

(Through the Bible) Matthew 18-19

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon emphasizes humility, the importance of serving others, and the necessity of forgiveness in the Christian life.

Duration: 58:25

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-20, Matthew 5:33-37, Matthew 18:6, Matthew 18:15-17, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 19:30, Matthew 22:37-40

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Christian Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having a spirit of forgiveness. He begins by sharing a parable from the Bible, where a servant owes a large debt to his king. The servant pleads for patience and promises to repay the debt, and the king, moved with compassion, forgives him. However, the same servant later refuses to show the same forgiveness to a fellow servant who owes him a smaller amount. The preacher highlights the lesson of this parable, urging the congregation to understand that forgiveness is essential in their relationships with others. He also reminds them that Jesus is present when even just two or three people gather in His name, and encourages them to seek His help in times of need. The sermon concludes with a prayer for obedience to God's word and a spirit of forgiveness.

Transcript

Now, at the same time, there came disciples to Jesus saying, Who's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Oh, boy, how they longed for this. You're talking about motivation and, you know, the disciples were not pure in their motivations. They were always wrangling about, Well, I'm going to be bigger than you.

I'll be better than you. I'll have a better place than you, you know. And their motivations were not always the purest.

And they many times were arguing about these things. The greatest. In fact, even the mothers of the disciples sometimes got in on this and said, Lord, when you come into your kingdom, would you let one of my sons be on your right side and the other on your left side? Little Jewish mothers wanting to set up their boys, you know, and that's very typical.

God bless them. And so the disciples came and said, Who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom? And Jesus called a little child unto him. And he set the child in the middle of them.

And he said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not even enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The true path to greatness is always the path of humility.

He that exalteth himself shall be abased. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Humble thyself in the eyes of the Lord and he shall lift you up.

And Jesus takes a child and says, Look, you got to become like a little child if you're even going to enter the kingdom of heaven. And so if you'll humble yourself as a little child, that person will be the greatest. The path to greatness is the path of servanthood.

How important that we learn to serve. That we not be looking for ourselves, but we only be looking for our Lord and to exalt Him. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receives me.

Oh how the Lord loves the little children. How He loves their beautiful little faces. How He loves that simple faith and trust that is in the heart of a child.

There's something about their innocency and simplicity that is absolutely glorious. I love it. But He said, Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

I love Jesus. He's a man's man. Sounds like the mafia here, but I'm all for it.

I mean, He's straight. I think that the most heinous sin anyone can commit is to seek to destroy the faith of a child in God. That is one of the worst sins that anyone could ever commit.

To take this pure little child with this simplicity and trust in God and deliberately seek to destroy that child's faith in God, in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, Look, it'd be better for a man if you just took a millstone. And these millstones weigh about three, four hundred pounds.

Tie it around his neck and toss him into the sea. Better that that happened to him than he offend, destroy the faith of one of these little ones who believe in me. Woe unto the world because of offenses.

For it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh. Be careful. Offenses are going to come, but be careful that you're not the cause of the offenses.

Wherefore, if your hand offends you, then cut it off. Cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life halt or maim rather than having two hands or two feet and to be cast into the everlasting fire.

If thy eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes be cast into hell fire. So take heed that you despise not one of these little ones.

For I say unto you that in heaven, and I love this, their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven. The angels that have been given charge over us to keep us in all of our ways. The angels who are watching over our little children.

Their faces are before the father continually there in heaven, beseeching the father for these precious little ones. This business of thy hand offend thee and all is something that Jesus meant to be repugnant. He means it to be shocking.

To maim my own body to me is a very repugnant idea. To lose a hand, to lose an eye by my own doing is just a horribly repugnant thought and Jesus wanted it to be. He did not literally mean that we are to cut off our hand or to pluck out our eye.

But he is only illustrating how vital it is that we enter the kingdom of heaven. It is worth more than having a whole body. As we were talking to you last Sunday about the trapping of muskrats.

