

He Said What Part 7

Sell Everything You Have And Give It To The Poor

Mark 10:17-31

Memory Verses: Mark 10:25

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Up to this point we have heard some very shocking statements from the mouth of Jesus. Statements about his momma; like “who is she,” and “you should probably hate her... and your daddy... heck, hate all of your family and yourself while your at it.” Statements about the world; like “I didn't come for the righteous but sinners,” and “I didn't come to bring peace but a sword.” Statements that make no sense at all; like “to find your life you must lose it,” and “the last will be first,” and “to be great you must be humble.” And statements about life and death; like “take up your cross,” or perhaps the most shocking one, which we saw last week, “it would be better if you were to drown.” And whenever we here one of those statements it makes us say? “He said what?” And why does Jesus say these shocking statements? Cause sometimes he has to shock our ears in order for us to hear! I pray you would hear this morning!

This morning, again we will see another shocking statement from Christ when he blatantly and boldly asks a rich man to; “sell everything you have and give it to the poor.” I'm not kidding. Jesus tells this guy that if he wants to be a disciple of Christ that instead of just coming to church a couple of times a month or praying before his meals, or just quit cussing; instead of that, Jesus tells him go sell all of your worldly possessions and give all of your money to the poor and then you can come and be my disciple! In our world, our consumerism driven, merit based, capitalistic society, that makes no sense. Jesus, I earned this money. Jesus, I worked hard for this money. Jesus, I thought you wanted to bless me? Surely Jesus isn't being literal.

Well let's look at the context shall we? **Mark 10:17-27**. That's so crazy it deserves another look. Look with me at **Matthew 19:16-26**. So what am I missing? Surely Jesus isn't telling me that I must sell everyone of my possessions and give it all to the poor in order to follow him? Surely he understands that the movement needs houses and cars and computers and church buildings and sound systems and air-conditioning; man I love me some air-conditioning. Surely Jesus knows I need clothes and shoes and indoor plumbing. Surely Jesus isn't suggesting that we give everything we have to the poor is he? And in our minds we automatically say, “of course not.” And we look at Jesus like he's telling us a funny joke. But I assure you, this is no joke. And I assure you that

Jesus is being literal, at least to this guy. And it would be ridiculous for us to think that if he demanded this of his disciples and this rich young ruler, then he would certainly demand it of some of us. Let us stop hearing what we want to hear and start hearing what Jesus is saying because I promise you at the least he is saying this; **if we have more than we need, which we do, and the world needs Jesus, which it does, then we can most certainly give a little more for the cause**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing I want us to focus on here is that... **Our Salvation Is Unmistakably Linked To Our Generosity**. Look at our last parallel passage in **Luke 18:18-27**. So now having looked at three different passages what sticks out in your mind. The first is simple right, here is a man that any of us would want in our church. He's described as a rich, young, man who has leadership skills. Isn't this exactly what every growing church is looking for. We most certainly need more men right? We definitely need more leaders. We always could use someone who tithes those big fat checks. And they are young and hip to the current culture? Bring it on! But Jesus isn't like us and doesn't respond the way we do. In fact Jesus does exactly the opposite of what many of our church leaders in America would do. Instead of vetting him to see if he's legit, like Jesus does, we would simply rubber stamp him and bring him into the fold. This is exactly why so many churches find out too late that they have given leadership to wolves in sheep's clothing. But that's another message for another time.

Back to the issue. Instead of making it easy for this young rich guy to join up, Jesus goes line by line through the 10 Commandments to see if this guy is good enough. Then when he seemingly passes that test instead of immediately making him a deacon and putting him in charge of a Bible Study, Jesus ups the anti and tells him one thing you lack... go sell everything. Again as I've said before, the disciples have to be shaking their heads in disgust. “Jesus, how do you expect to begin a movement if you keep telling everyone they have to sell all they have. We'll be lucky if we stay at 12.” Clearly Jesus isn't trying to be seeker sensitive. And let that be a reminder to us all. Christianity isn't seeker sensitive. If anything it's seeker annoying. Don't get me wrong, coming to Christ should be easy, but not that easy... it should most certainly cost you something... if not everything. And I think that's exactly what Jesus is trying to communicate to the rich young ruler.

