

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 11/15-16/2021 *Matthew Chapter 19*

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS107, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).

THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!

MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340

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OPENING PRAYER

Matthew Chapter 19

Marriage and Divorce – (vs. 1-10); Why marriage? - God's reason for creation - two shall become one!

Why divorce? – Man's hardness of heart; permits innocent party to remarry.

Jesus Teaches on Celibacy - (vs. 11-12); A calling rather than a duty.

Jesus Blesses Little Children – (vs. 13-15); We are to be like little children – simple, willing to learn, obedient.

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler – (vs. 16-22); What is keeping me from being what He wants me to be?

With God All Things Are Possible – (vs. 23-30) With man, salvation, and all else, is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Matthew records for us the departing of Jesus from the area of the Galilee. He would go to Jerusalem for the feast days according to the law. But the majority of His ministry was centered around the Galilee region. He is leaving now the Galilee for the last time until after His resurrection when He meets His disciples here. He is on His way to Jerusalem to the cross.

Teaching About Divorce

Mat 19:1 *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.*

- **The region of Judea beyond the Jordan**, known as Peraea, was on the other side of the Jordan river. Jesus is leaving now this area of the Galilee, where there are tensions that are built up. But He continues to minister to the multitudes.

Mat 19:2 *And great multitudes* (used 9 times in Bible, 7 times in Matthew; *a great multitude* used 5 times in Matthew) **followed Him, and He healed them there.**

- **His ministry of healing continued.** In the nineteenth chapter, we find Jesus as He, first of all, ministers to the multitudes. We find Him being challenged by the Pharisees. We see Him as He blesses the little children. We see Him dealing with the rich young ruler, and finally, with the disciples, His words of comfort and hope for the future.

Mat 19:3 *The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"*

- **It is important to note that the Pharisees came to Jesus** with the intention of trapping Him. They intend to create a controversy. They intend to split the opinion of the people concerning Jesus. So, the question they asked is a leading question, the purpose is to entrap Jesus and to bring criticism against Him. There were multitudes coming to be healed, but with them came the Pharisees,
- **They are challenging Jesus on the subject of divorce.** There was in the law the provision for divorce. It was rather ambiguous. If a man's wife no longer found favor in his eyes, if he **found some uncleanness in her**, let him give her a writing of divorce, the law said. There was no provision for a woman to divorce her husband but there was this provision for a husband to divorce his wife. But what did it mean she found no longer favor in his eyes but **there was some uncleanness in her?** That was the issue the interpreting of that phrase.
- **There were two major schools of thought.** One led by rabbi by the name of Shammai, who took a very narrow position on this. He said the uncleanness was adultery. That was the only legal grounds for a man to put away his wife or divorce his wife.
- **There was another rabbi by the name of Hallel that took an extremely liberal view, which was,** "she found no longer favor in his eyes and he found some uncleanness in her." He interpreted that as meaning anything by which she displeased him. Maybe not fixing his meals to his satisfaction. So, the Jewish people were divided between the teachings of the Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hallel. The Pharisees are seeking to draw Jesus into this controversy. The question is, Can a man put away his wife for any cause? According to Hallel, yes. According to Shammai, no.
- **The Pharisees are trying to put Jesus into the controversy** because they know that when people are polarized on an issue, which is the easiest way to divide people. Satan uses that so often in the church. A divisive tactic of Satan is to polarize people on issues, and it is easy to create division. With the Jews there was the polarizing between the Pharisees and the Sadducees over the subject of spirits, angels, and resurrection. The Pharisees believed in all, but the Sadducees believed in none of it. Thus, if you wanted to create a division in a crowd, all you had to do is bring up the subject of resurrection or spirits and you have a big argument going between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.
- **Satan often uses these divisive tactics by just polarizing people** in positions and then bringing up the issue, and here we are dividing the church again, causing them to be polarized. The people were polarized on the issue. They knew if they could draw Jesus into it, immediately no matter which side He took, He is going to lose the support of half the people.