How that if you catch them by their paw, they'll turn around and gnaw their leg off and leave the paw in the trap. Again, that's a, you know, kind of a thought that sort of gives us a, we react mentally to that. As, ooh, horrible, but yet how wise as far as the muskrat is concerned.

For he figures better to be a free muskrat with three paws than having four paws be tacked on a furboard. So Jesus is saying much the same thing here in a, in a, if there's something in your life that is causing you to stumble. If there's something in your life that is creating an offense, cut it out, get rid of it.

Sometimes when a person comes into the office and sits down and begins to pour out their story. And they say, well, Chuck, I'm really in a mess. I never thought it would happen to me and I can't understand it.

But man, I'm involved in an affair and I don't know what to do. It, you know, it's just ripping me apart. It's tearing me up.

My wife doesn't know it. And I just don't know what to do about it. No.

I say to them point blank, cut it off. Not tomorrow. Right now.

Cut it off. Oh, but I don't. Cut it off.

I said, if I were a surgeon. And you came to me. And you said, oh, I'm having these lumps under my arm and they're sore and, and, and they really bother me.

If I didn't bother to take the biopsies and determine whether or not you had cancer of the lymph nodes. But I just said, oh, you know, probably you've got cancer in your lymph nodes. But you know, that's a painful operation.

We don't, you know, we don't want to go through the pain of it. Why don't we just sort of take aspirin and so you won't feel the pain and, and forget about it. Why you'd file a malpractice suit against me for quackery.

Saying, well, you know, just let it go and see what happens. And I said, now you're coming to me with a spiritual malady that is more deadly than cancer. I'm the surgeon and I'm telling you, we've got to operate immediately.

Your life depends on it. You've got to cut it out. And if there is some sin that you're tolerating, allowing, playing with and, and messing around with.

You cannot do it. Jesus is saying, cut it off. Better to go through life maimed than into hell hole.

And then Jesus in verse 11 says so beautifully, for the son of man has come to save that which was lost. I love that. We'll get to that when we get to Luke's gospel and it amplifies it a little further.

Now Jesus said, what do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them is gone astray. Will he not leave the 99 and go into the mountains and seek the one which has gone astray? And if it so happens that he finds it. Verily I say unto you, he rejoices more for the one sheep than for the 99, which never went astray.

Even so, it is not the will of your father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Your father is watching over them. Their angel faces to behold the face of the father continually.

And he isn't willing that any of them perish. Be careful that you do not offend one of those little ones who believes and trust in him. Moreover, Jesus said, if your brother trespasses against you.

Go and tell him the fault between you and him alone. And if he hears you. Then you've gained your brother.

This is the way differences are to be resolved and settled within the church. Now, if he does not hear you. Then take with you one or two witnesses.

So that by so that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. Take another person with you or another two people with you and face him with the issue again. And if he neglects to hear them, then take it before the church.

But if he neglects to hear the church, then let him be as a heathen, a publican, an upright sinner, rank sinner. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything. That they shall ask it shall be done for them of my father which is in heaven. So here Jesus is speaking about loosing and binding.

Loosing the work of God, binding the work of Satan. And then declaring that if two of us. So the value of prayer together.

An agreement in prayer. Now most of our prayer is done in private. But there are times when agreement in prayer is extremely valuable.

And I encourage every one of you to have a prayer partner. Someone that when something really is troubling you. You have someone that can pray with you and bear that burden with you.

For if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything. That they shall ask it will be done for them by my father which is in heaven. The power of agreement in prayer.

Then Jesus goes on with this two or three concept. He said four. Where two or three are gathered together in my name.

There am I in the midst of them. So the simplest form of the church is just two or three people getting together. To worship the Lord to pray together.

And whenever there are two. There are always three. Wherever there are three visibly present.

There's always four. Jesus said I am in the midst of them. I think that it is important that we have and somehow can conceptualize this.

Jesus isn't like some today who say well the crowds too small. I'm not going to go out there tonight. He said if two or three are gathered.

I'll be there. Now what you need to conceptualize and to realize is the fact that Jesus is here tonight. Now.

