



The Sermon

Mark 10:17-27

"True Riches"

TRANSCRIPT

We're going to be in Mark, Chapter 10. We're going to be in Mark, Chapter 10. We're going to look at verses 17-27. We're going to actually go a little further than that at the end but Mark, Chapter 10 and starting in verse 17. "As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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.' And he said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth up.' And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, 'One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' But at these words he was saddened and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property."

Verse 23, "And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!' The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again and said

to them, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! 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.' And they were even more astonished and said to him, 'Then who can be saved?' Looking at them, Jesus said, 'With people it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.'"

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we're grateful for this word that you have given us through your revelation. Lord, we would not know who you were apart from the special revelation that you've given us in these 66 books, penned through the authors that were moved by the power of the Holy Spirit. These are your words; these are your people; and this is your message. We ask that you would attend it with great power from the Holy Spirit. We pray that you would teach us this morning from these words that are as applicable today as they were when they were written. This is not a parable. This is not a figment of someone's imagination. This is an actual event that took place while you were on the Earth. So, Lord, we pray that you would teach us this text. Teach us these words that we might leave here changed. I pray that if there are any who do not know you that this hour you might open their eyes, perhaps, for the first time. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

Back in the early 1800s, there was a famous wrestler named Yusuf Ismail. He was known as the Terrible Turk. He won all over Europe. No one could beat him. He was a giant of a man weighing in at over 350 pounds. Once he finished beating everybody in Europe, he had to go across the ocean to try to find some more competition and win more money, which he did by going to America.

At that time, there was an American champion named Strangler Lewis, from whom we get the phrase stranglehold. Now, Strangler Lewis was much smaller. He was only about 200 pounds but he had a technique that never failed to work. He put people in a stranglehold around their neck and was able to win every match that he had. But as he got tangled with Yusuf the Turk, he realized very quickly that this giant of a man didn't have a neck. That became a problem. So, it wasn't long into the match that Lewis, after having failed applying the stranglehold, was quickly flipped, pinned, and lost the match.

The Turk immediately demanded what he came there for, the \$10,000.00 in prize money, but he wanted it in gold. Being an unsophisticated and suspicious man, he carried his money around his waist on a belt. He immediately, upon receiving the gold, put it into his belt and he took the next boat back to Europe. He boarded the SS Bourgoigne. Unfortunately, for the Turk, just off the coast of Nova Scotia a storm struck the ship. As he was trying to make his way into a lifeboat, he fell overboard.

You can imagine that with the \$10,000.00 in gold strapped around his waist, even though he was a strong and good swimmer, he sank like an anvil. No one ever saw him again. It's such a tragic story, such a sad story. Here was this man, who by the world's standards had been such a great success and yet the very thing that he wanted most was the very thing that caused his demise. Yusuf clung to his gold despite the need to be rescued and somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean it drowned him.

I googled the other day how many people die globally every hour. I was just curious as I was preparing this. Google says – and, of course, Google is never wrong – 6300 people, actually, 6316 people die every day or every hour rather around the globe. Think about that. By the time I finish my message, 6300 people in this world will die. I have to wonder how many of them perish clinging to their idols. They hold so tightly to something or some things that it ultimately destroys them, things that can't save them from death. Today we meet a man who is similar to Yusuf, a man who seemed like a huge success in the eyes of the world but, in the end, he was a man whose wealth destroyed him. And worse, he rejected the only offer of eternal life and true riches.

This passage this morning is a vivid reminder to everyone that salvation is only found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. I've entitled this "True Riches", Mark 10:17-27, because it gives us an idea of where we find true riches in this world. The text breaks very simply into two parts. First, in verses 17-22, we see the kingdom of man, verse 17-22 the kingdom of man. Second, in verses 23-27, we see the Kingdom of God. It's a wonderful picture of the difference between the kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God.

Now, let me set the context before we start. Mark is like an action film. His favorite word in the book of Mark is the word immediately. Things happen very quickly in the book of Mark. He doesn't dispense with any of the genealogy. He jumps right in. In Chapter 1, the key verse, really, for the whole book is in Chapter 1, verse 15, where Mark writes this. "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe

the Gospel." That's the key verse upon which the whole book rests. Mark presents Jesus as a suffering servant. That's the tone of the book. We see that in Chapter 10:45. Jesus is the suffering servant, the one who would come to die for his people and be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Mark is more focused on Christ's deeds than on his words.