But there is another issue we can't stray away from here no matter how hard we may want to. Jesus doesn't just hit the young man where it hurts... He hits him where it kills. And not just for him, but for most of us. We all struggle mightily with a love for money. Jesus talks about this struggle more than any other topic in the four Gospels. We love our

prosperity and our possessions. We are all idolaters and sooner or later we have to make a decision, God or money; his kingdom or this world! In short, we cannot be saved if we are not willing to break our idolatry of money and possessions. The god of wealth must fall if the God of all is to reign in our hearts. And there is no greater test of where our hearts are than how we give our wealth away. When I say our salvation is unmistakably linked to our generosity I am in no way making the claim that you can earn salvation by giving your money away. That's not true at all. But what I am saying is this, if you have truly been transformed by the Spirit of God through the salvation of Christ then you will inevitably be a person who trusts God with your money and freely gives it away when he asks you to! If I were to put it bluntly I would say... **it is impossible to follow Christ and hoard your wealth to yourself. You simply aren't a Christian if you can't give your money away.**

Why do you think he says that it is harder for a rich person to go to heaven than it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? Rich people really struggle to kill the idol of wealth for the sake of Christ. The Rich Young Ruler clearly is an example of someone not to emulate with our wealth. So who is? Look with me at **Mark 12:41-44**. We should emulate the widow. The wealthy can give and give and still not be generous. Why? Cause they give out of their abundance. It doesn't bother them to give a little here and there. It doesn't hurt. But what Jesus is saying is that if it doesn't hurt to give then it's not really giving is it? The widow truly gave because she not only gave out of her poverty till it hurt... she actually gave all she had to give. What does it mean to give out of our poverty? **Giving out of your poverty means giving when you don't think you can afford to give... and then trusting in Christ to supply the rest.** If you only give when you can afford it then are you really giving in faith? Do you only trust God in your giving when you have an abundance? I don't think that is what God wants exactly. Again, he's probably not telling all of us to give away all of our money. But I know this for a fact... he is most definitely telling all of us to give away some if not most of our money, and he is most definitely telling some people to give it all away. People like Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Mother Theresa, Trisha and Josh Dickinson, Katy and Ricky Sanford, and many others who have given it all to follow Christ. So... what is he telling you? **If we have more than we need, which we do, and the world needs Jesus, which it does, then we can most certainly give a little more for the cause.**

Secondly, we need to focus on the fact that... **Our Reward Is Directly Linked To Our Sacrifice**. Now all of these passages have a second part which is so similar in all texts that it is only necessary to read one of them so let's look at **Mark 10:28-33**. You can find this as well in

Matthew 19:27-30 and **Luke 18:28-30**. I love Peter don't you? He reminds me of Canaan. I will often say a statement like; "you guys always leave the house a wreck." And immediately Canaan will say, "what do you mean by you guys?" Canaan has to always let it be known that he isn't as guilty as his siblings. Peter is the same way. After seeing Jesus dismiss the Rich Young Ruler by telling him it's impossible for the rich to go to heaven, Peter pipes in with a, "what do you mean you guys?" Peter says, we have left everything to follow you Jesus. Surely you aren't talking about us. And here we recognize another fundamental truth; not only is our generosity unmistakably linked to our salvation but the measure of our sacrifice is directly linked to our reward in heaven. What we are willing to give up here is in proportion to what we will get up there.

