

Mark Chapter 10B

There are times when I mindlessly walk into Walmart through the Exit Door. I find myself feeling like a Salmon swimming against the current. Thinking what's wrong with these people. In my blindness I neglect the clear markings on the door that are obvious for those who have eyes to see.

TODAY we are going to contemplate how to enter the Kingdom of God and we are going to look at the directions that the Lord Jesus provides through his words.

Many years ago I hired a young man to work in the warehouse. (He kept coming back) He was a hard worker who was brought up in a very strict J.W. home. Often he lamented the harsh legalistic regulations that his parents placed upon him. HE was never able to celebrate his birthday, Christmas, And instead of playing sports, which he loved, he was forced to go over and over the arguments of a faith that he despised.

- HE kept coming into my office after work wanting to hear more about the Lord Jesus. But when I spoke of being justified by grace through faith in Christ He said it was too good to be true. The false religion of works righteousness was a stronghold in his life.
- And then one day when he came into my office and confided in me that his friends purchased a prostitute for his 21 birthday (*until then he was a virgin*)
- He later found out that he had contracted Aids from that one sexual encounter.
- All of his self-righteousness, all of the false religion seemed to be helpless when he realized that DEATH was at work within him.
- And still, even in the face of death he refused the free offer of life through faith in Jesus.

This morning we follow the Lord Jesus into TWO separate encounters, in the region of Perea, two situations that turn our eyes to the signs on the entrance door to the Kingdom.

- The Question for today is: HOW does one enter the Kingdom of God?

Here are the points to look for as we continue to work our way through Mark Chapter 10:

1. Those who would enter the Kingdom are literally Carried through the door
2. Running to the door, doesn't necessarily open it.
3. Failing to enter the door, (*We find*) the most righteous man to ever walk away.

1 Carried to the Door

Mark 10:13 **And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.**

It would seem that the Lord Jesus and his disciples were still in the house in that region of Perea where the Pharisees attempted to "Test" him.

After instructing the 12 it appears that a crowd gathered (maybe the same people he taught earlier) now they were bringing their children to Jesus in hopes that He might touch them.

- This was a common practice when a notable Rabbi came into town parents brought their children out for him to pray a prayer of blessing.

- Understand, this was not the recognition of Christ's divinity or his role as the Messiah. It was simply a parent's desire for God's blessing on their children from someone who seemed to have a special connection to God. (*All parents can relate*)

Matthew 19:13 Then **children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray.**

- The wording used by Mark tells us that parents were continually bringing their children to the Lord Jesus. (obviously this would be taking up a good deal of time)
- It appears that the disciples see this as an intrusion, an inconvenience so they take it upon themselves to rebuke the parents.
- Question: Are they communicating the priorities of God OR *the priorities of this world?* What value does God place on children? And what value does the world place on them?

(Daniel Akin commentary) Writes of the value that the Roman Empire placed on children. "IN Jesus' time Romans had a trash heap beside many homes where people could leave unwanted children. If other people wanted the children, they would pick them up. Sometimes kids were raised to be prostitutes, gladiators or slaves." (*How incredibly sad*)

- We can look at Herod, who slaughtered hundreds of children in a feeble attempt to destroy Jesus, or the Roman trash heaps or the abortion clinics of today; our world is not a very welcoming place for children. BUT Jesus received them joyfully.
- We find here in Mark 10:13 that the disciples misrepresented the Lord and he responded with a rebuke of his own:

Mark 10: 14 **But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."**

- Not only is Jesus correcting his disciples, he was also giving them valuable insight into the Kingdom.
- Jesus uses the children as an illustration, they represent all those who actually enter the Kingdom of God. **"To Such (LIKE these children) belongs the kingdom of God. Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.**
- Jesus uses this comparison for the sake of clarity. Help us understand who can enter...

Often times when this portion of scripture is taught the focus is on the innocence, purity and humility of little children. The qualities of the little children are often followed by an exhortation to emulate their humility and innocence.

- While I believe that ALL of the Saints of God should strive to live childlike, humble, pure lives.
- The context here in Mark 10 is NOT MERELY describing the character qualities of those who inhabit the Kingdom.
- It is describing the WAY in which one would ENTER the Kingdom.

What is Jesus saying about HOW someone can enter the Kingdom of God?

1. FIRST take note that these children are being brought to the Lord Jesus by someone else. **"they were bringing children to him"**

The word that Mark uses for “Little Children” is a diminutive (PAIDIA) meaning very young child Luke 18:15 says “Babies”

- These babies are being carried to the Lord because they are UNABLE to bring themselves.
- With this in mind it is more likely that Jesus is commenting on the helplessness of the babies rather than their innocence.

John 6: 44 **No one can** (no one has the ability to) **come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.**

- Those who would enter the Kingdom of God must be brought or carried into it by the Father.
- Apart from the divine initiative no one would enter the kingdom. I believe that is what Paul is expressing in : (Romans 3)

Romans 3: 10 **as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”**

2. We often think of little children as being innocent and in certain ways they are. BUT the Bible tells us that ALL of us are actually born in a fallen or sinful state.

Psalm 51: 5 **Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.**

- We come to the Kingdom as soiled children, in need of a cleansing, being carried by the Father into the kingdom.