Mat 19:4 *And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' (Gen 1:27) So God created (bara) man in His own image; in the image of God He created (bara) him; male and female He created (bara) them.*

- **Notice that Jesus goes back even before the law.** In the law it said let him give her a writing of divorcement. But Jesus goes back before the law. In the beginning, God's original intent, God's original purpose. God's divine ideal is that marriage is for life! That is God's divine ideal, that when you make that commitment, when you take those vows, that it is a lifetime commitment. It takes a lifetime of working out the differences. But you see, God intended that marriage be a process of completion. The purpose of marriage was complementary, that you might become a complete person through marriage. God intended that marriage be a completion, that the two become one. So, Jesus goes back to the original principle of God in the creating of man, "*In the beginning, He made them male and female.*"

Mat 19:5 *and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO (cleave to, be united to, hold fast to) HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE (compound unity, the LORD, our God is One God!) FLESH (one flesh – 7 X in Bible; 3X in Matthew)?*

- **Male and Female!** Man is a three-fold being; body, soul, spirit! As we look into the three aspects of a person, physically, psychologically and spiritually, we see God has created significant differences, physically and psychologically, but sameness, spiritually, in males and females.
- **Jesus makes is that God has done it. He has made the distinctions!** They are different. They do not react the same. But spiritually men and women are identical. There is no difference. Therein lies their equality before God. It is absolutely true that they are equal persons before God and man. But that is only in the spirit. Psychologically and biologically, they are different. When we understand that difference, we can say, with the French, *Vive la difference!* Thank God for it! They do not contribute the same things to life. They are not intended to! Men think differently than women. Men feel differently than women.
- **THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH?** It is unnatural to say there are no differences between the two sexes! **Two people, who are disparate, distinct, and different individuals, with different personalities, different gifts, blending their lives so together that through the process of the years they become one flesh -- that is what marriage is! Marriage is one man and one woman, and it always has been, from the very beginning.** The beauty in the divine ideal in marriage to make the two, significantly different, persons into one (echad – compound unity!)
- **The Original Creation Law** - Instead of going back to Deuteronomy, Jesus went back to Genesis. What God did when He established the first marriage teaches us positively what He had in mind for a man and a woman. If we build a marriage after God's ideal pattern, we will not have to worry about divorce laws.
- **The reasons for marriage.** The only thing that was not "good" about Creation was the fact that the man was alone (**Gen 2:18**) *And the LORD God said, "It is **not good** (only used once in Genesis) that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."* The woman was created to meet this need. Adam could not find fellowship with the animals. He needed a companion who was equal to him and with whom he could find fulfillment. God's answer to this need was Eve.
- **Marriage makes possible the continuation of the race.** "*Be fruitful, and multiply*" was God's mandate to the first married couple (**Gen 1:28**). From the beginning it was God's command that sex be practiced in the commitment of marriage. Outside of marriage, sex becomes a destructive force; but within the loving commitment of marriage, sex can be creative and constructive.
- **Marriage is one way to avoid sexual sins (1Co 7:1-6).** Of course, a man should not marry simply to legalize lust! If he is lustful outside of marriage, he will no doubt be lustful after he is married. He should not think that getting married will solve all of his personal problems with lust. But marriage is God's appointed way for a man and a woman to share the physical joys of sex.
- **Paul used marriage as an illustration of the intimate relationship between Christ and the church.** (**Eph 5:22-23**). Just as Eve was taken from the side of Adam (**Gen 2:21**), so the church was born from the suffering and death of Christ on the cross. Christ loves His church, nourishes it with His Word. He cleanses it and cares for it. Christ's relationship to His church is the example for all husbands to follow.

- **The characteristics of marriage.** - By going back to the original Edenic Law, Jesus reminded His listeners of the true characteristics of marriage. If we remember these characteristics, we will better know how to build a happy and enduring marriage.
- **It is a divinely appointed union.** God established marriage, and therefore only God can control its character and laws. No court of law can change what God has established.
- **It is a physical union.** The man and woman become “*one flesh*.” While it is important that a husband and wife be of one mind and heart, the basic union in marriage is physical. If a man and woman became “one spirit” in marriage, then death would not dissolve the marriage; for the spirit never dies. Even if a man and woman disagree, are “incompatible,” and cannot get along, they are still married; for the union is a physical one and can be broken only by death or sexual immorality.
- **It is a permanent union.** God’s original or divine design was that one man and one woman spend one life together. God’s original Law knows nothing of “trial marriages.” God’s Law requires that the husband and wife enter into marriage without reservations.
- **It is a union between one man and one woman.** God did not create two men and one woman, two women and one man, two men, or two women. “Group marriages,” “gay marriages,” and other variations are contrary to the will of God, no matter what some psychologists and jurists may say.

