punishment in hell. All these rewards and punishments will be wisely proportioned out to each person according to what they have done for Christ, or done against Christ, or done for themselves, or done for the gospel. Only one life; too soon is past, only what's done for Christ will last. Which will it be for you; earthly riches now, or the true riches of the hundred fold kind; in this life and in the life to come?