James Edwards in his commentary on Mark 10:15 says:

“We are not innocent and eager, instead we are slow, disbelieving and cowardly. In this story children are not blessed for their virtues but for what they lack; they come only as they are, small and powerless without sophistication, as the overlooked and dispossessed of society.”

“To receive the Kingdom of God as a child is to receive it as one who has no credits, no clout, no claims. A little child has absolutely nothing to bring and whatever a child receives, he or she receives by grace on the basis of sheer neediness rather than by any merit inherent in him.”

These children serve as an example for all who would enter into the Kingdom of God. They come, not by their own strength but they are gracefully carried by the Father, possessing no righteousness, no merits that would open the door for them but by grace alone.

- THAT brings us to the rich young ruler:

2 Running to the Door

The rich man in the present story, with all of his possessions and social status, serves as a striking contrast to the simple child spoken of in the previous story.

All of the rich young man’s assets prove to be a greater liability to entering the Kingdom than do the deficits and neediness of the little children in the previous story.

The children actually embody the essence of the kingdom, whereas the rich man with all of his piety and lawful observances represents the prideful rebellion of those who love the world.

Speaking from a strictly human viewpoint, infants might be considered a liability, BUT a rich young ruler; well he would be a GREAT ASSET to the Kingdom...

- Think of the influence the church could have with a community leader in the congregation.

- Think of how affluent the church could be if this rich young man would tithe!
- Let's look at the text:

Mark 10:17 **And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

- At first appearance this young man shows great promise.
 - He displays a great sense of urgency when he RUNS to the Lord. In this culture wealthy, influential people didn't run.
 - When he arrives at the Lord he falls on his knees in front of him.
 - This man is every evangelists dream. He actually ASKS Jesus **"what must I do to inherit eternal life?"**
- TODAY, many Christians would reply, Pray this prayer with me, Ask me into your heart, Some might take him down the Roman road. BUT Jesus asks a strange question.

18 **And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.**

- The first thing that Jesus does is point the man to the perfect goodness of God. **"No one is good except God alone."**
- Goodness is an essential characteristic of God. An attribute of his holy nature.
 - The first step toward the Kingdom of God occurs when God reveals His goodness, his loving-kindness to lost and sinful men through the Gospel.

One of two things are going on here, either the man has a skewed image of what is truly good or the Father has revealed himself to the man through Jesus' teaching and he sees that Jesus is truly good.

- Further conversation will establish that the former is true of the man. The man has a skewed image of what is good.
- WE have the same RELATIVE idea of goodness: my DOG is Good, Campbell's soup is M, M, Good, a piece of cake is good, (some) Brussels sprouts are good?
- In Reality ONLY God is truly good, Goodness is an attribute, His nature, His essence.

Now, like a skillful surgeon Jesus uses the Law of God to cut to the heart of the man: Mt.19:17b **"If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?"**

Mark 10:19, **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.'**

- The LAW is actually a revelation of the holy heart of God. (tablets inside the Ark) Every line describes his purity and so every line uncovers OUR impurity.

BUT this man, who has a skewed image of true goodness, responds:

20 **"Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth."**

- Matthew includes one more phrase spoken by the man, "What do I still lack?"

In spite of all of his legalistic righteousness the man still senses that something is missing.

- He was seeking to be justified by the works of the Law. Obviously he was a devoutly religious man. But his religion was unable to bring him into the Kingdom.
- He mistakenly thought that one more act of obedience, one more display of righteousness would put him over the top and grant him entrance into the Kingdom.

BUT the New Testament teaches us that the Law was given by God NOT as a means of justification (Make one right w/ God) but as a tool, a magnifying glass designed to expose our sinful condition and reveal our need for a Savior.

Romans 3: 19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.
20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

- This man mistakenly assumed that he would be able to earn his way into the Kingdom of God by human effort.
- He had zeal - he ran to Jesus, He had a good attitude, He knelt before Him, He had a strong desire to obey God and do good works.
- Combine that with his youth, influence and money, I believe that this boy thought he could do anything.

BUT there was one thing that he couldn't do:

3 Failing to Enter the Door

21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- The command of Jesus, "*go sell all that you have*" actually exposes the idolatry of his heart.
- With this statement, Jesus takes the young ruler to the first tablet of the Law.
- Jesus is saying, "You say that you have kept all of the Law, what about the first commandment? **You shall have no other God's before me?**"
- If you truly want to enter the Kingdom you will have to get rid of the idol of wealth.

Matthew 13: 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls,
46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

- The pearl of great price was standing in front of him but he refused to sell everything that he had in order to possess it.
- Like a man who refused to trade a wooden nickel for a billion dollars, he considered his earthly possessions of more value than the boundless riches of the Kingdom of God.

Is there something in your life that is more dear to you than the Lord Jesus?

Lu 14:26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

1 John 2: 15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Matthew 6:33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

The Question for today is: HOW does one enter the Kingdom of God?

Here are the points to look for as we continue to work our way through Mark Chapter 10:

- 1 Those who would enter the Kingdom are literally Carried through the door
 - Has God opened your eyes to see the glory of his Kingdom? Do you see yourself in the light of his glorious holiness. Have you sensed him carrying you?

- 2 Running to the door, doesn't necessarily open it.
 - Are you like the young man who came running only to turn around when Jesus stood against the IDOLS you had formed in your heart.

- 3 Failing to enter the door,
 - This is one door that you don't want to miss!