But the more immediate context for what we're looking at this morning is really right before the text we see, Mark 10:13-16. Of course, if you're reading your Bible and you don't understand a verse, always read before and after. If we look at the verses that immediately precede the text this morning, we see that Jesus drives home this point. The Kingdom of God must be received as a little child. He says that two different times in those few verses because he wants to emphasize something about the Kingdom of God and little children.

We have to stop and ask ourselves. Why does he say that? What does he mean by using children as an example? Those of us who are parents understand that children are utterly dependent. They can't feed themselves when they're born. They can't clothe themselves. They can't talk. They're utterly dependent. They're naïve. They're poor. They have no money. They have nothing of this world's goods. They are trusting. They're weak. They're prone to wander. Typically, they're very humble. They're kind. They're gentle. They're vulnerable.

This is what Jesus says is what typifies the Christian. We are to be children. So, in contrast, in this section of scripture we look at this

morning, we find in the verses that follow a man who's very different than what Jesus describes as childlike faith. This is a man who is quite different. He has no interest in the Kingdom of God because he's so caught up in the kingdom of man. Yet, he's blinded and held captive by his wealth, by the kingdom of man.

Let's look at verse 17. We look at the beginning of the kingdom of man, verse 17, the kingdom of man. He, meaning Jesus, was setting out on a journey. A man ran up to him and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The first thing we need to do is understand who this man is. This is written in three of the four gospels. Anytime you have that much ink about this same story, you know that it's important.

The man, with the help of Matthew and Luke, becomes very clear. We see five things about this man that are important to know. First, this man was very rich. In fact, we all know this text probably from youth, those of us who have been taught the Bible as kids, as the rich, young ruler. We know he was rich because in Luke 18:23, he says he was extremely rich. Matthew tells us, in his account, that he owned much property. Wealth was considered a blessing in Jewish society. Back in I Chronicles, it says both riches and honor come from thee. That was an Old Testament concept that the Jews held dear.

If we're honest with ourselves, we're fascinated by wealth, right? Who doesn't love to peruse the list of the Forbes most-wealthy people? We love driving through neighborhoods where the houses are huge. We just

wonder. Who lives in these? So, we all have this fascination I think if we're honest with ourselves about being wealthy. Hollywood, that's what makes them so famous is their wealth.

The second thing we see about this man is that he was young. Matthew 19 tells us that he was a young man. Youth tends to bring around the idea of entitlement, self-confidence, being impetuous. The old typically look down upon the youth because of their ignorance and yet the youth look down upon the old because they lack the vigor. So, we see a lot of shortcomings in someone being young. We see it in this man, in particular.

Number three, we see that he's a ruler. We see that he's a ruler. Luke 18 tells us that he was a ruler, probably an elected official in the synagogue which was an incredible achievement for a man of this age. Rarely did that ever happen. He was a man who had great power. He was a leader. He was, no doubt, very religious or he wouldn't have been able to get to this level as ruler. He was scrupulous in his obedience of the law. We're going to see that here in a minute. He's so scrupulous he thinks he's completely perfect by the law of standards. So, he had power and success. We have a lot of the world's Trinity here, do we not, in the kingdom of man? We have power. We have wealth. We have youth. These are what our society – even today in 2018 – this is what we look to. This is the world's Trinity. This is the kingdom of man.

Number four, he's the perfect seeker. Paul says in Romans no one seeks but if there was such a thing as a seeker this man would be the perfect

seeker. Notice that he runs up to him. This was something that Jewish men didn't do. They didn't dignify themselves by or they weren't indignant by running to somebody. But it shows he was eager. He had, as Paul says, a zeal for God but it wasn't according to knowledge. Notice he's respectful. He kneels before the Lord. He appears humble and respectful before Christ. As I was studying this, I had to wonder how many people in hell right now were respectful and humble to the Lord. They didn't believe in him as Savior but boy they gave him respect. "They honored him with their lips", as Jesus says in Matthew 7.

This is a guy – let's face it – that you'd want your daughter to marry. He was rich. He was young. He was successful. He was influential. He was earnest. He was sincere. He was religious. He was devoted. I mean, this is let's have a barbeque. This is the guy that you want to bring home to your parents.