Now it's probably not a 1 to 1 comparison, nor is everything dished out in proportion... I just don't think God works that way, but we are promised that if we leave our money and our stuff and even our families to follow Christ we will receive a hundredfold in this life and the life to come. Meaning, and you can take it to the bank, if you give away riches then you will most likely receive some type of physical or financial blessing. For example, I have been giving and tithing since I was a child. And I kid you not, ever since we have committed to give our first fruits along with offerings to God, we have been financially blessed. This is a hard statement to make but I'm going to make it anyway. **If you are sick of always struggling to make ends meet... start tithing and giving to the Lord and see how that works out for a change!** Test God. If you give away land on this earth then you will most likely be given a greater territory of influence in this world. When George Muller gave away all of his land, God kept giving him orphanages and hospitals and schools. He also made the territory of his reach grow across five continents. If you leave behind your physical family... well then just like we talked about a few weeks ago, God will give you a spiritual family tens of thousands of times larger. And in Heaven... all the riches and land and family you can stand to have! It will all be yours! So why not sacrifice your money, and time, and land, and possessions, and family, and comforts for the sake of the reward which will dwarf what we currently have. As **Jim Elliot said, "it is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what cannot earn."** **If we have more than we need, which we do, and the world needs Jesus, which it does, then we can most certainly give a little more for the cause.**

Lastly, we need to focus on this fact... **Eternal Life Is Found In Giving Everything For The Cause Of Christ**. I want us to observe the bigger truth here. Yes God is concerned about your heart and your heart is revealed in your giving, but there is something bigger at play here. Go back to **Mark 10:17**. What is the Rich Young Ruler looking for? Eternal life, right? Look at **Matthew 19:16** again. How does he want to earn eternal life?

A good deed, right? Here we see two fundamental flaws with his way of thinking. First, he shouldn't be seeking eternal life because eternal life is not the ultimate reward, and second, he can't get eternal life by doing good deeds. The ultimate reward isn't eternal life, or the riches of heaven... the ultimate reward is Jesus. His disciples weren't following him because of what he could do for them or give them here or in heaven... they followed him because they loved him and couldn't stand to not be with him. They believed in the cause because Christ was the reward. Any of us coming to Christ because of something he can do for us or give us are clearly coming with the wrong motives. Now, many of us come with the wrong motives at the start but then we learn about who Jesus is and we fall in love with him later. That's fine, but I truly don't think we can be saved unless we are coming to Christ for Christ's sake.

Secondly, we cannot prove ourselves worthy of Christ through any deed. Notice that in **Mark 10:19** Jesus walks the rich young man through the commandments. Each time he says, yeah i've kept that, i've kept that... Okay, strike one... that's a lie. None of us can keep all of the commandments all of the time. Anyone who says they can is delusional or deceptive. But even if we give him the benefit of the doubt and say he has kept all the commandments he clearly strikes out when Jesus challenges his love for his wealth. The Bottom line is simple... there is no deed this guy can keep that can earn him eternal life. This is why we get this exchange in **Mark 10:25-27**. No one can be saved if it is up to man. But with God all things are possible. Our deeds can't save us. Our giving away our wealth can't save us. Only Jesus can save us! In asking the Rich Young Ruler to give away all his wealth Jesus wasn't really asking him to give away his money and possessions... he was asking him to give away his soul! Becoming a follower of Christ is as simple as selling all that is in your heart and giving it away to Christ. **Jesus is worth selling out for. If we have more than we need, which we do, and the world needs Jesus, which it does, then we can most certainly give a little more for the cause.**

Application

So let's boil it all down. Yes Jesus wants you to give your wealth away. Yes Jesus wants you to fund the mission of seeing people evangelized and disciple all over the world. Yes Jesus wants your tithes and offerings and will bless you for giving. And yes your giving reflects your heart for Christ. But Jesus doesn't just want your money and your possessions... he wants everything! He wants your allegiance, your devotions, your total loyalty. He wants you to sell out for him!

Conclusion

So whether it's money... you can give more. Or whether it's time... you can give more. Or whether it's devotion to the cause... you can give

more. If he wants everything... then you can definitely give a little more. **If we have more than we need, which we do, and the world needs Jesus, which it does, then we can most certainly give a little more for the cause.**