

## Mark 10:13-31

### “A Detrimental Decision”

Today’s text brings us to the only occasion that we ever find someone having come to the feet of Jesus and being worse when they left than when they came. and It’s kind of a sobering reminder to us that not everyone is going to make the right decision when it comes to Christ. There will be those who aren’t willing to count the cost, who have the opportunity to respond to the invitation to *follow* Jesus, inherit eternal life *from* Jesus; they’ll weigh their options and decide to walk away...

If you remember right last week we were considering the Divine design for marriage. Jesus had been talking to His disciples about what it meant to have a right relationship with God and a right relationship with one another. About serving rather than being served, about having *peace* with one another as opposed to *problems* with one another; it was out of that context that the Holy Spirit led Mark to record what Jesus had to say concerning the touchy and tough topic, the incredibly sensitive subject of marriage and divorce. It was like, “As long as we’re talking about getting along, serving not being served, having peace and not problems, let’s talk about the marriage relationship. Only let’s not really focus on what qualifies us for divorce, but rather what does it take to remain married. You’ve searched the scriptures for God’s heart on divorce, but what you need to understand is God’s heart on marriage.” Why? Because the institution of marriage doesn’t belong to man, man didn’t ordain it, didn’t make the rules concerning it so he really doesn’t have any say *in* it. What matters is what does God say, what does His heart show concerning the marriage relationship?

and Of course we discovered that God’s divine design never included divorce but rather it was to be 1 man with 1 woman for life; the 2 become 1 flesh; so then they are no longer 2, but 1 flesh. So what God has joined together, whatever He’s cemented together as 1 unit, let not man separate. Its God’s institution man has no right to tamper with it. Now, does God *ever* see divorce as a justifiable course of action? Yes, His word is very clear and we discussed those couple things last week, we know that what’s not included as verifiable options are things like misery, incompatibility, I don’t love them anymore... God does not validate excuses like that. Those are things you should’ve considered before you ever said “I do.” Now you need to bring your relationship to the word of God, be *obedient* to the word of God, and let the Lord heal that relationship if you find yourself in one of those categories. It doesn’t have to be the way it is if your marriage is suffering, but you’ve got to be willing to submit yourself to the Lord and do what He requires *of you*. You’re not to worry so much about what the Lord requires of *your spouse*, you’re to focus on being the spouse He’s called you to be.

But the reason I bring all that back up is because in Vs 13-16 of Mark Ch 10, right after Jesus counsels us on marriage and divorce guess what comes up? The children; we see children being brought *to* and blessed *by* the Lord. As painful as divorce is on the spouses, with out a doubt it does the most damage, the most devastation to the children. So it’s only natural that after the Lord counsels concerning marriage and the devastation of divorce that we see His

heart it taking up the children into His arms and blessing them, reaching out and making Himself real to them, bringing a source of comfort and security to their lives.

### Vs13-16

It sorta shocks us doesn't it?

To see Jesus' disciples act in such a way so as to *discourage* parents from bringing their children to the Lord... Especially when we stop to remember that just a few short verses ago in Ch 9 Vs 36-37 that He demonstrated to His disciples that ministry to children (and otherwise "insignificant" people according to the social stigma) was an absolutely essential priority to Him. That to receive a child in His name, to minister to and bless a child was to minister to and bless Him. and We don't know exactly how much time has past between the 2 events, but we know it hasn't been much, but even if it's been a couple weeks you would think that it wasn't so far removed from their minds that they'd already seem to be oblivious to the Lord's heart toward children here.

I have no doubt that somewhere in the back of their minds they thought they were doing the Lord a favor. He's always got demands *upon* Him, people are never giving a break *to* Him, He's been speaking a lot about dying lately, He's under a lot of pressure seemingly, the last thing He needs is to be pestered by a bunch of kids. But really this scene here if nothing else should serve to underscore the heart of God toward kids all the more. Because Jesus knows He's mere months from the cross, He's headed to Jerusalem for just that purpose, and yet He still takes the time to welcome the children into His arms, maybe some of them are pulling on His hair, or messing up His beard, and He's just loving *on* them, giving a sense of value and priority *to* them.

