

God's Perspective on Spiritual Wealth

Scripture: Mark 10:23–31

Code: 41-52

I want you to open your Bible, if you will, to the tenth chapter of the gospel of Mark. While you're doing that, I will remind you of a statement that I read earlier in the service from Luke chapter 1 verse 37, "For nothing will be impossible with God. For nothing will be impossible with God." That great statement comes right out of heaven, the confidence that God can do all things that He determines to do.

That, however, is not true of us. Although there are people today who would like to make us think we can do anything, it is a deception. So common for people to say, "You can do anything you want. You can accomplish anything you desire, just believe in yourself."

That is so ridiculous, of course. It's the comment of a deceiver, or deluded person, and I just began to think about that a little this week and I found some things that you can't do. You...well, there are a lot, I'm going to give you just a few. You can't tickle yourself, you can't lick your elbow. Okay? We'll start there. And if that's not profound enough for you, you can't sneeze with your eyes open and you can't slam a revolving door. And you cannot, according to one source, move your leg in a clockwise position in a circle and simultaneously draw a six. Don't try that, you may fall over.

Or, as Winston Churchill said, "There are three impossible things for me to do." Churchill said, "One, climb a wall leaning toward me. Two, kiss a girl leaning away from me. Three, speak to a group on a subject about which they know more than I do." He was a modest fellow, to put it mildly.

Well, those are trivial things to think about but for anybody to assume that we can do anything we want to do is pretty ridiculous. There are all kinds of limitations on what we are able to do. There are limitations of talent. There are limitations of opportunity. There are limitations of circumstances. There are limitations of time. We all understand that. Life is full of limitations. Some of them belong to us and some of them basically are part of the environment in which we exist. You can't do anything that you want to do, necessarily, just because you want to do it. And believing that you can do it doesn't alter the fact that you can't do it if you can't do it. That kind of folly belongs in the self-esteem psychology which is deluding people with exaggerated opinions of themselves.

But getting out of the trivial and into the more profound, there is something else you can't do also. None of you can do it. No one can do it. And it's recorded in the passage before us, Mark 10 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.' 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 the Kingdom of God.' 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.'" Almost a direct quote from Luke 1.

Then verse 28, “Peter began to say to him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You.’ Jesus said, ‘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. But many who are first will be last and the last first.’”

Now, first of all, in this passage we have come across something that is impossible to do. It is impossible. It is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God, even if you’re rich. It’s impossible to enter the Kingdom of God, even if you’re rich. It’s impossible to enter the Kingdom of God even if you’re rich. And based upon the response of the disciples in verse 26, “Then who can be saved?” they understood entering the Kingdom of God as the same as being saved from divine judgment and hell, from the consequence of sin.

I guess we could title this message, “The Impossibility of Salvation,” because that’s essentially what this portion of it is about.

Now you will remember that this passage follows immediately the experience of verses 17 to 22 of the rich young ruler, this young very religious, highly esteemed, very wealthy man who had elevated himself to the pinnacle of lay leadership in some synagogue somewhere, coming to Jesus and asking this provocative question, “What do I do to inherit eternal life?” which is a great question the most important one you can ask. This was the most important moment in this young man’s entire life. He has a certain degree of respect. He comes with a certain degree of diligence and eagerness. He is running, he kneels. He comes to the right person, the one who Himself is eternal life. He asks the right question, “What do I do to inherit eternal life? Or, what do I do to enter the Kingdom? Or, what do I do to be saved?” Because they’re all used interchangeably here. “What do I do, he says, back in verse 17, “to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus then comments that it’s hard to enter the Kingdom of God. Meaning entering the Kingdom of God and eternal life are the same. The disciples respond by saying, “Who can be saved?” Meaning entering the Kingdom of God, receiving eternal life and being saved are all the same. And so that’s his question.