Fifth, and finally, notice his confession. Notice his confession. He says, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The idea in the original language is literally good master, good master. Notice that he's focused on merit. This man is focused on merit. Look at his words carefully. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Matthew renders it this way. What good thing shall I do to acquire eternal life? We learn a lot about this man by this question, don't we?

It's so funny. When you talk to people about the Lord, you can tell a lot about what they think of the Bible and what they think of the Lord by what they say. We see that here with this man. He has his resume in his hand,

doesn't he? How does one get to Heaven? Men typically pull out their resume. They say here are the things that I've done. I'm not as bad as some people. Sure, I'm not perfect. That's what this man does. He brings his resume to the Lord Jesus. This is, again, the kingdom of man.

This world is based entirely upon merit. The world that we live in is all merit based. We get a paycheck at work. We get grades. We're measured on the athletic field. Most people feel like they're good. They have to go to the jail to find somebody who's not good. Notice the personal pronoun that the man uses, I. He focuses on self. This is the epitome of the kingdom of man, seeking to do enough good works to get into Heaven. But the problem is how many good works are enough? That's what you want to ask a Catholic. How many good works does it take to earn Heaven?

False religions all boil down to one thing. Do this and you can earn Heaven. That's Satan's greatest lie. He's a master counterfeiter. Just do enough good and God must let you into Heaven. This question reveals an internal lack of peace. He wouldn't ask this question if he really felt that he'd had eternal life. So, it belies a big missing piece in his life. He says what'll I do? With all of his wealth, and youth, and vigor, and power, he still realizes deep down that he lacks something. He isn't sure he has earned eternal life.

He's really not as unique as we first thought. He's like most unconverted men. When they lay in their beds at night and just before falling asleep they think about the great questions of the world that they can't answer by themselves. Why am I here? Why did God make me? What is this all

about? Things that special revelation alone can answer, things in the scriptures can answer. He thinks that he can work his way to Heaven. He has this tremendous need that has not been filled.

Verse 18, Jesus says to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." Notice Jesus doesn't answer the way we would expect him to. He doesn't answer the way I would answer. We would expect him to say you can't do anything good. You're not able to do anything good but he doesn't say that. I want you to pay attention to how Jesus deals with this young man because it's totally counter, I should say very counter, to the way that most do evangelism today. Jesus is going to give this man two very important tests so that he can understand who he is. It's very instructive I think for each of us here this morning.

The first test he's going to give him is the knowledge of God. This man has a complete lack of understanding of who God is. He's standing before Jesus Christ, God himself, and he doesn't have a clue. So, Jesus is going to give him the test of the knowledge of God. Notice he says, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone." Jesus wants to get his focus off of himself. Take the mirror out of his hand, put it down, and have him begin to focus upon the one who he stands in front of. The Greek word good here is agathos, which literally means good to the core, virtuous, inherent goodness. That's the idea. It's goodness upon goodness.

Does this suggest here that our Lord is confessing that he's not good? Of course, it doesn't. What does the Lord mean by saying this? Jesus' point

is simply this. Don't use the adjective good which can only be ascribed to God. Only God is good. Good is an absolute term. Good is not relative. We use the word in a relative sense all the time. He's good. I'm good. You're good. Only God is truly good. Romans 7:12, "The law is holy and the commandment is holy, just, and good." The law of God gives us a picture of who God is, that he is absolute goodness.

Jesus confronts the man with the reality of who he really is, God incarnate. The man has no clue that he's standing in front of Jesus Christ, the God man. This knowledge is the very essence of eternal life. The Jews understood that eternal life was what this man was asking because of the way he asked it. How can I gain salvation? The words eternal life and salvation were ipso facto for the Jew. They were one and the same.

In John 17:3, Jesus says this, "And this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." So, I find it fascinating that Jesus doesn't run straight to the gospel. He doesn't run straight to the gospel with the man. He takes him to the law. He takes him to the law. As we've heard Dr. Lawson say before, you must present the bad news or there's no reason to give good news. That's what the Lord does here.

Look at verse 19. Jesus says, "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." Now he's moving to test number two, the knowledge of self. First, he wanted him to understand who God was. Now he wants him to understand who he is, the man

himself. He says, "You know the commandments." Notice the refrain. Do not, do not, do not, do not. That's the law.

I remember Tommy Nelson talking about, when I was first converted, one of his messages. The law – he gave a little vignette about the law. It goes like this. Do this or that, the law commands but gives me neither feet nor hands. A different law the gospel brings. It bids me fly and it gives me wings. I never forgot that. So, he gives him the knowledge of self.