When we read there in Vs 13 that the disciples rebuked those who brought them, more literally it reads simply that the disciples rebuked them. and I bring that up because the word translated to indicate those whom the disciples were rebuking is in the masculine gender. What that means is that it wasn't only moms who were bringing their kids to church so to speak, but that the dads were there and placed priority on bringing their children to Jesus that He might touch their lives and bless them.

and I'm not going to take away from the mom's responsibility to be a godly mom, but dad you need to be the priest of your home. You need to set the bar and do what you need to do in your home personally and in church publicly to make sure your children have the opportunity to come to Jesus that He might touch them and bless their lives. and Where we read that they "brought" them, the word brought was commonly used of a sacrifice or an offering. The idea being that they were dedicating their children to God and asking the Lord to place His blessing upon them. In other words Jesus was doing dedications here. Again we do well to recognize that God is the giver of life and we should dedicate back to Him that which He has so graciously given to us.

Now it would seem that the disciples were probably outside the house, and Jesus caught a glimpse of them through the door, or perhaps a window, and seeing them rebuke the people didn't exactly set right with Him. Where we read that He was *greatly displeased* (Vs 14) that's a kind way of saying it. It would be more accurate to say that He was indignant, it made Jesus mad to see them discouraging people from bringing their kids to Him. and He said, "Hey, let the little children come to Me and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God." Don't

think that children are a waste of time, or that they don't really understand it so why waste your time with it. Believe me when I tell you that kids can make a cognitive decision for Christ early, early on, much younger than what we might even realize. But even if they *don't* understand it all, we err to make their coming to Christ a complicated/necessary to understand kind of thing.

The bottom line is that if they want to come, let them come. People often worry about when their kids want to be baptized, not sure if they understand. To me it doesn't really matter, they're voicing a desire to want to do something that honors the Lord I'm not going to forbid them. Or make it difficult for them, I want to open the door and make it simple for them. "Well what if they didn't understand but it clicks later?" Great, let em come then to. The bottom line is that we're not to forbid the children from coming to the Lord. Jesus says...

### **Vs 15**

We're often times telling kids that they need to grow up. Jesus says *we* need to be more childlike if we hope to inherit the kingdom of God. Now He's not saying we need to be *childish*, but *child like*. What does He mean by that? What does a child illustrate to us about what is needed to enter the kingdom of God? (This doesn't really have anything to do with the study but I found a few things kids have said online that I were kinda funny so no better time but the present to share them with you) A Sunday school teacher asked her class, "What was Jesus' mother's name?" One child answered, "Mary." The teacher then asked, "Who knows what Jesus' father's name was?" A little kid said, "Verge." Confused, the teacher asked, "Where did you get that?" The kid said, "Well, you know they are always talking about Verge n' Mary. A 3-year-old, Reese, praying the Lord's prayer, "Our Father, Who does art in heaven, Harold is His name. Amen." After the christening of his baby brother in church, Jason sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied, "That preacher said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I wanted to stay with you guys." A Sunday school teacher asked her children, as they were on the way to church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church? One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5 and Ryan 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake, I can wait.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!" A father was at the beach with his children when the four-year-old son ran up to him, grabbed his hand, and led him to the shore where a seagull lay dead in the sand. "Daddy, what happened to him?" the son asked "He died and went to Heaven," the Dad replied. The boy thought a moment and then said, "Did God throw him back down?" A wife invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?" "I wouldn't know what to say," the girl replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," the wife answered. The daughter bowed her head and said, "Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

There are lots of things that have been mentioned at various time regarding the characteristics and qualities of a child. We could no doubt consider several, but I think the bottom line Jesus points to when He uses the word, "receive." A child is an absolute dependant,

they depend on their provider (parent) for everything, they trust provision will be there. They're not afraid to ask for things even though they don't earn them and whatever they have they have to simply/humbly *receive* it. So ultimately it seems to me that Jesus is saying that if we're not willing to *receive* the gift of God (eternal life) simply/humbly just trusting the Father for it, acknowledging our absolute dependence upon Him regarding it, realizing that we can't do *anything* to earn it we'll never make it. I've never seen a child refuse a gift out of self-sufficient pride. Even so we'll never enter the kingdom through earning it, we have to humble ourselves and simply receive it in the person of Jesus Christ

### Vs16

The word "blessed" speaks of blessing fervently and passionately, the Lord genuinely desired that these children would have the life long testimony of a life set apart to the glory of God. I mean the conversion of an adult is great but their life is ½ spent, the conversion of a child represents an entire life for God to use. By the way here's another reason to emphasize the evangelism of children.