Jesus answers him not by giving him the gospel and saying, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you’ll be saved,” like Paul gave the Philippian jailor. Jesus doesn’t say that to him. Instead of giving him the gospel, Jesus gave him the Law, remember that? Jesus said, “Let’s talk about the Law. Let’s talk about why you need to be saved and from what you need to be saved?” The effort that Jesus makes is to get him to recognize his wretchedness and his corruption and his sinfulness. So Jesus first brings him before the second half of the Law, the second table of the Law that has to do with human relationships. Remember verse 19, “Don’t murder, steal, adultery, bear false witness, honor your father and mother and adds another one about defrauding someone.” And he says, “Oh, I’ve kept all of that. I am not a breaker of the Law. I do not break the Law. That Law which relates to human relationships, the second half of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20, I don’t break those.” Which shows that he failed to understand the depth of the Law. He failed to understand that the Law had not only to do with behavior but it had to do with heart attitude, as Jesus pointed out in the Sermon on the Mount.

But even worse than that, he was a violator of the first half of the Law which had to do with having no

other God, no idol, never taking the Lord's name in vain, and always honoring the Lord on the Sabbath. He would be quick to affirm that he kept all of that Law except it would have been a lie because as it turned out, Jesus confronted him and said, "Let's find out who you worship. Sell everything you have, give to the poor, come follow Me."

And he was saddened and went away, verse 22, grieving because he owned much property. So his idol was property, money, possessions and self. He was therefore a blasphemer of God. He was a breaker of the back half of the Ten Commandments and the front half. Every time he used the name God, it was in a blasphemous way in vain. Every time he went to the synagogue or the temple on a Sabbath day, it was with hypocrisy because his true God was money. He wanted eternal life but only in addition to what he really worshiped. He had another God. In the end, it was himself.

And what the lesson here is, if you want anything more than salvation, if you want anything more than eternal life, if you want anything more than Christ, if you want anything more than God, you lose everything...you lose everything. He went away sorrowful, it says. He went away saddened. He went away grieving because he owned much property. So he exchanged his eternity for time. That's a sad story...a sad story. He wanted eternal life but he wanted it as an addition not as a complete substitution for everything else in life.

So Jesus builds on this story and starting in verse 23 He teaches His disciples some lessons about riches and poverty...some lessons about riches and poverty. And He really is explaining here what He said back in chapter 8 verse 35, "Whoever wishes to save his life, you'll lose it. Whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospels will save it. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" That's exactly what that rich young ruler had done. He forfeited his eternal soul for earthly riches.

So out of this instant moment, this confrontation, this conversation, Jesus teaches His disciples a crucial lesson about riches and poverty. First of all, He teaches them about the poverty of early riches...the poverty of earthly riches. Straight talk, verse 23, "Jesus looking around," I think He was looking around because there were more than just the Apostles there, more than just additional disciples, there was a crowd. According to chapter 10 verse 1, crowds were gathering around Him as He was in the area of Perea. So He looks around making eye contact and identifying, I'm quite confident, those people in the crowd who were rich, looking around, just taking stock of who was there, perhaps making eye contact with certain people who knew people who knew that fit into the category of those who were rich.

"He then 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.'" Now you have to understand that that is a shocking statement. To us, you know, we might say that's not such a shocking statement. It's...after all, we look at the church and it's not many noble, not many mighty and it's the lowly and the base and the humble and the nobody and the nothings. Why is that? Why is it so hard for really rich people to enter the Kingdom of God? And we could do a pretty good job, I think, of lining up some rather obvious psychological answers to the question as to why it's hard. First of all, because the rich live with a sense of false security. They lack desperation. They are smugly confident of their own dependency on themselves having gotten them to where they are. And so they're very happy, very confident. In the language of Paul writing in 1 Timothy 6:17, they tend to be conceited and fix their hope on uncertain riches. This is the nature of being rich. They feel confident in their own ability. It got them there, it made them successful, it made them prominent, it elevated them above the hoi-polloi above the crowd. They're not desperate.

They're not looking for resources beyond themselves. So it's that sort of smug success that makes it hard for the rich to really be interested in coming into the Kingdom of God and having everything provided for them by God because they're doing so well at providing it by themselves.