Mat 19:6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

- **Jesus took a very strict and narrow view concerning divorce.** “*What God has joined together, let not man separate*” Now, this is exactly what they were hoping Jesus would say. They sought to close the trap on Him!
- **For this reason** - That is, God, at the beginning, made but one man and one woman: their posterity should learn that the original intention of marriage was that a man should have but one wife, and the two becoming “one flesh.”
- **The real issue, the real question, is not how to get a divorce; the real question is: Why maintain a marriage?** This is what we ought to know.

Mat 19:7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

- **Everybody recognized that God gave the law through Moses.** That was a given. There was no question in their minds that God spoke to Moses the law for the people. The Torah was recognized as God’s Word. Here, they have Jesus making a declaration that seems to be in conflict with the Mosaic law. If Jesus is saying something that is in conflict with the Mosaic law, then how can He claim to be God? We know that God spoke through Moses and gave the law. Now, if Jesus is saying something that is contradictory to that, then we can point out that Jesus cannot truly be of God. So, how is it then? They close the trap, saying, You are in conflict with God’s Word through Moses!

Mat 19:8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness (skleros – used in hardening of the arteries) of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

- **Again, going back to the beginning.** Jesus is going to the divine ideal in marriage. The two become one! It is a lifetime commitment. But, because of the hardness of the hearts and the inability of people to come to God’s divine ideal, God made provision through the law of Moses for a man to then divorce his wife. But that was because of the hardness of the hearts of the people. It was their failure to come to God’s divine ideal. It is God, more or less, accommodating the weakness of man. It is not really the divine purpose and plan and the best, but it is a provision that God made when people, because of the hardness of their hearts, cannot achieve or attain to God’s best!
- **A successful marriage is not one without problems.** It is one where the problems are being worked out, where the husband and wife do not split but stick together. They face up to their problems, discovering the hardness of heart that is there. They learn how God can soften it. It is a process, not a single production. It is a pilgrimage, not a six weeks' performance. It is intended to be a public portrayal, not a private predicament. It is life-long contract, not a renegotiable franchise, as many presume today.

Mat 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality (porneia – sexual unfaithfulness of a married woman), and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

- **Jesus is very strong, very firm in His teaching concerning divorce.** He indicates that adultery, sexual infidelity, destroys the work God has been doing by building oneness in a marriage. But again,

acknowledging that God made provision for people whose hearts are hardened and cannot and will not come to God's divine ideal. So that divorce and remarriage is not an unpardonable sin. It is a failure to rise to the divine ideal.

- ***And marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery. Adultery breaks the marriage relationship and provides the one ground for divorce. Believers may separate on other grounds, which seems to be the whole point of 1 Corinthians 7, but divorce is permitted on only one basis, adultery. Divorce was granted for the purpose of permitting the innocent party to remarry.***
- **This rule is applicable only to believers.** God is not regulating the lives of unbelievers but is holding them to the message of the Cross first. God wants the unbeliever to come to Christ. He is lost whether he is married, divorced, or single. It makes no difference until he accepts Christ. The important thing to note is that for believers, He puts down one ground for divorce. That is adultery. Now suppose there is a believer whose spouse got a divorce on another ground. What about the innocent party? If there has been adultery there, and in most cases there has been, then the innocent party is permitted to remarry. This seem to be the whole thought in this particular case.

Mat 19:10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

- **Because it is a life-long commitment**, consider if you got to stick with her the rest of your life, it is better not to marry. For us believers, with the exception of sexual immorality, we are to work things out in a troubled marriage, which has many significant results. Our character is developed. The family unit is maintained. There is that comfort, security and fellowship in old age that can never be replaced by just surface relationships. If this were the standard in our culture, it would lead to more thoughtfulness, to really stop and hear the voice of the Lord, before going into marriage, which we see in the divine ideal of life-long marriage. God has a way when He is given a chance to work within a marriage. It isn't easy! But it forces us to do the hard thing, forcing a relationship to grow into a depth that it otherwise wouldn't have.

