

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#21: Mark 10:13-31: The Unexpected Reversal of God's Kingdom

Intro: Spiritual Dyslexia

I. God's Kingdom is for the Humble, Not the Important (v.13-16)

A. The Problem: We Operate with a "VIP" Mentality

- People were bringing their children to Jesus for a blessing (v.13)
- The disciples "rebuked" them—a harsh term of rejection, effectively saying that these little ones were not important enough to bother Jesus with

B. The Solution: Notice the People Others Don't Notice

- Jesus has a habit of noticing overlooked, forgotten people. Can you think of some examples?
- Children represent the kind of person that the Kingdom is meant for
 - Children are weak—they have nothing to offer
 - Children are humble—they don't naturally think of their own greatness
 - Children are inherently trusting—they believe what you tell them
- Lucy in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*
 - It's noteworthy that Lewis picks Lucy as the first to Narnia since she's the smallest and youngest
 - The older Susan is skeptical: "But this couldn't be true—all this about the wood and the Faun. . . We thought there might be something wrong with Lucy"

II. God's Kingdom is for the Sinner, Not the Righteous (v.17-20)

A. The Problem: We Are Tempted to Think Our Righteousness Gets Us to Heaven

- The rich young man in the story is interested in eternal life—and that's good!
- But he assumes that it's up to him: "What must I *do*?"
- Then he confidently declares that he has kept all the commandments: "I have kept them from my youth."
- This man perfectly summarizes most people's view of religion: they think the law is pretty simple to keep, and they think they've done a pretty good job of keeping it

B. The Solution: We Need to See Ourselves as We Really Are

- Jesus works to correct the man's view of "goodness"
 - "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone."
 - Jesus is basically quoting Psalm 14:3: "There is none who does good, not even one" (cited by Paul in Rom 3:10-11).
 - Essentially Jesus is tipping his hand: no one is righteous enough to earn heaven
- Jesus works to correct the man's view of himself
 - "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have..."

- This is not a command that all Christians must sell their possessions
- Rather Jesus is challenging the man's own claim to righteousness: "Oh, you've kept all the commands have you? Then this shouldn't be a problem: go sell all that you have..."
- Effectively Jesus shows the man can't even keep the very first commandment!
- But there is good news here. It's when we realize our sinfulness that we are ready to receive the gospel. Jesus said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners" (Mark 2:17)
- Key question: How can we see ourselves accurately, as we really are?

III. God's Kingdom is for the Needy, Not the Wealthy (v.21-30)

A. The Problem: Wealth and Security can be a hindrance to the Gospel

- Wealth makes us feel safe, secure, self-sufficient
- Thus, Jesus is very blunt:
 - "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!"
 - "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle..."
- Key point: In our wealthy world, we need to take this seriously and heed this warning

B. The Solution:

- Realize salvation takes an act of God
 - The passage is not saying God hates rich people; nor is it saying all rich people must become poor
 - But it does remind us that if a heart doesn't naturally feel its need, then it will take a divine act of God: "All things are possible with God"
- Remember that our sacrifices for the kingdom are worth it
 - The disciples make the point: "We have left everything to follow you"
 - Jesus reassures them that it is worth it—a "hundredfold" blessing will come to anyone who loses their life for the gospel
 - **This is not a "health-wealth" promise, but a look at Kingdom blessings
- Key application: Generous giving is a sign of a healthy spiritual life

Discussion Groups

1. How does it encourage you today to know that Jesus notices the "little" person, not just the "important" person? What are some steps you can take to notice those people in your life that go unnoticed?
2. Why do you think most people in the world are unable to see the depth of their own sinfulness? What can be done to address that problem?
3. If someone is wealthy, what advice would give them about how to handle their wealth in light of being a Christian? What cautions would you give them about wealth?