Secondly, we could say about the rich that they tend to be bound to this world. They tend to be consumed with earthly enterprises. "Where our treasure is, there will your heart be also," Jesus said in Matthew 6:21. And the Apostle Paul in the same passage in 1 Timothy 6 warned about the love of money being the root of all kinds of evil. And what are those kinds of evil? The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil connected with the world, using every possible means, legitimate and illegitimate, to accumulate the money that you so greatly love. They get sucked up into the world. They become like the rich fool in Luke 12 verses 16 to 21 who had much and he just said, "I'm just going to keep accumulating, I'll build bigger barns and bigger barns and bigger barns and eat, drink and be merry. And the word came to him that night, "You fool, tonight your soul will be acquired of you."

But that's how it is with wealthy people. I think we understand a little bit of the psychology of that. We also understand that the rich are selfish. They do what they do for self-fulfillment. They do what they do for self-pleasure. They do what they do for self-gratification. They do what they do to elevate their ease, to elevate their status in life, to get more stuff so that they can display themselves more. This is about pride. This is about self-indulgence, like the story that Jesus told in Luke 16 of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man ate sumptuously and ignored the beggar because that's what rich people do. They may do some token charity in some direction, but, believe me, it doesn't affect their desired life style. And so, it's impossible in one sense we would say, sort of psychologically, for rich people to come to a true entrance into the Kingdom because they are so self-sufficient, so self-reliant, so self-centered, so self-gratifying and so convinced of their own success and they are so inextricably entangled with the things of this world that have garnered them their wealth that we could say it's hard for them to enter the Kingdom.

Now as true as that is, that's not the point here. That's not at all the point. That's not the point here for this obvious reason. Our Lord said this about a very religious man. "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God." In the context of Israel, these religious people who are wealthy. And according to their theology, they were wealthy because they were blessed by God. If you were wealthy, you were blessed by God. And if you were poor, you were cursed by God. If you were healthy, you were blessed by God. If you were sick, you were cursed by God. That was the simplicity of their theology and a wrong theology to be sure. But the idea was that a very, very religious man like this who was very, very wealthy would be easily able to enter into the Kingdom of God because he had so much money he could buy all the animal sacrifices, he could buy the spotless lamb where somebody else with less money would have to take a blemished lamb by the sheer money factor, or even lesser than a lamb, maybe even down to a bird. This man had the money to purchase as many sacrifices as he wanted, maybe in the morning and evening sacrifices they were capable, the rich were, of making more than the rest. Also, the fact that they also continued to be blessed meant that God was pleased with them and it just kept escalating. And so up the ladder of spiritual confidence they would climb, not only in their own eyes, but in the eyes of the people around them.

The rabbis said that with alms one purchases his redemption. That's what they said. Some of the writings are very interesting. One writing taken from Tobit says this, "It is good to do alms rather than to treasure up gold for alms deliver from death and this will purge away every sin." Okay, that was

Judaism. If you want your sins washed away, give money, or Syriac 3 says, "Alms will atone for sin." Or the Talmud, "Alms giving is more excellent than all offerings and is equal to the whole Law," in other words, if you give alms, you have virtually kept the whole Law, and further, will deliver from the condemnation of hell and make one perfectly righteous.

Wow! Well how do you become perfectly righteous? How are you delivered from the condemnation of the Law and of hell? By giving money...by giving money. Well that was their system.

So, when Jesus says, "Look, it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God," this is completely counter-intuitive to them. They don't get that at all. It is a shocking statement. It is a jolt to their system.

Now remember, they had come to faith in Christ and Peter will make that confession again in verse 28, as we'll see in a few minutes. But they still had all the stuff of the legalistic system which they had imbibed for their entire lives. They still saw wealth as a sign of divine blessing and wealth as a means of entering the Kingdom of God because you bought your way in with your giving. They assumed a causal relationship between wealth and power and blessing from God. They were very much in the same theological zone as Job's less than helpful friends. And the rabbis would have agreed with them. He had become rich, if he was rich because God had blessed him, and now he had more to bless God and it just kept escalating.