Jesus Teaches on Celibacy

Mat 19:11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

- **There are those whose hearts are hardened.** They cannot receive this. He, then introduces the subject of eunuchs,

Mat 19:12 For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs (not to marry and have a family, but to fully serve the Lord) for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

- ***For there are eunuchs.*** They are talking about better not to marry. There are some who are eunuchs, who were born with that physical deformity, *from their mother's womb.*
- ***Who were made eunuchs by men.*** This was a common practice in the eastern culture, for those men who had charge of the harems of the potentates. They were castrated, as well as the priests in the temple of Diana of the Ephesians.
- ***There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.*** Origen, one of the early church fathers, in reading this passage of scripture, castrated himself and later on realized that he had made a wrong interpretation of it, but it was too late.
- **If you are given the grace and the calling to remain single, rejoice in that and in the freedom it affords you to serve God with abandon.** If you're not single, be like Philip and raise godly kids. (*Act 21:9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.* If there has been a failure in your past, know there is a redemptive plan for your future as you seek the Lord with sincerity.

Let the Children Come to Me

Mat 19:13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

- **Little children were brought to Him.** The mothers wanted Jesus to bless their little children, to lay His hands on them and pray for them. The greatest thing that any parent can do is to bring their children to Jesus!
- **But the disciples rebuked them.** The disciples felt that they were doing the right thing. Jesus was under a lot of pressure at this point. He had been talking to them about His death. They knew that trouble awaited Him in Jerusalem. They knew the tension that was existing over Jesus throughout the country. Thus, they thought that they were protecting Jesus by telling the mothers do not bother Him with your babies. He is too busy for that. He is too involved with other things.

Mat 19:14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

- (Mar 10:14) *But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased (aganakteō - Greatly afflicted, indignant, moved with indignation; the only time used by Jesus to the disciples) and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.*

Mat 19:15 *And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.*

- **Let the little children come to Me!** How wonderful! Jesus is always touchable! He is never too busy! He is never too pressured even to take time with little children! How far that is from some of these important people that we see today, who sort of isolate and insulate themselves, and become untouchable. If we don't get anything else right, let us bring our children to the Lord!

The Rich Young Ruler

Mat 19:16 *Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"*

Mat 19:17 *So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good (compared to perfection) but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments (all 613 commandments in the law of Moses?)"*

- **Good Teacher... Why do you call Me good?** *No one is good but One, that is God!* Jesus is saying one of two things: **He is saying I am no good, or He is saying I am God.** He is trying to quicken this man's conscience. The reason you called Me good is that you recognized something in Me. Something that is true, I am God. That is what you see in Me. That divine life is that which you are desiring, it is that which you see that I have, that brought you to Me. With the question, Jesus is trying to just draw him and to lead him with His question into an understanding that was there, subconsciously, but He wanted him to really comprehend the truth. Before I give you the answer, will you consider me good, even if you don't agree with the answer? What you see is God!
- **This man had a consciousness that life must be more** than what he had yet experienced. He was aware of an emptiness. There was that lack of fulfillment. He saw in Jesus a quality of life that was higher! He desired it. He was looking for some good thing that he might do in order to **earn** this extraordinary life. This eternal life, this age abiding life.
- **There are many people are endeavoring by good works to be saved.** (Eph 2:8-9) *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, [9] not of works, lest anyone should boast.* Yet, there are always those who are **endeavoring by their good works** to be acceptable by God. But in reality, (Isa 64:6a) *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.* Our good works are like filthy rags in God's sight! By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified!
- **Throughout the Bible the justification by faith is declared,** proclaimed, illustrated, emphasized. It seems like man is just an ingrained religionist who feels that by good works and good efforts, he can be accepted by God. All of the religious systems of man have an emphasis upon the good works and prescribed works for those that would enter into the kingdom of heaven. But in Christianity, it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, and our works avail nothing as far as our salvation is concerned! Thus, this rich, young, ruler was making the common mistake that so many people make, feeling that somehow he could earn his salvation by some good work. *"What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"*
- **We love to boast!** If we could be saved by good works, then think of how we could boast about that! If God would say, Well, you have to read so many chapters and you've got to pray so many hours and you got to lead so many people to Jesus and you got to do... and we could keep all of these lists, then

we could say, Hey look, I've got gold stars all the way! There is that tendency to glory in our flesh, or desire to glory in our flesh. This is so typical of man.