We have to stop here and say wait a minute. If Jesus had taken an evangelism explosion course, he wouldn't have done this. Shouldn't he say at this point, if you want eternal life then believe in me and you'll be saved? Or, how about we go into a dark room? Would you rather be in this dark room or would you rather be in this light room? Jesus is the light of the world. Or, what about pray this prayer with me? Or, I love you and have a wonderful plan for your life. Jesus doesn't say any of that. He gives him the law.

The Ten Commandments are in two parts. The first four deal with the love of God and the final six deal with the love of our neighbor. The question we have to ask ourselves is why does the Lord skip the first four of the Decalogue? The answer is because he wants to draw this man's attention to something the man couldn't see, something the man couldn't measure. It's an attempt to show him that he cannot and that he does not keep the law.

Just go through part of the law. Honor your father and your mother. Have you ever dishonored your father or mother? Of course you have. Love your neighbor as yourself. Have you done that always? Of course not. Have you ever stolen? Have you ever cheated? Have you ever lied? Of course. This man couldn't see any of that. He hasn't kept the law. He can't keep the law. So, the Lord puts this law in front of him as a mirror to show him God's perfect standard. Son, you fall short. It shows that he's a law breaker in thought, word, and deed.

The law says to you and me every day, you can't, you can't, you can't. If you ask somebody who's unconverted, why did God give the Ten Commandments? Ninety percent of the time it's been my experience they would say that God might have us to live by them. My response to them is no. It is God's perfect standard. That's true. But it is given that we might understand how far short we fall, that we might run to the perfect ten, the one who did keep the law perfectly.

Romans 10:4, "Christ is the end of the law for those who believe." That's why he was born of a woman, born under the law, Paul says in Galatians 4. He had to be born under the law to obey the law in our place. That's why he lived 33 years and didn't come and die as a baby. He had to fulfill the law perfectly. Galatians 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.'" If you're going to obey the law, you better be perfect.

The problem is not only are you imperfect but your father Adam, your only other representative, is imperfect because he broke the law in your place. So, the second Adam, Christ, is the only hope you have, your representative in righteousness. The man didn't grasp the gravity of his sin. How many men do outside of the work of the Holy Spirit? He had offended a Holy God. He was dead and he didn't understand it.

As I was studying this week, I came across these few words that I thought I'd read that speaks to this very issue with this young man. It is said that a flippant young man remarked to a preacher in a mocking fashion. Does that sound familiar? You say that unsaved people carry a great weight of sin. Frankly, I feel nothing. How heavy is sin, ten pounds, fifty pounds, eighty pounds, a hundred pounds? The preacher thought for a moment and he replied, "If you laid a 400 pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?" The young man was quick to reply and said, "Of course not, it's dead." Driving home his point, the preacher said to him, "The person who doesn't know Christ is equally dead. And though the load is great, he feels none of it."

The Christian, unlike the average non-Christian, is not indifferent to the weight of sin. He is actually hypersensitive to it. Having come to Jesus Christ, his senses are awakened to the reality of his sin. His sensitivity to sin intensifies as he matures spiritually. Such sensitivity prompted a saint as great as Chrysostom, the fourth century church father, to say he feared nothing but sin.

The good news of the gospel is that Christ has obeyed the law in the place of sinners. John Calvin says this at the beginning of his institutes, "Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say true and sound wisdom, consists in two parts, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves. The knowledge of self is not only that which arouses us to seek God but it leads us by the hand to find him." So, Jesus gives him the knowledge of God and the knowledge of himself.

Look at verse 20. He says to him, "Teacher, I have kept all of these things from my youth up." This is truly a remarkable statement. This goes into the annals of biblical history as being up there in the top three. Number one to me is when Aaron tells Moses I threw in this gold and this calf came out. I mean, that's in the top three. You have to admit. This I would put in the top three.

Jesus is standing before him. God incarnate gives him the understanding of who God is, gives him the understanding of who he is, the man himself, and yet the man has the audacity to say I've kept the law. This is the boastful pride of life that John talks about in his epistle: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. He says, "Teacher, I have kept all of these." He doesn't even stumble in one.