Jesus says something that is just shocking. How hard it would be for those who are wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God. Is He talking psychologically because of the things I told you? No. Is He talking religiously? Not really. They thought they could buy your way in, they couldn't understand this. And so, the result is, in verse 24, they were amazed at His works. This was an astounding thing for them to hear. It is hard for a religious, expected, elevated, rich young man to enter the Kingdom of God to be saved, to receive eternal life. It's hard.

And backing that up, if it's hard for him, how hard is it for everybody who isn't rich? Because these guys should be leading the parade, they're the front line.

You know, this is a very important lesson, that it's hard to be saved, that it's hard to receive eternal life, that it's hard to enter the Kingdom of God, because I think even in modern evangelicalism most people think it's easy...it's easy, just pray a prayer, say a few words, but it's hard.

What's He talking about? What do you mean it's hard? Well they're so stunned by it, verse 24, that Jesus repeats, "He answered again and said to them, 'Children,' not let's just make it a broad statement, "how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God period, not just for the rich, it's just hard to enter the Kingdom of God." If the rich can't do it in their system, then nobody can do it. It's hard.

Well how hard is it? How hard is it? Verse 25 says, this is how hard it is, "It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." And if it's like that for a rich man, it would be like that for the poor and everybody behind the rich. What is this talking about? This is an expression found in writings outside the Bible, it is found in the Talmud, Jewish writings. And the expression there uses an elephant. It is easier for an elephant to go through the eye of a needle. That statement is used in the Talmud to reflect something that can't happen. This is impossible. Since the elephant was the largest animal in the Middle East, an elephant was used in

the Talmud, in this case the largest animal in Israel, there were no elephants, as far as we know, was a camel, so they used the camel. It fit their experience.

What is our Lord saying? It's impossible, that's what He's saying. You cannot put a camel through the eye of a needle. Some have tried to tamper with that saying. Really, some have tampered even with the original manuscripts, *kamelos*, camel, *kamelos*, slight difference in the vowel, rope. Maybe some scribe made a mistake, put the wrong letter and it came out camel but it should be rope. That doesn't help because you can't put a rope through the eye of a needle either. But that's not the point. The point is this is a very common expression that appears even outside the Bible to express something that is impossible...it's impossible.

Others have said if you can somehow reduce the camel to liquid, you could eye drop the camel through the eye of the needle, or if you could line up his molecules, you could get them through.

I read commentaries, many commentaries, that said there was a needle gate in the city of Jerusalem, a little tiny needle gate and they used to stuff camels through that. Are you kidding? No one's ever found a needle gate and fifty yards to the left or the right there's a gate a camel could walk through. Who would do that?

There's no needle gate and we're not talking about altering the substance of the camel's basic form. What it's saying is, you can't do it, you can't stick...it's a very graphic, vivid declaration of something that can't happen, or you can add it to your list that I gave you at the beginning, you can't put a camel through the eye of a needle, or for that matter, an elephant. That was a Semitic way of expressing something that was impossible. It's impossible for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God. What a statement...what a statement!

They were even more astonished, verse 26, "And they said to Him then, 'Who can be saved?'" If the rich can't, who can? See, they had this...this residual theology that is still lingering there, even though they've come to Christ, they're still hanging on to the vestiges of that old system. Our Lord is not saying it's difficult, He says that, you know, it's a narrow way and few there be that find it. Many would seek to enter the Kingdom, they wouldn't be able. There's people seizing the Kingdom, it takes a great act of aggression, or Acts 14:22, through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom. There are statements that our Lord makes that shows that it's a narrow gate and few find it, that it's a difficult battle that few will succeed in it. But that's not what this is saying.

What this is saying is, salvation, entering the Kingdom, inheriting eternal life is impossible...it's impossible...it's impossible. And they pick it up, verse 26, "That who can be saved?" If it's not the rich who can buy the sacrifices and give the alms, who can be saved? And Jesus answers with this very sweeping statement, "Looking at them again, catching their eyes, a penetrating glance, engaging them so that they listen to what He is saying, 'With people it is impossible.'"