- **The Jews today have a whole system of righteousness by works.** The most holy day of the religious calendar, Yom Kippur, is the day when in the past the priest would go into the Holy of Holies to bring the blood of the goat to atone for the sins of the nation; rather than looking to the sacrifice for the covering of their sins. Yom Kippur today is a day of reflection. You sit and think of all of your evil works this past year, weighing against them all of your good deeds of the past year. You sort of put them in the scale balances. Hopefully, your good deeds will overbalance your evil.

Mat 19:18 He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'YOU SHALL NOT MURDER,' 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' 'YOU SHALL NOT STEAL,' 'YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS,'

Mat 19:19 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER,' and, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "

- **But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."** He said to Him, Which ones? That is a peculiar question because if Jesus would say keep the commandments, I would think all of them. But the ruler is wanting a definition here, *which ones?* Jesus gave to him the commandments from the second table of the law, the commandments that deal with man's relationship with his fellowman.
- **The first table of the law dealt with man's relationship with God.** Jesus did not mention that here. That is interesting because the first table of the law is really basic to and necessary for the second table of the law. You cannot have a right relationship with your fellowman until you have a right relationship with God. The right relationship with God precedes the right relationship with your fellowman. Why Jesus would just jump to the second table of the law is interesting.

Mat 19:20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth (What an outstanding man -- rich, young, a ruler and how moral!) What do I still lack?"

- **I have done these, but I am still not satisfied.** I still have not achieved or attained. I am still feeling this need for something more. I am not fulfilled. *What do I still lack?*
- **Here is an interesting problem.** The last of these commands that Jesus gave to him is, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' We read that he was very rich. He had great possessions. It would seem if he loved his neighbor as himself, he would have been helping some of his unfortunate neighbors who did not have enough. Yet, he said I have done all of these from my youth up. We oftentimes, have a view of ourselves that differs from God's view of us. We are prone to overlook our flaws and our faults. We have justified ourselves. We can give good reasons for why we reacted as we did and why we continue to react that way. But are these reasons valid in the eyes of God?

Mat 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect (teleios – being morally, fully developed), go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me (Here, is the call to salvation!)"

- **Now Jesus is getting to the first table of the law.** "You shall have no other gods before me." Rather than just giving him that commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me," had Jesus said that... Well, I do not have any other gods, no doubt he would have said that. But Jesus points out that he does have a god, a little god! It is his possessions. They are mastering his life!
- **Riches are not wrong in and of themselves.** But if your riches master your life, if you are ruled by your riches, if they are the most important thing to you, if they have precedence over your relationship with God, then they are wrong! There were many people in the Bible that God blessed with great riches! (**Gen 13:2**) *Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.* It is not sinful to have riches. It is wrong when riches are above God in your life. That was the case for this young man. His riches were the thing that was standing in the way of his following Jesus Christ. The real essence of the word of Jesus to him was follow Me. If you want eternal life, follow Jesus! That is the essence, which is the heart of it. If you want eternal life, follow Jesus.
- **Go and sell what you have and give to the poor" is not universally applicable.** If Jesus were talking to you tonight, it may be that He would put His finger on something entirely different in your life, that which is holding you back from following Him completely. That which has captured your heart and that which has become sort of the master passion in your life, that which is ahead of God and keeps you from following Jesus. That is the thing that He would put His finger on, in your life now. With

this young man, it was riches that was standing in the way, but that does not really affect many of us. But there are other things that can stand in the way of your following Jesus, that hinder your following Him. Jesus put the finger on the issue in his life that was keeping him from following the Lord.

- **The promise is you will have treasure in heaven.** Come and follow Me! That is the heart of the message. I am God. Do you want life? Do you want this divine life, this age abiding life? Repent of the one thing that is an obstacle. Follow Me!