It's like the needle goes off the record. Those of you who are under 30 have no idea what I'm talking about. Here is the example of the man with perfect church attendance. He has an unbelievable grasp of the scriptures. He knows the Word of God backward and forward but it's never

penetrated his heart. The longest distance in the world sometimes is between the mind and the heart. So, here it is with this man.

He answers very quickly much like this young man did to the preacher. He's smug. He's sure. He's positive that he's right. Those laws, I've kept all them. Do you have any more? Do you have 10, or do you have 11? Do you have 20? I've probably kept them too. Matthew 19, in fact, renders it what am I still lacking? Not only have I kept them, please tell me, am I lacking anything? The idea there is what am I in need of? I am in need of nothing.

Many of you remember Lance Armstrong winning his seven Tour de France titles all the while blatantly cheating and, granted, in a sport of cheating. I'll never forget that even after he was caught and he was dead to rights, he stood there in the courtroom, in front of USADA's chief man, Travis Tygart, who was getting ready to strip him of his title, strip him of his money, strip him of his reputation, Lance Armstrong says to the court and to Travis, "I hold the keys to my own redemption." How'd that work out for him?

The man that stands before the Lord is, in a sense, doing the same thing. So, why did he come? It begs the question. If he didn't need anything, why does he come? Because he has a nagging conscience and that's the thing that man can never get away from. It doesn't matter how wealthy a man is. It doesn't matter how successful a man is. It doesn't matter how scrupulous the man is in his religion. There is a nagging, gnawing conscience.

As John MacArthur says, "The conscience is the spiritual equivalent of physical pain." When you pull into a handicap stall and you know you shouldn't, your conscience tells you. You never sin against your conscience, ever. Because the more you do, you can sear it as with a hot iron. So, this man has a nagging, gnawing conscience. Paul says it this way in Romans 2:15, "In that," this is the pagan, "they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."

I'll never forget. Tommy Nelson gave one of the greatest examples of this that I've heard to this day talking about this verse. He said, "Even the primate in the jungles of Africa, who is hunting heads for a living, knows innately that they do not want their head cut off." Where does the knowledge of that right and wrong come from? It's innate. It's inside as the image bearers of God. This man is lacking something. He can't put his finger on it.

You contrast this with Paul's words. Paul says the law brought him to the end of himself, which is what the law is to do. The law was made for an insubordinate person, a lawless person. Sin is lawlessness. It taught Paul how far short he fell. Remember, in Philippians 3, he gives us a laundry list of all the things that he did as a Pharisee, as a scrupulous Jew. He says that's all cow manure because it kept him from Christ. In Romans 7, he says it this way, in verses 9-11, "I once was alive, apart from the law. But when the law came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment

which I thought was to bring life, I found brought death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment deceived me and it killed me."

This is why Paul says elsewhere the letter kills. We think we're alive. We think we're obedient. We think we're good and then the law comes and says you didn't. You didn't. You didn't. You broke. You broke. You broke. We realize wow. The thing I thought was to bring me life – my goodness – the scrupulousness of my obedience is actually the very thing that killed me. I'm now dead. That's when you have a fighting chance. That's when you understand that you need a savior.

Look at verse 21. "Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, 'One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven. And come follow me.'" This is astounding. This is one of those things where we read the scriptures – I don't know about you – I read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and I just think to myself over and over again. I am so unlike Christ. I don't love my neighbor as I should. I don't love God as I should.

And yet, here, of all the things that this man could say, this is the height of arrogance. That he would stand before God himself and, basically, say I've kept this. The man who's going to die for the sins of his people because they broke the law and he's going to stand before Christ and say I kept the law. In a sense, you came for no reason because I'm perfect. And yet, Jesus doesn't fly off the handle. He doesn't get upset with the man. It says that he feels a love for him. Jesus loved this young man despite his arrogance, despite his lostness, despite his blindness.

Jesus loves sinners. Mark it. Jesus loves this rebellious Christ rejecting sinner. Do you know what he does? He proves that only God is good. Only God is capable of this kind of love. The two greatest commandments Jesus said were to love your God and to love your neighbor. God, above all things, is love. John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Now, this is an important note and I want you to mark this. Loving this man did not preclude him from giving him the truth. Do you see that? We have churches filled today with God is love. God is love. God is love. And he's nothing more than a moral Santa Claus in Heaven. But love, the love of God should not be divorced from the truth. That's what this man is going to get. That's what this man has gotten from the Lord Jesus Christ, truth. The truth is that man is a sinner. The truth is that Jesus Christ had to come as a substitute for sinners. Jesus says to this man, "One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and come follow me." Literally, the understanding in the original language is sell the things at your disposal. Sell the things that you are in control of.

