

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 29TH-30TH, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

DIFFICULT (MATTHEW 19:23-30)

SEIZING A TEACHABLE MOMENT

After the Rich Young Ruler walked away, Jesus took advantage of a moment to further teach His disciples about the pitfalls of wealth and selfishness.

- Jesus didn't say that wealthy people can't be saved, but that **wealth can become a difficult obstacle because people can easily grow to love what money brings.**

A CAMEL THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE

This was more than likely a metaphor similar to the Persian one that used an elephant. There is no proof that a "Needle Gate" ever existed in Jerusalem.

- Jesus was simply stating that wealth makes living righteously more difficult.

"THEN WHO CAN BE SAVED?"

The disciples had been conditioned by the prosperity teaching of their culture, so the statement that wealth makes salvation harder "astonished" them.

- When Jesus replies, **"...with God all things are possible,"** He is referring to our inability to be wealthy AND righteous without God's intervention.

"SO WHAT WILL THERE BE FOR US?"

Peter again speaks up for the group and reminds Jesus that they had given up everything in order to follow Him.

- Peter was seeking reassurance because he and the other men had given up homes, jobs, and families in order to follow Jesus. **God knows we need to be reassured at times, but we must be listening.**

"TRULY I TELL YOU..."

Whenever Jesus says, "Truly I tell you," we know He wants us to take note. Jesus responds to Peter's concerns with a concrete answer about the specific reward for the 12 and the reward for all who have sacrificed to follow Christ.

- The Bible reminds us many times that **our sacrifice and obedience to Jesus will be rewarded more than we can imagine.**

12 THRONES TO JUDGE ISRAEL?

Jesus assures the 12 that they will be seated on "twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes." This is more than likely referring to the elders in Revelation 4. Revelation also tells us that the foundations of heaven will have the names of the disciples written on them.

- The teachings of Christ will be the standard by which all people are judged.

"...FIRST WILL BE LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST."

Jesus ends with this phrase to teach His followers to not use human standards to judge eternal rewards. In the world, the Rich Young Ruler was 1st, but **in God's economy contributors are greater than consumers.**

- **God is all-knowing and faithful to give what He sees we have earned, whether that be reward or punishment.**

GRACE (MATTHEW 20:1-16)

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD WORKERS

This parable goes back to the conversation with the Rich Young Ruler and **how we are to be dependent on Jesus' work on the cross and not our work.**

- We must balance this with Js. 2. **We're not saved by works, but true salvation leads to Christians working for the Kingdom's advancement.**

"FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE..."

Jesus often begins His parables with this phrase. This shows us that the principles being taught in the short story reflect how God and His kingdom operate.

- This story is pretty simple. The Landowner is God and the hired laborers represent all Christians that are saved in different stages of their lives.

DIFFERENT TIMES AND LEVELS OF DEDICATION

The Landowner hiring in the morning and throughout the day either represents different stages in life that people get saved, or different levels of work they've done for God.

- The point is that **God rewards people based on His grace and wisdom, compensating people differently than we may expect.**

NOTICE THE FOREMAN PAYS THEM BACKWARDS

To emphasize for the second time the idea that the "first will be last, and the last first" the Landowner tells the foreman to pay the workers in reverse order

- Again, the lesson is to show Jesus' disciples that God rewards differently than people do.

A DIFFERENT STANDARD

God's sense of "fairness" is not like ours. We have a tendency to compare ourselves to others (self-righteousness), but **God compares what we do to how much potential we have.**

- **If we've been trusted with much, much is expected of us.** If God has given us talents and abilities and we don't use those, we will be held accountable.

A SIN THAT WE OFTEN OVERLOOK

All of the workers agreed on compensation individually, but when they saw the Landowner giving everyone the same reward at the end of the day, they complained.

- This parable highlights **the sin of coveting** what other people have. **We need to take our eyes off what others have and be content with what God gives us.**

OUR RELATIONSHIP IS PERSONAL

We are also reminded that our relationship with God is personal. Just like the workers who complained, we often look at others and blame them for what we have or haven't done.

- **When we stand in front of Christ before we inherit our eternity, we will not have the luxury of pointing fingers.** We will be compensated on our works.

GOD TAKES ATTITUDE INTO ACCOUNT AS WELL

1 Cor. 4:5 tells us that it is not just what we do, but **why** we do it. **Jesus not only looks at our actions, but the state of our heart.**

- The practical application is this; **we can look the part, say the right things, go to church, and even serve, but if we don't do it all for the glory of God and the love of others, we have missed it!**

"ARE YOU JEALOUS BECAUSE I'M GENEROUS?"

This question touches on **our selfishness, our sin of coveting others, and our lack of trust in God and His ways.**

- We have to ask ourselves, **"Do I want others to be blessed? Do I find myself being self-centered? Do I trust how God does things?"**

THE LAST WILL BE FIRST, AND THE FIRST LAST

- We must be constantly evaluating our motives and asking ourselves why we think and act the way we do.
- **Are we acting in a way that glorifies God and blesses others?** Or, do we find ourselves jealous and coveting others? How do we feel when others get rewarded?
- **Do we live a life of sacrifice?** Are we giving our best to God? Are we giving our best to others, both in and out of the faith?
- Do we blame others, or do we take responsibility for our faith, actions, and ramifications of those actions?
- **Do we trust that God is just and rewards those who live in humility and peace?**

LOOKING THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

- The point of these passages is to challenge our perspective on God, the world, ourselves, and other people.
- Do we acknowledge how broken a worldview without Jesus is?
- **Are we using the Word of God as a filter? Do we rely on His Spirit to counsel us?**
- **What steers our perspective?** Honestly.