Mat 19:22 *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful (lupeo – sad, distressed, grieved), for he had great possessions.*

- We are told in (**Luk 18:18**) Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" We are told here that he was a young man, verse twenty and again in verse twenty-two, and we are told that he had great possessions. So, it is called the story of the rich young ruler. Notice he had what most of us feel. If I just had that, man, I would be fully satisfied. As the old saying goes, "Too soon old, too late smart." Youth, if I were only young again and knew what I know now, if I only had enough riches, I would be satisfied! I would be happy. I would be content. But this fellow had it all. He had the riches. He was moral. When Jesus flashed on him these commandments, he said I have done all of those from the time I was a youth. I have kept these. He was moral. He was wealthy. He was young, but yet he was aware of a lack! There was still something unfulfilled. He lacked this life, this eternal life!
- **By asking him to sell his goods, Jesus was forcing him to examine his own heart and determine his priorities.** With all of his commendable qualities, the young man still did not truly love God with all of his heart. Possessions were his god. He was unable to obey the command, "Go and sell . . . come and follow." Notice the young man is only focusing on what he has to give up! How tragic it is, not to focus on what He could gain! Eternal, everlasting life!
- **The young man went away grieved, but he could have gone away in great joy and peace.** We cannot love and serve two masters (**Mat 6:24**). We can be sure that, apart from Christ, even the material possessions of life give no lasting joy or pleasure. It is good to have the things money can buy, provided we do not lose the things that money cannot buy. Unless this rich ruler eventually turned to Christ, he died without salvation, one of the "richest" men in the cemetery.
- **What thing or things do I have in my life that I consider to be great?** Spouse, children, possessions? How do these "great" things compare to what I have in my relationship with my God? Do I feel like there is something lacking in my life, right now? How calm and quiet is my soul? Is my hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever.

Mat 19:23 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard (duskolos – hard to fulfill) for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.*

- **As this young fellow was walking away, head down, sorrowful.** He came with all kinds of expectations and hopes, but he goes away sorrowful. When the Lord puts His finger on the issue in your life that is holding you back from following Him, that is when that choice must be made. Do I deny myself? Do I bring these things to the cross that I might follow Jesus? Or do I go away and walk my own path apart from Him? It is decision time! When the Spirit of God speaks to your heart and shows you those things that are hindering your walk with Jesus, those things that are keeping you from following Him completely!
- **Then Jesus said to His disciples, Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.** Another gospel said (**Mar10:24c**) *And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!*

Mat 19:24 *And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (likely a sewing needle – meaning basically impossible from a human standpoint!) than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."*

- **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.** What is Jesus saying? He seems to be saying something that is impossible for a camel to do! In the use of such proverbs it is not necessary to understand them literally. They merely denote the extreme difficulty of the case.
- **Some say, at the great gates of the city there was always a small little gate** so that at night when the gates of the city were barred, and someone would come and need entrance into the city. They could get down and squeeze through this little sub-gate which was called the eye of the needle. There are those, and

you can read commentaries that will tell you that to get the camel through that little sub-gate, they had to pull on the thing and push on the thing and it just took all kinds of effort to get the camel through. There are those that would like to think that they are like the rich young ruler who are looking for some good work that they can do to be saved and they like to think that if you work hard enough, push hard enough, pull hard enough, you can make it. But Jesus eliminated all of that when He says next:

Mat 19:25 *When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished (exceedingly amazed), saying, "Who then can be saved?"*

Mat 19:26 *But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible (dunatos – able, competent, powerful)."*

- **Who then can be saved? And Jesus said, With men it is impossible.** There is not a single work that you can do or combination of works that you can do to save yourself. Salvation is beyond man's capacity! With men it is impossible, by pulling and pushing and exerting a lot of effort you will never make it. By being honest and moral and sincere, you'll never make it. By being religious, you will never make it. With man it is impossible, man cannot save himself with his greatest efforts. Salvation is of the Lord! But know this! With God, it is even possible to save you. Are you resting on that?

Mat 19:27 *Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"*

- *Then Peter answered and said to Him, See, we have left all and followed You.* This rich, young, ruler was called upon to go sell, give to the poor, come, and follow Me, and you will have treasure in heaven. That was the promise. Peter said, Lord, we have forsaken everything! We have left it all and followed You. *What shall we have?*

Mat 19:28 *So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration (paliggenesia – re-creation, spiritual rebirth, specifically Messianic restoration), when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

- **Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration.** In the original, literally the making new, in this new order that I am bringing, in this new creation, this new order, **when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.** What shall you have? When we bring in the new order, God's divine order, then you will sit with Me, as I sit upon the throne of His glory! You will sit upon twelve thrones and judging the twelve tribes of Israel!