Obviously, there was more than one thing the man lacked. But Jesus, as the master teacher, puts his finger on the very thing that men struggle with. With Zacchaeus, he put his finger on the fact that he had defrauded and Zacchaeus paid back four fold. With the woman at the well, he puts his finger on her adultery. And here with this man, he puts his finger on this man's covetousness, his idol, his money. He says that's your

stumbling block. John MacArthur says this. He wouldn't get saved by draining his bank account but only by forsaking his idol.

I want you to note that the Mosaic Law doesn't have one single command regarding giving. There's not one thing in the Mosaic Law that talks about giving. But Jesus exposes him to the reality that he had broken the very first commandment. The man didn't even get out of the batter's box on the first Ten Commandments. Because the first one, you shall have no other Gods before me and that's exactly what the man's greatest problem was. His God was his money, his treasure, his riches, his wealth. He had something between himself and the Lord God. His possessions were possessing him. He wanted salvation in addition to, not in place of.

I see that so much today in Dallas, Texas. We live in a modern day Corinth. So many people think, oh wow, wealth, and riches, and power, and Christ too. It's almost like The Price is Right. Tell them what else they get, Johnny. Open door number two. Of course you get door number one. Christ is not a bolt on. Christ is not a camper that we just attach to a car. You can't have Christ in addition to. Heavenly math works this way. Jesus Christ plus anything equals zero. I'm not brilliant but I remember in math, anything times zero is zero. Anything that adds to Christ is nothing.

Christ demands all of us. Our lives must be open and laid bare before him. They are anyway. The author to the Hebrew makes that very clear. We live Coram Deo, before the face of God, hiding from God. Hiding something from God is silly. He knows it all. He knit us in the womb. He knows our words before they're on our tongue. There are to be no idols,

no caveats. There are no loopholes. Psalm 73, Asaph, says in verse 25, "Whom have I in Heaven but you? And besides you I desire nothing on Earth."

God was satisfied in the perfect sacrifice of his Son. That's why Jesus says it is finished, nothing more for man to do. There's nothing that man could do. That was the declaration from the cross. The question is do you believe that? Is Jesus Christ a bolt on? Is he an addition to everything else that you bring to the table? Or is he the all in all? Is he truly the alpha and the omega of your salvation? Is the blood of Christ and his atoning sacrifice your only hope and confidence? It wasn't for this man.

Look at verse 22. "But at these words he was saddened. And he went away grieving for he was one who owned much property." In modern parlottes, we'd say he got on his G6 and he flew us across the vineyards, and then he flew us over his hotels, and then he flew us over this, and he flew us over that, and he tilted the plane so we could see it all. That's impressive to the men of the world. There's nothing wrong with owning property. There's nothing wrong with being wealthy. It's whether wealth possesses you or you possess wealth. That's the issue.

One of the greatest responsibilities a man can have is possessing wealth in the Kingdom of God and doing what's good with it, being generous with it. But at these words the man went away. What words? What words is he referring to, these words? The words that Jesus just said, sell all you possess and come follow me. Wow. That was a little bit of a boomerang, wasn't it? He didn't expect Jesus to say that. Everything was going well

until Jesus said, why don't you stroke a check for all that you have and then come follow me? Notice there's no response. This is the saddest part of the whole text. There's no response from the man. He just simply walks away. The conversation is over. Jesus dumbfounds the man.

Unlike the woman at the well who realizes that this man is more than a prophet. This man is the Messiah. Yes, you're right. I've had five husbands. Yes, I'm an adulterer. She runs into the city and becomes an evangelist. Not this man. He had a choice between Jesus Christ and his wealth and he chose his wealth. This is Yusuf the Turk. He wouldn't give up his gold bullion in his belt and he was fixing to go overboard. As far as we know, he did. We have no idea if this man ever came to faith. The conversation ended.

Jesus has no interest in temporary converts. This man was respectful of the Lord. He ran to the Lord. He knelt before the Lord. But he ends up leaving with nothing. Jesus says in Luke 9:62, "No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." This man found the right person. He asked the right question. He got the right answer. And he made the wrong decision. For he was one who owned much property and it's repeated just for emphasis. The reason he left was because he was wealthy.