Stop right there. Bottom line, you can't save yourself, right? Anymore than you can stuff a camel through the eye of a needle. The sinner by his own power and his own will and his money and his religion and his morality cannot save himself. He cannot enter the Kingdom. He cannot inherit eternal life. And he cannot be saved. We're not talking about the fact that it's psychologically difficult for rich people to do that, although that's true. We're not talking about the fact that it's a misconception

theologically that you can buy your way in and it's not until you know you can't buy your way in that you can actually get in. What we're learning here is, that the sinner has no power in himself to be saved. This is the language of Jeremiah 13:23, "The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, the leopards cannot change their spots, and neither can you do good who are accustomed by nature to doing evil." This is one of the great foundational statements on the problem of human depravity. The sinner is stuck in an impossible situation, an impossible situation. Even the rich religious sinner is stuck in an impossible situation and therefore all the people who are poor are equally in the same situation.

And, of course, this is so astonishing that it says they were even more astonished, or in the words of Matthew, they were exceedingly amazed because this is all completely new to them, and they say then, "Why can be saved? With people, it is impossible." You can't do it on your own. You can't inherit eternal life, enter the Kingdom, be saved on your own. However, and this is the good news, with people it's impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God.

That same phrase is used in Luke 1 to refer to the virgin birth. That's an impossibility, right? This is an impossibility of that same category. As a child cannot be born without an earthly father, so a sinner cannot be reborn without a heavenly work of the Spirit of God.

It's interesting that those two statements are made in those two contexts. One having to do with the virgin birth of Christ which is a divine miracle from above. The other, having to do with the regeneration of a sinner, which is a divine miracle from above. Only God can do this mighty, mighty work. John 1 opens up, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believed in His name who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God...but of God." Or John 3, Nicodemus says in his heart, "What do I do to be born again? What do I do to get into the Kingdom?" And Jesus says, "You need to be born again but that which is born of the flesh is...what?...is flesh. You need to be born from above, *anthen*, you need to be born of the Spirit, born from above." Only God can work the work of regeneration. It is a divine miracle and it is possible with God.

How does this practically come down to the sinner? What I say to a sinner is this, "Look, this is a divine miracle that God does by His own will, not of the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but of the will of God. All you can do as a sinner is, if you're at the point where you desire to repent and be saved, where you desire eternal life, where you know you're a lawbreaker and you want to be rescued from eternal judgment and you want to enter the Kingdom of God and leave the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan, all you can do is cry out to God and ask Him if He would be gracious and save you because it's His work to do."

It's like Luke 18, pounding his breast the Publican says, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner. Save me." That's the sinner's prayer. That's the sinner's prayer. It's a divine work. You don't get it by a formula. You don't get it by being religious or moral or rich and giving alms, it can't come from a human viewpoint. It's of grace, right? Ephesians, it's of grace not of works lest any man should boast. By grace through faith, that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

So the first thing to understand here in understanding the juxtaposing of poverty and riches is that earthly riches, earthly riches cannot buy spiritual riches. Okay? Earthly riches when clung to will make you spiritually bankrupt...spiritually bankrupt. That's the poverty of riches.

But flipping that over, let's look at the riches of poverty in just a very brief way, verse 28. "Peter began to say to Him, 'Behold, we've left everything and followed You.'" Okay, we have done exactly what that young man wouldn't do. If you go back to verse 22 when...the end of verse 21, Jesus said, "Come, follow Me. Come, follow Me." The young man heard the words, was saddened, went away grieving for he owned much property. So Peter says, "Look, he left. We didn't." And there had been other times, John 6, you remember, many left and Jesus said, "Will you also go away." And Peter says on behalf of the ones who stayed, "To whom shall we go? You and you alone have the words of eternal life."

So Peter is saying, "Look, what that young man wouldn't do, we have done. You have said, 'Deny yourself, take up your cross, follow me, we've done it...we've done it.'" In fact, "We have left everything and followed You. We have left our own homes, Luke 18:28 puts it, we've left everything, we've abandoned it all."

