

Theme: Disciples of Christ must recognize and reject the temptation to trust in riches, look to God alone as their source of identity and salvation, and use their wealth to be a blessing to others.

I. Intro - Gospel and Wealth Paradox

- A. When the Gospel enters a region the poor receive it
- B. Over time as they walk with Christ they are blessed and wealth grows
- C. As wealth grows their love for God cools and the Gospel wanes in the culture
- D. The relationship between wealth and God's kingdom is complex!
- E. Jesus teaches about the Kingdom and wealth

II. A Penetrating Conversation

- A. Jesus and the rich young ruler
 - As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:17
 - 1. We looked at this in the previous teaching as well
 - 2. As we saw, the key issue is entering the Kingdom
 - a. The young man is asking about eternal life
 - b. Jesus emphasized the only God is good
 - c. Jesus used God's law to point the man to his sin
 - d. "How hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!" - 2x!
 - e. Only God can get a human into the kingdom!
 - 3. But a second key topic is that of wealth

- B. The important issue of wealth in this story
 - At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had **great wealth**. Mark 10:22
 - When the **young** man heard this, he went away sad, because he had **great wealth**. Matthew 19:22
 - A certain **ruler** asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²³ When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of **great wealth**. Luke 18:18, 23
 - 1. From all three we see he was a rich, young, ruler
 - 2. All three emphasize his great wealth
 - 3. Mark holds off mentioning his wealth to emphasize it
 - 4. Jesus exposes the idol of his wealth
 - Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Mark 10:21
 - 5. "It is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom!"
 - Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the **rich** to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a **rich man** to enter the kingdom of God." Mark 10:23-25
 - a. 2x the rich hard for the rich, 1x hard for everyone
 - b. "Easier for a camel to go through the eye..."
 - c. Clearly Jesus is warning about the danger of riches!
 - 6. The rich young ruler proves the point - he prefers his riches to the Kingdom of God & following Jesus!

III. The Kingdom and Wealth

A. The blessing of wealth

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"
²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Mark 10:23-27

1. "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom!"
2. The disciples are amazed and Jesus doubles down!
3. The camel and the eye of the needle
4. The disciples are even more amazed - who can be saved then?
 - a. Their question assumes wealth is an advantage
 - b. Their question assumes wealth is a sign of God's favor and blessing
5. The Bible teaches that wealth is a blessing of God
Praise the Lord. **Blessed** is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in his commands. ² His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be **blessed**. ³ **Wealth and riches are in his house**, and his righteousness endures forever. Psalm 112:1-3

Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are **riches and honor**. Proverbs 3:16

Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. Genesis 13:2

- a. Many Bible verses say that wealth is God's blessing
 - b. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob blessed with great money and possessions - as were Job, David, Solomon, etc.
6. Over time these verses and examples became so dominant that many simply equated wealth with God's favor and blessing

B. The dangers of wealth

Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the **rich** to enter the kingdom of God!"
²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a **rich** man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "**Who then can be saved?**" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Mark 10:23-27

1. Jesus is clearly indicating that worldly wealth can make it even harder to enter the kingdom!
2. The disciples' question assumes it is easier for the rich to enter the kingdom, but Jesus says it is harder!
3. The rich young ruler had just proven this point!
4. Jesus had taught on this danger before!
Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, **the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful**. Mk 4:18-19

5. There is also a great stream of biblical teaching on the dangers of wealth which the disciples and others had ignored!

Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them. Psalm 62:10

Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down,¹³ and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied,¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Deut. 8:12-14

- a. These and other verses were forgotten or ignored
- b. It is easy to mute Bible verses warning of dangers in things we love and value!

6. Wealth easily becomes a god challenging Christ
“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”¹⁴ The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.¹⁵ He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight. Luke 16:13-15

- a. This is the danger of wealth - it becomes a rival god.
- b. Earthly riches are a huge temptation to view myself as good, as self-sufficient, as having special worth to God - the opposite of the way of the kingdom!
- c. The rich young ruler was a living parable of this truth

7. Wealth is like nitro glycerin - it can be used to accomplish great things, but it is inherently dangerous to those holding it!

IV. Applying the Word

A. How do I relate to my wealth?

1. The focus in this passage (and most of Jesus’ teaching!) was on the dangers of wealth - so we will place our focus there.
2. As a disciple I don’t hear the warnings for others but for myself!
3. Recognizing my wealth - I am rich!
 - a. All Americans are WILDLY wealthy by the standards of almost all humans alive today and throughout history!
 - b. This means I must wrestle with Jesus’ warnings!
4. My wealth presents a danger to my soul!
 - a. Wealth tempts me to self-sufficiency rather than God-sufficiency
 - b. Wealth tempts me to greed and covetousness for more, and can destroy my faith and love for God!
But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.⁹ People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. ¹ Timothy 6:8-10
 - c. This is magnified in our culture for two reasons:
 1. Our economy is built on encouraging coveting and greed. It says life is found in an abundance of possessions (but it is not - Luke 12:15)

2. The health and wealth Gospel movement is a cancer in the church teaching that godliness is a means to financial gain - but it is not! (1 Timothy 6:5)

d. Is my soul being shaped by greed or gratitude?

e. Do I have a greedy or a giving soul?

5. God's antidote - blessed to be a blessing!

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

a. Don't be arrogant or trust in wealth - hope in God!

b. Be rich in good deeds - generous and sharing!

c. Store your wealth in the age to come!

B. The Table of Feasting

1. This Table reminds us of the True Source of Life

2. This Table offers the chance to confess our sins, be cleansed, and renewed.

3. This Table calls for us to Feast upon the True Bread that satisfies

4. 1 John 2:15-17 corporate reading

Communion

Genesis 12:2-3

Teaching keywords: Kingdom of God; money and finances; salvation and deliverance; discipleship; mercy ministry

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." Gen. 12:2-3

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good — except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰ "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." ²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²² At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. ²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." ²⁸ Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" ²⁹ "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Mark 10:17-31

Lessons for Disciples - The Kingdom and Wealth

Mark 10:17-31

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