Here's the proof. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says in Matthew 6:24, "You cannot serve God and money." It's like having one foot on the ground and one foot on the escalator. Something's going to give. You've got to make a decision. That goes for any idol. Perhaps some of you here

this morning say I'm not rich. You could be poor and still love money. Or maybe another idol that you have is keeping you from the Lord. Some idol that is more important to you than the Lord. I'll promise you that you'll either walk away from the Lord like this man did or the Lord will pry that idol out of your hand. It will be painful.

Lane says in his commentary, "The peculiar danger confronting the rich lies in the false sense of security which wealth creates in a temptation to trust in material resources. When what is demanded by the law and the gospel is a wholehearted trust upon God." I want you to mark this. Jesus had the perfect seeker and he goes away in despair and sadness. I think, again, it's instructive for our evangelism techniques today. This man walked away from the Lord. The Lord doesn't cajole him. The Lord doesn't grab his ankle and drag him back. He simply lets the word of God go forth. The Spirit of God blows where it wishes. You hear the sound of it but you can't tell where it comes from. He simply lets the Word of God go forth and the man walks away. We need to stop being so man-centered when it comes to evangelists.

I heard about a trip to Cuba the other day. There's nothing wrong with going to Cuba. This idea that we had 78 people pray a prayer and come to the Lord. It's not a biblical concept. You may have had 78 people pray a prayer. But did 78 people become Disciples of Christ? I doubt it. So, why can't we simply give the gospel, give the Word of God and let the Holy Spirit do his job. God calls men. God calls women. He can give new birth. We're simply the agents. Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

John 6:44, Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." Tommy Nelson does a great interpretation of this verse. He says this. Do you know what that verse means? It's the same verse in 65, "No one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him. And I'll raise him up the last day." It says exactly what it says. No one can come unless I draw him. Where the Holy Spirit blows, it cuts through all the ties of this world.

I have a dear friend who said one time in a message, and I wrote this in my Bible, never, ever have anything between you and Christ. If it's an idol, put it on the altar that Abraham built for his most precious Isaac and say by faith, "Lord, all that I have is yours, even this promised Son." Now, that's the kingdom of man.

I want you to see this second part here, the Kingdom of God, verse 23, the Kingdom of God. Notice the difference here. It's all the difference in the world, verse 23, "Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God.'" How hard it will be. Earthly riches keep us from true riches. That's what happened with this man.

We build this wall around us with wealth, some men do. And they think that as Psalm 49 says their names are on the buildings and their wealth is going to be their insulation. It's going to be their castle. They think that somehow that's going to protect them. But then the end comes and there's no U-Haul in a hearse. So, it keeps some men from the true riches.

This man – notice three things – he failed to acknowledge his sin and idolatry. Number two, he failed to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Number three, he was unwilling to part with his money and his possessions. Again, it's not having riches. It's trusting in those riches. He calls him teacher but he doesn't call him Lord. That's what Jesus own town used to do. Aren't you Mary's son? Aren't you the carpenter? Aren't you this? Aren't you Joseph's boy? No. I'm the Messiah. He could do no miracles there. He was astounded at their unbelief. This is the Kingdom of God. I want you to notice that Jesus uses this repetition, Kingdom of God, three times in verses 23-27, Kingdom of God, Kingdom of God, Kingdom of God. You, son, live in the kingdom of man.

Let me tell you about the Kingdom of God. Notice two times he says how hard it will be, verse 23 and verse 24, how hard it will be, how hard it will be. Verse 24, "The disciples were amazed at his words but Jesus answered again and said to them, 'Children' – notice the phrase children, harken back to earlier in this section, 'how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God.'" Why were the disciples so amazed? The reason they were so amazed is because if you had to boot up a human being and you had to build the Frankenstein prototype of the perfect seeker, this guy would have been it.

This is Hollywood central casting. He was rich. He was young. He was a ruler. He was wise. He was religious. The disciples were just blown away. If this guy can't get into Heaven, Lord, who can? Are you serious? This guy should be an elder. But Jesus answers, "Children, how hard it is to

enter the Kingdom of God." The repetition is used to cause sober reflection. He's saying this is not the way to get to Heaven. The contrast with children is to get back to what Jesus had just said earlier, "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." The question is why? Why? Because children simply trust.