I read some stats on a Gallup poll taken a # of yrs ago that stated 19 out of 20 people who became Christians did so before the age 25. At the age of 25, 1 in 10,000 become believers; at 35, 1 in 50,000. 45, 1 in 200,000; at 50, 1 in 300,000 and at 75 1 in 700,000 people will become a believer. Now we realize that God doesn't put much stock in statistics but the point remains that child evangelism should be a major priority in the church and in our homes. Not scaring them or forcing them into a confession, but simply teaching them, encouraging them in Christ, giving them the opportunity to commit their lives to Christ, and give their heart to Christ.

### Vs17

Follow the flow, keep the context and catch the contrast. Jesus has been teaching about the need for total dependence and receiving in humility the gift of eternal life. and Directly following that we're brought face to face with an *independent* young man who wants to know how he can *earn* what he has to *do* to enter the kingdom of God; that's no coincidence. Now Matt tells us he's a young man, of course Mark informs us he was rich, and Luke let's us know that he was a ruler. Hence, "The rich young ruler." and There are a few things we can glean here.

We note the ambition of this young man as he came "running," he wasn't going let this moment pass him by. We note his humility and respect, "he knelt" before the Lord, and we note a commendable desire in him, he wanted to inherit eternal life. So far so good, he seems to be right where he needs to be.

Something else we do well to observe from this is that the things of this world will not satisfy the void in the human heart. Think about it, he's like Bono (U2) or Mick Jagger (Rolling stones) he's got wealth, he's even one up on those guys, he's young, he's got power, everything that this world esteems he's been there done that, yet he still hasn't found what he's looking for. He still can't get no satisfaction. He was still lacking, still knew there was something missing in his life, yet he noticed something in Jesus, that quality of age abiding life. There was something about Jesus that had drawn him to seek Him for the answer. Jesus had what he wanted, but Jesus didn't have a lot of money, He didn't occupy a seat on capital hill yet He had something that this young man didn't. and So he comes to Christ and he asks Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Well already we see a bit of confusion in his “earn his own way” philosophy; he uses the words “do” and “inherit” in the same breath. By its very nature an inheritance is a gift, you don’t *do* anything to get it, you simply *receive* it. and That’s what Jesus will ultimately pin point even as He just made clear regarding the children. Eternal life is nothing to be *achieved* it has to be *received*, we can’t gain it through independent acts of meritorious service, you can only receive it through total trust and dependence (as a child). This guy thought the Lord would give him some magnanimous feat to accomplish, and then once and for all he could settle it in his mind he’d be right with God.

Now Jesus is going to get to that but before He does He zeros in on how this guy addressed Him, notice.

### **Vs18**

You have to understand that the title “Good” wasn’t just thrown around in that day, “He’s a good man” the usage of *good* was generally understood as the intrinsic and inherent nature of God. The scriptures were clear, *“They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.”* Ps 14:3 and Again, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;”* Isa 53:6 So Jesus basically says, “Stop right there, why did you say that? What did you see in Me that caused you to call Me good, there’s only 1 good and that’s God.”

What is Jesus saying? That He’s no good? No, He’s telling him that He’s God, He’s trying to get this young man to see what it is that He’s drawn to in Christ. He’s seeking to reveal Himself to this young man. “You’re right in calling Me good, but that means I’m God.”