Remember in Luke 9 Jesus was talking to some would-be disciples and they kept saying, "Well I need to go home until my father dies." "I need to go home and get some money from my relatives." And Jesus said, "No, no, no, if you don't follow Me now, you're not worthy to enter My Kingdom." If you've got other agendas, you can't enter My Kingdom.

Well these men had no other agendas, we've left everything. We've left our families. We left our fishing. We left our nets. We left our boats. We left it all and we're following You. And when others along the way have forsaken You and left, we're still here.

So Matthew adds, what he said after that in Matthew 19:27, Peter says, "What shall we have therefore, What's in it for us?" At the end of the day these guys are pretty crass, practical, always arguing about who's going to be greatest in the Kingdom, who is going to get the biggest reward, the biggest seat, the highest elevation. What do we get out of this? He's the rich who is spiritually poor. Okay, we're the poor and what does our spiritual riches look like? We've left it all. We did what he wouldn't do. What do we get out of it?

This is so good. Jesus in verses 29 and 30 says, "Truly, 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, not purely as an act of philanthropy, but for the sake of Christ and the gospel, 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."

Well, you get that. It's pretty straight, isn't it? Our Lord says, "Look, you think you've left everything, you have no idea. There is no one, there is no one, truly I'm telling you, there is not one person who has left his house, brothers, sister, mother, father, children, farms for My sake and the gospel's who will not receive a hundred-times as much...a hundred times as much and in three separate eras. One, in the present age, now in the present age, now in the present age."

What do you mean by that? Well what He means by that is you've just entered the church. You've just become a part of the people of God and now you have many fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers in Christ...that's the church...and there will be homes to provide for you, and food provided by your fellow believers. And we saw that played out, didn't we, on the Day of Pentecost when the church was born and the church was full of pilgrims who had come from all over the Jewish

settlements outside Israel. They had come back. They had been converted on the Day of Pentecost, didn't want to go back because there were no believers back where they came from, there was only one church in Jerusalem. They stayed. Some of them stayed permanently, they lived in the homes of the believers that were already there. They were fed there, they were housed there. They were loved there. They were cared for there. The Apostle Paul, you remember, years later is traveling all over the Mediterranean area collecting an offering to take back to give to the Jerusalem saints so they could continue this care of people who were now their burden and yet their joy to care for in the church. You're going to find that you may have given up an earthly family, but you have gained a Christian family. You've gained the family of God. And that's the first thing that He's referring to and it's larger than any family you may have come from. Three thousand on the Day of Pentecost, thousands more and thousands more and thousands more beyond that.

It's a wonderful thing to think about that you don't really give up family, you get true family because Jesus said with an unbelieving family, He said, I came to bring a sword to set a man against his father, against his mother, against his brothers, against his sisters. That's what the gospel will do. When you separate from that family, there's a family larger ready to welcome you...look around, here they are, a small portion of that family in this present age.

But not only in this present age, in Matthew's account of this same incident, there's a wonderful statement that Matthew makes and he alone makes it, Luke doesn't. But our Lord even expanded on that in, I think, a really amazing and wonderful way. Our Lord promised this, "I tell you, you who have followed Me in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Wow! That's millennial. That's talking about the time when Christ sits on His throne, when He takes His throne. This is called the *palingenesi*, the regeneration, only used here and also used in Titus 3:5 to speak of spiritual regeneration. There's going to be a regeneration of the earth, a rebirth of the earth in the Millennial Kingdom when the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom. There's going to be a rebirth and our Lord says in what the book of Acts calls the Time of Refreshing, or the Times of Restitution, Acts 3, what Revelation calls the Millennial Kingdom, the Thousand-year reign of Christ, this glorious time to come is part of the age to come mentioned in Mark 10 and verse 30. Messiah will rule the earth, Israel will be converted and restored to her land and her glory. Truth will dominate the world. Joy will dominate the earth. Righteousness will flourish. Peace will reign. Joy will abound. The Holy Spirit's power and presence will be dominant. The curse will be lifted. Life will be long. The earth will produce like it's never produced since pre-Fall, health and healing will dominate. Jesus will reign in an exalted fashion. Satan and all demons will be bound. This is the glory of the Millennial Kingdom. And in that period when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, He says to these men, "You will reign, you will...and He's talking to the Apostles at this point, Peter and the others...sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

You think you've left everything and what are you going to get? In this life you get the whole family of God. And in the Millennial glory to come, you will reign on a throne over the twelve tribes of Israel. Staggering promise.