Why do we teach our children don't get into the car with strangers? Why do we teach them don't take candy from a stranger? Because children have no discernment, they simply trust. They simply follow. So, how hard is it for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God? The next verse tells us, verse 25, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." This was a colloquialism back in the day. In ancient Persia, they used to say how hard it is for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle. That was the biggest animal that the Palestinians had. I'm sorry, in Persia. In Palestine, the largest animal was a camel. So, Jesus takes that old time colloquialism and he says how hard it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

I want you to note then who can be saved? Who can be saved? Verse 27, "Jesus looks at them and says, 'With man it is impossible but not with God. All things are possible with God.'" Salvation is utterly impossible with man. First, he says in verses 23 and 24, it's hard and now in verse 27, he says no, it's not just hard, it's impossible. It's impossible. This rich man couldn't enter the narrow gate any more than a camel could fit through the eye of a needle. God must act. Man cannot act.

This man couldn't come through the narrow gate because he had all of his stuff. He had all of his money. Jesus talks about the narrow gate. The picture is a turnstile. You can't come through a turnstile with a bag of money, with anything. You come through alone. He made the foolish decision choosing the kingdom of man rather than the Kingdom of God. But Jesus says with God all things are possible. God makes the impossible possible. How can you get a sinner into a Holy Heaven? God did it. God does it through the perfect sacrifice of his Son. He removes the stain of sin. He makes us holy in the eyes of God the Father through the blood of his Son Jesus Christ.

Recall what he said to the rich young ruler back in verse 21. Remember what he said back in verse 21? Sell all that you possess and we can skim over the rest. Sell all that you possess and what? Come follow me. What does it mean when Jesus says come follow me? I think we get a great picture of it in the verses that follow our lesson. Look at verses 28-31. We see this in the words of Peter.

Mark 10:28-31 Peter says this, "Behold, we've left everything to follow you." Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for my sake and for the gospel sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." That's what Jesus is talking about.

It's interesting. John Piper calls this section of scripture true Christian hedonism. Hedonism is a bad term most of the time. We think about getting all the world's goods. He who dies with the most toys wins. Piper calls this Christian hedonism. Whatever you give up, Christ will give a hundred fold.

Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China for 50 years, he faced trials. He faced persecutions. He faced loss, little success. And yet, at the end of his life, they asked him, how could you have made such a great sacrifice for the Lord? He said sacrifice? I made no sacrifice. Jesus says, "With persecutions both now and the age to come eternal life." Hudson Taylor understood that any sacrifice he had made, which he didn't even consider a sacrifice, was made up a hundred fold by the Lord.

So, the question this morning is do you want treasure in Heaven? Verse 21, treasure in Heaven is what this man was offered. Do you want true riches? The riches only Jesus Christ our Lord can provide. Then declare spiritual bankruptcy. Declare spiritual bankruptcy. Lay down your pride, your education, your possessions, your sin, your idols, all the worldly possessions that are keeping you from Jesus Christ and confess him as Savior and Lord. Jesus promises that whatever you may think you're giving up he will multiply one hundred fold. Notice it's in the present tense, not just now but forever.

Let me close with a poem. This rich young man can warn us all to trust in wealth will cause our fall. Tis not in silver or gold to trust for currency in this world will rust. True riches come through Christ alone who died that

he might bring us home. Lay down your idols. Give up your pride. And trust in Christ for sinners died.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we're grateful for these words. It's a sober reminder that anything that comes between us and Christ keeps us from Christ. Father, I pray that if there are any here today who have something that comes between you and the Lord Jesus Christ that you would make application of that in their heart and you would smash it. That they would lay it on the altar and they would trust completely in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For those of us who do know you because of a sovereign work that you performed in our heart I pray that we would search our hearts to root out any idols that keep us from the Lord Jesus Christ. That we would love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, and strength and that we would love our neighbor as ourselves.

Thank you that the commandments are no longer burdensome for the believer and that you've given us the ability to obey through the power of your Spirit. May we put to death the deeds of the flesh and by your Spirit be renewed day by day. Lord, bless us and keep us.

We thank you for the veterans that we remember tomorrow and this weekend. I love the phrase: all gave some and some gave all. May you bless their families and bless us with a wonderful remembrance for the men and women who died to give us the freedom to give the gospel in a country without threat of our lives. We pray in Christ name. Amen.