Mat 19:29 *And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.*

- **Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake** In those days, for those Jews, many times it was at the price of earthly relationships. Even to the present day in Orthodox Jewry, if a son or a daughter received Jesus Christ, they will be disowned by the family. They will even in extreme cases have funeral services for them and do not even recognize that they live anymore. They treat them as though they were dead.
- **This is interesting going back to what Jesus had said earlier concerning divorce.** Now, He is saying, if you gave up a wife. So, this is not for adultery's sake. This is for the kingdom of God's sake, because the breach between you and your wife was created because of your faith in Christ and her lack of faith. If an unbelieving wife is not willing to remain with the believing husband, let her depart. She is not under bondage in such cases. There are times when the faith in Jesus Christ, determining to follow Jesus Christ, does cost you, your family.
- **Shall receive a hundredfold and inherit eternal life. God will not be a debtor to man!** You cannot give up anything but what God does not replace it a hundredfold. He will not be a debtor to you. If for the kingdom of God's sake, you give up anything, you can be sure that God will make it back to you over and over again, a hundredfold.

Mat 19:30 *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

- **Many of the important people of the earth will be last,** those that have first prominence today. Many of those that are last will be first, the new order established by Jesus.
- **There is to be a reward for the saved ones who have sacrificed for Jesus' sake.** Many an unknown saint, of whom the world has not heard, will be given first place in His presence someday. In that day, it may be that many outstanding Christian leaders who receive wide acclaim in this life

will be ignored while many unknown saints of God will be rewarded. What a glorious, wonderful picture this presents to us!

Key principles - Matthew Chapter 19

- **Marriage and Divorce** – Why marriage? - two shall become one! Why divorce? – man’s hardness of heart. The real issue is not how to get a divorce; but why to maintain a marriage! God made male and female for the reason of becoming one flesh!
- **Jesus Teaches on Celibacy** - A calling rather than a duty
- **Jesus Blesses Little Children** – We are to be like little children – simple, willing to learn, obedient
- **Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler** – What is keeping me from being what He wants me to be? What thing or things do I have in my life that I consider to be great? Spouse, children, possessions? How do these “great” things compare to what I have in my relationship with my God? Do I feel like there is something lacking in my life, right now? How calm and quiet is my soul? Is my hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever!
- **With God All Things Are Possible** – With man, salvation, and all else, is impossible, but with God all things are possible. *Many who are first will be last and the last first!*

Final Thought! *Re the rich, young, ruler.... But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful!*

- **Decision time?** Whenever the Spirit of God speaks to my heart. Whenever He puts His finger on things that are hindering my walk with Him. Those things that are keeping me from following Him completely, that is when that choice must be made. Do I deny myself? Do I bring these things to the cross that I might follow Jesus and follow Him more closely? Or do I go away, going my way, walking my own path apart from Him? It is decision time!...Maybe it is your decision time! What is your decision?
- **Remember His grace and mercy in saving you!** Give Him your praise and your worship. He has done great things!

Closing Song:

GREAT THINGS - Phil Wickham (4:26)

Come let us worship our King
Come let us bow at His feet
He has done great things
See what our Savior has done
See how His love overcomes
He has done great things
He has done great things

Oh, hero of Heaven, You conquer the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things
We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things
You've been faithful through every storm
You'll be faithful forevermore
You have done great things
And I know You will do it again
For Your promise is "Yes and Amen"
You will do great things
God, You do great things

Oh, hero of Heaven, You conquer the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things
We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things
Hallelujah God, above it all
Hallelujah God, unshakable
Hallelujah, You have done great things
Hallelujah God, above it all
Hallelujah God, unshakable
Hallelujah, You have done great things
You've done great things

Oh, hero of Heaven, You conquer the grave
You free every captive and break every chain
Oh God, You have done great things
We dance in Your freedom, awake and alive
Oh Jesus, our Savior, Your name lifted high
Oh God, You have done great things
You have done great things
Oh God, You do great things

Closing Prayer:

Assignment for next week: Read *Matthew Chapter 20*