### **Vs19-20**

Jesus takes Him to the 2<sup>nd</sup> table of the Law, those that deal with man’s relationship with man. and He’s trying to expose something in this guy’s heart, because if you want to go to heaven on your own merit you’ve got to keep the law perfectly. So He says, “You want to know what you have to do, keep the law.” and He lists a few of the 10 commandments, don’t steal, don’t murder, don’t lie about things, honor your mother and your father.” and The guy says, “Teacher (notice he dropped the “good”) I’ve kept all these things since I was but a youth.” You might think Jesus would’ve launched into another discourse like the sermon on the Mt, because he obviously had a fundamental error in the way he perceived the law. You might outwardly say, “I’ve never murdered someone so check that one off.” The problem is that you’ve wanted someone dead in your heart, you’ve wrote them off, you’ve killed countless people (who’ve pulled out in front of you) in your heart. The law is spirit, aimed not at outward reformation but to demonstrate the need for an inward transformation. To show us that we’re all adulterers in our heart, we’re all murderers at heart, we’ve all stolen something that didn’t belong to us in not literally then in our desire inwardly. The law was meant to show us not how to be righteous but that we can never *be* righteous on our own.

But Jesus didn’t go there, it’s as though He says, “Ok, I’ll give you that, lets suppose you’ve actually succeeded in having a right relationship with man.”

### **Vs21-22**

Do you see what just happened? Jesus allowed him a right relationship with man, but showed him that what he lacked was a right relationship with God. What was the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment? *“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the*

*house of bondage. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.'*" Ex 20:2-3 This guy knelt before Jesus, but his heart *bowed* before another; money. Money was his god, and he wasn't willing to count the cost, he wasn't willing to lose his life to find life. He wasn't willing to give up his treasure on earth even though Jesus promised him treasure in heaven. He was brought to a cross road, Jesus brought him to a place whereby he had to make a decision, where did his loyalty truly lie? Jesus said, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* Matt 6:24 You'll do what you got to do to make that extra buck and secure your financial future, or you'll do what you got to do to stay committed to Christ, but if those things ever come into conflict you can't have it both ways, who's your master? Whom do you serve? God, or mammon? It's been said that money makes a marvelous servant, but a terrible master. He came to Jesus for insight, wanted to know what to do; but Jesus isn't someone who merely points the way to eternal life. He *is the way*, we say it all the time, it's not what we do it's what He's done.

Jesus said, "One thing you lack; go and sell everything you have, give it all to the poor (store up your treasure in heaven) and come; take up the cross and follow Me." Now you should know that Jesus isn't advocating a general mandatory lifestyle of asceticism as a prerequisite for eternal life. The issue wasn't really, "Get rid of all that you have" it was "come, take up the cross and follow Me." But for this man there was something that was hindering him from whole hearted commitment to Christ and that was his money. and That may be true for you as well, I don't know.

But *whatever* it is that keeps you from following Christ, looking *to* Him and relying *on* Him to be your righteousness before the throne of God it's gotta go. It may be a person getting in the way, it may be a position of power that you're jockeying for, could be some passion of yours. Whatever the case may be if it's between you and obedience to Christ it's gotta go.

When this guy heard that it landed on his heart like a ton of bricks; and it's such a sad situation because here he was so close to salvation that he could literally reach out and touch it, yet he missed it. and It's not that he *couldn't* enter, it's that he *wouldn't* enter; he was willing to give up eternity for what he had presently. He was willing to sacrifice a relationship with the Lord at the expense of pursuing riches as his priority. You might say his wealth made him poor...

Contrast him with a another rich man like Zacchaeus who after coming to Christ said, *"Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."* And Jesus said to him, *"Today salvation has come to this house,"* Luke 19:8-9 The things a man does with his money reveals incredible amounts about the man; the bible is clear, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Matt 6:21 We're to die to self, the self life, crucify the flesh (take up the cross) and follow Christ.  
**Vs23-25**

You see they subscribed the prosperity doctrine, they felt like riches were a sign of God's blessing upon a man's life. If a person had money then that meant they were in good with God. Jesus says far from a benefit, riches can actually be a detriment. They can cause you to settle in and be satisfied with the things of this world. and Ultimately it comes back to what Jesus says in Vs 24, where do you place your trust...*really*. Because we're not to trust in money we're to

trust in the Lord, and sometimes with money that line can blur. Jesus says, “Be careful.” The apostle Paul said this, *“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”* 1 Timothy 6:9-10 That pretty much sums up what we just witnessed with the rich young ruler doesn’t it? We read in Jer 9:23-24 *“Thus says the Lord: ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,’ says the Lord.”*

You see for this man it was his money so Jesus seized the opportunity to teach us from it (and believe me money in the scriptures is addressed over and over again). There are over 2,300 Vs in the bible that deal with money, more than those that deal with prayer (approx 500) and faith (approx 490) combined. 280 Vs in the gospels alone deal with money, about 1 out of 10, it’s important (again where your treasure is there your heart will be).

