

MULTIPLY WEEK 4

Stewarding Your Life: Mark 10:13-34

Mark 10:13-34

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 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. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

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?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 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." Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult 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 person to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Peter began to say to him, "See, 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 lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are

first will be last, and the last first.”

And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”

Introduction

The guy who never gets around to asking his girlfriend to marry him, the guy buying the gym membership that doesn't get used after February, the girl who never went back to get the rest of the tattoo filled in — the stories we know of divided commitment are either tragic or comical. It's easy to recognize it in others, but how can we keep ourselves from having a divided heart when it comes to the most important thing in our lives?

Mark was a master at weaving stories together to get his point across. No point was more important for Mark than what we have here in Mark 10: the cost of discipleship for those who want to enter God's Kingdom. So he strings three heavy stories together in chapter 10. Jesus teaches little children, a rich young ruler, and his fearful disciples what it will take to follow him. None of us can make it to Heaven on our own, but if we follow Jesus, his ransom makes the impossible possible (v. 27) and allows us access to the Kingdom. The only question that remains is this: Will we lay down our lives to follow Jesus, the way he laid down his life to save us?

The rich young ruler from verses 17 to 22 was trying harder than many of us to gain entrance into the Kingdom on his own. He was diligent in following God's laws, and he was desperate to gain Jesus' approval. His efforts were commendable but missing the key ingredient. Jesus loved him enough to point out the hard truth he needed to hear: There was something significant standing in the way of his relationship with God. He wanted to follow Jesus and he wanted to keep his wealth, but he could not do both, and so he walked away in sorrow.

This interaction provided Jesus another great teaching moment with

his disciples. Surely rich people have more of God's favor than everyone else — or so they thought. So if the rich cannot get into God's Kingdom, who can? Those who get into the Kingdom aren't those who get everything but those who give up everything they have to follow Jesus. You can see why the Kingdom is often more attractive to little children, the materially poor, and those who know they cannot attain righteousness on their own. Jesus' call is clear and sobering: Those who are not willing to give up family, friends, money, and land — really their whole lives — for the gospel will not enter the Kingdom.

Caveat: the call of Jesus takes different forms in different times of our lives. For some of us, that means being willing to say goodbye to friends and family going to faraway places on mission. For others, it means considering buying a smaller house than you were planning on so that you can support local outreach efforts. These types of decisions are best made in prayerful conversations with other believers.

Multiplication Principle

The promise of Jesus here is staggering. The call of the gospel on your life is to give up everything, but what you gain in return is **100 times greater**. When you sacrifice for him, God multiplies what you have. This is neither prosperity gospel nor some pious statement about the benefits of a relationship with God. In verse 30, Jesus clearly states that we will receive back a hundredfold what we give up in this life. No, you will not receive a million dollars if you tithe 10,000. Yes, your relationship with God will become the most precious thing to you when you start to follow him. What Jesus means as the fulfillment of this promise comes partly through the church community that you join when you follow him. You will become relationally wealthy with the support and love of self-sacrificial people who join you on your journey of following Christ.

At the mention of persecution, some of Jesus' disciples became fearful. Some had already given up family and land to follow him, but now they were confronted with an even bigger sacrifice. Jesus would go first, as he was about to remind them, and some would follow him all the way to death for the sake of the gospel. The promise of what is on the other side of that sacrifice is tremendous: We get God, eternal life, entrance into the King-

dom, and 100 times what we have sacrificed *in this life*. What are you more focused on: the largeness of what you are giving up or the opportunity to follow Jesus?

Study Questions

1. Read Mark 10:13-34. Write down the verses that describe the Kingdom of God. What do you learn about God's Kingdom from this chapter?

2. This is the only time in Mark's gospel where Jesus is said to be "loving" someone. What is Jesus doing in this passage that you would describe as loving?

3. There are different sets of characters in these verses: the children, the rich man, and Jesus' disciples. How would you describe each group's commitment to Jesus?

Reflection Questions

1. The rich man had one specific blind spot in his commitment to God. Jesus called him to give up his wealth in order to follow him. What do you think God has called/is calling you to give up so that you can follow him with complete commitment?

2. Have you experienced fear about the consequences or cost of following Jesus? What helped you overcome that fear?

3. Jesus says in verse 30 that we will receive back a hundredfold what we sacrifice in this life. The promise is so big that it almost sounds like hyperbole. Do you believe that God can and will deliver on this for you? How have you seen fulfillment of this promise in your life?

Prayer Guide

Pray Mark 10:42-45.

Pray Deep:

- Thank Jesus for the price he paid in order to ransom your soul (Mark 10:45).
- Pray for the strength to be faithful even when circumstances make it difficult (Mark 10:44).

Pray Wide:

- Pray for a clear distinction between how the world exercises authority in relationships and how you serve one another (Mark 10:42, 45).
- Pray that our church would be marked with the love and compassion that Jesus shows in this story (Mark 10:45).

Further Reading

Gaining By Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches that Send

by J.D. Greear

“Jesus Makes Up for Every Sacrifice”

by John Piper, desiringgod.org

“9 Questions to Help You Steward All of Your Life for God’s Glory”

by Brad Hambrick, bradhambrick.com