And back to our text, and beyond that, eternal life. Beyond that, heaven, everlasting heaven with all its glories.

What do we get, Peter says? We saw the rich man who ended up spiritually poor. We're the poor

who are supposed to end up spiritually rich. What do we get? A worldwide fellowship of believers, a promised Kingdom in which we will reign and though we're not apostles, we'll be there reigning with Christ, reigning on His throne. And in eternity, eternal life...eternal life.

And a final word from our Lord, very, very practical. "Many who are first will be last, and the last first." That principle, so important. They were always arguing about who is going to be the greatest, right? Who's going to be first? And our Lord says this to make a statement that can't be mistaken and yet many people mistake the meaning of the statement. What does it mean? It means everybody ends up equal. That's what it means. If you're first you're last, and you're last, you're first, then everybody's the same. This is defined for us in Matthew 19 verse 30 through 20 verse 16 when Jesus tells the story about people who worked one hour, three hours, five hours, eight hours, all different amounts of work and they all received the same pay. And Jesus said, "That's because the last are first and the first are last, everybody ends up the same." This promise of blessing now, blessing in the Kingdom, and blessing in eternity is equally the same for everybody. Yes, the rich man went away spiritually poor forever. You poor men, stayed and followed Me and you will receive eternal riches.

Jim Elliot said, "It's true that he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to keep what he cannot lose." Whoever desires truly to inherit the Kingdom must be inwardly free from the dominance of pride, confidence in his goodness and religion, the illusion of righteousness, must be willing to sever his self-confidence, his family, his pleasures, his wealth all idols, must be willing to confess his sinfulness, his inability to please God on his own, must be willing to esteem Christ more precious than anything, anyone, Christ to be so great a Savior, so great a Lord, that he would give up anything and anyone, everything and everyone abandoning everything for Christ and the forgiveness and spiritual promise that comes in Christ. To be willing is God's requirement for the sinner. Are you willing? If you are, then you need to cry out to God as a willing heart and by the power of God already at work in you to make you willing, God will hear and answer and grant you the salvation that this young man asked for but didn't really want, but hopefully when you ask, you desire to receive it.

Father, we thank You for the time this morning again to worship You. We're so greatly blessed in so many ways to enjoy the richness of worship and instruction and fellowship and friendship here. We thank You for all that You give to us. We thank You for Your Word especially because it defines everything we are, everything we do, everything we believe. We love Your truth, we love Your Word. We love the Law. We love the gospel. They both have a place. Now we pray, Lord, that You would do a work in hearts of folks that are here, that there might be none who are going to walk away like the rich young man and cling to their own idols and continue in the blasphemy that will condemn them to hell. May this be the day when like Peter they say, "We've left everything, we've followed You." Show us what is prepared for us. We don't deserve these promises, we don't deserve the forgiveness of sin, the salvation, but we rejoice in it and we thank You for it and we want to live lives of immense and unending gratitude for all that is ours now and all that awaits us in the glories of the Kingdom where we will reign with You and with the Apostles and all the saints in glory, both alive on earth and returned from heaven in the glory of that Kingdom and enjoy all that that provides for us. And then beyond that, all that desires by way of promise and preparation in what You've prepared for us in the new heaven and the new earth to come. We thank You for the spiritual riches that come to those who recognize their poverty. And we pray that You would cause that to be our honest recognition of our own condition that we might ever be eager to rush to Christ and find in Him the true riches we need.

We know it's impossible to be saved, it's a divine work. It can't be done by a man, no matter how religious or how wealthy or how eager or how humble. It can only come as Your gift to a willing sinner. Make sinners willing and may they cry out for this grace, we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

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