But as we read there in Jeremiah if you’re trusting in your own wisdom, your own strength or achievements, it’s a problem, we’re to trust in the Lord.

There in Vs 25 Jesus is simply saying that if anyone trusts in anything other than the Lord he’s not going to make it to heaven. He creates an impossible scenario, the largest animal in their region trying to get through the smallest opening, it’s not going to happen. But it’ll happen before a person trusting in their riches gets into the kingdom of God, what’s the point? That salvation is of the Lord, man can’t earn his way there, it’s the gift of God, notice.

### **Vs26-27**

They’re thinking, man if someone who’s been blessed of God can’t make it than how do any of the rest of us stand a chance? and Jesus makes it clear, you don’t. Salvation is impossible with man, but not with God, turn *toward* and trust *in* Him.

### **Vs28-31**

Right now Peter is all about getting, the day will come when he’s about giving as he looks at the man begging at the gate beautiful and says, “Silver and gold I don’t have, but what I do have I *give to you*, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth stand up and walk.”

But he says, “He wouldn’t leave anything to follow You Lord, we left everything, You said He’d have treasure in heaven if he forsook all to follow You, what do we get?”

and To try and be sensitive to your time Jesus simply says that our eternal reward will by far outweigh any temporal sacrifice we might make. If there’s division in your family because of Christ, if you lose or leave your job because of Christ, if you have to liquidate some things to be right with Christ. God will not be a debtor to you, or to me. For the one door that closed to you, the body of Christ will open up 100. If I had any need whatsoever I’m sure there are well over 100 people even in this church (much more the body of Christ in general) that I could call on who would be there for me in my time of need. Now Jesus is speaking in hyperbole here, you won’t get 100 wives (you probably wouldn’t want 100 wives). The point is that you can not out give God. Oh He’s brutally honest, you’ll be counted worthy to suffer for His sake, that’s part of the package, but as we’ve discovered He translates our temporal suffering to eternal

glory. So be it in this age or the age to come God will pour out on you way more than you were ever able to give *to* Him or sacrifice *for* Him.

The world looks on the prominent, the wealthy, those who have it all and give them a 1<sup>st</sup> class status. Jesus says, “God doesn’t agree with that,” that rich young ruler probably had 1<sup>st</sup> priority, these poor disciples didn’t get much clout, but we’ll all be in for a few surprises in the age to come. God’s looking to your heart, what’s He find, where’s your trust?

That rich young ruler made a detrimental decision...did he ever come to Christ? I don’t know, but that day he walked away from his opportunity to be forgiven of his sin and receive the free gift of everlasting life. What will you do? Maybe you already know the Lord, I think that’s great, think through your priority, what’s your primary pursuit in life, to know the Lord, to walk with the Lord, to make Him known? Or the next step on the corporate ladder, more money in the bank, personal pleasure...If you don’t know the Lord, you’ve never surrendered to the Lord don’t walk away from Him, perhaps Jesus is pinpointing your problem right now, what it is that’s between you and Him, are you willing to let it go? Or will you walk away sorrowful and full of regret having rejected the opportunity to be forgiving of your sin and receive the free gift of everlasting life?

Prayer Points:

Lord, we thank You that You look upon us in love, that You have so loved us that You’ve given Yourself for us. and We want to acknowledge our trust in You, our absolute and total dependence upon You. with out You we can do nothing, may we lead our lives set apart to You, willingly surrendering whatever we need to that You might have the whole of who we are. and We thank You for Your precious promise to take care of us, to bless and reward us though we’ve done nothing to deserve it. We praise You and we thank You...

Maybe through the course of this time together you’ve found yourself in place whereby at Jesus’ feet He’s ministered to you what it is that’s between you and Him. What it is that keeps you from Him, are you willing to forsake it, turn from it, repent and follow Him? If so then why not begin right now?