If you have a real need and you knew Jesus was there. What would you do? You say hey Lord. Problems.

And don't you know that if. You could see him. If he actually stood here visibly.

If you could reach out and touch him. You know that the problems would all go. He could do it.

You know he can do it. So many times you probably wish. Oh if I could only be at Capernaum and and Jesus was there and if I could only.

You know just have him lay his hands on me. Hey. He is here.

The fact that you cannot see him is. Of no import at all. Because he said.

He would be here in the midst of us. And you can reach out by faith and touch him tonight. And he will reach out and touch you.

All you have to do is make that contact of faith with him. He's here. Realize that.

Bring before him your need. Believe him and trust him. And he will work.

In you. Then came Peter to him and said Lord. How off.

Shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him. Seven times. Now I imagine that Peter.

At this point thought. You know I'm really setting a. Great example here. I'm sure that he was stretching in his own mind.

His. Knowledge of his own ability to forgive. I'm sure when he said seven times.

He was going far beyond what he knew he could do. I'm sure Peter was thinking. Well I might be able to forgive a guy a couple of times.

But it will sound good to the other disciples if I say seven. And Jesus will probably say. Look here's a guy that's really getting the lesson.

Listen to him fellas. Peter's really got it here you know. Lord how often shall I forgive my brother the very same offense.

He's doing the same thing. Seven times. Jesus said unto him.

I say not unto thee until seven times. But until. Seventy.

Times. Seven. I. Four hundred and ninety.

Now. What Jesus is pointing out basically is that forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. It's a matter of spirit.

That you should have the spirit of forgiveness. And I'm certain that he is certain that. If you take the four hundred and ninety.

That you'll lose count before you ever get there. And you'll just realize. Hey it isn't a matter of numbers.

It's a matter of spirit. I'm to have the spirit of forgiveness. And then Jesus went on to illustrate it.

He said therefore. Is the kingdom of heaven likened to a certain king. Which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon. One was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. About sixteen million dollars.

But in as much as he did not have any money to pay. His Lord commanded him to be sold his wife and his children. And all that he had in order that a partial payment might be made.

And the servant therefore fell down and worshiped him saying. Oh Lord have patience with me and I will pay you all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion.

And he freed him and he forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants. Which owed him a hundred pence.

About three thousand dollars. And he laid his hands on him and took him by the throat saying. You pay me what you owe me.

And the fellow servant fell down at his feet. And he begged him saying. Have patience with me and I will pay you everything.

But he would not. He had him cast into the debtors prison until he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done.

They were very grieved and they came and told their Lord all that he did. Then his Lord after that he had called him said unto him. Oh you wicked servant.

I forgave you all that debt because you desired me to. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant. Even as I had pity on you.

And his Lord was angry and delivered him over to the tormentors. Till he should pay all that was due from him. So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you.

If you. Careful note. From your hearts.

Forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses. Heavy duty lesson on forgiveness. Now.

The analogy is very clear and obvious. God has forgiven you so very much. All of your past sins.

Who are you to hold. A little grudge or a grievance. Against your brother not forgive him.

Because of some slight. Or some. Mean thing that he has said about you or some dirty thing that he has done to you.

Who are you to hold this. Bitterness and unforgiving spirit. Jesus said look.

If you don't forgive them from your heart. Your father won't forgive you your debt. Now that is heavy.

You say well explain it to us. I can't. You want me to explain it away.

I can't. You say well doesn't that works then forgiveness on works. I don't know what it is.

But it's the word of Jesus and you better take heed. The Lord has never commanded us to do anything. But what he will not give us the capacity to do it if we are willing.

The problem is we are not often willing to forget. The Lord is saying it's got to be more than just a forgivable forgiving of words. Oh I forgive you.

You know. But you do that again and you're going to get it. I forgive you but I won't forget.

I'll bury the hatchet but I'll leave the handle showing so I can grab it whenever I need it. The forgiveness is from the heart. Forgiveness is a matter of heart.

It's a matter of spirit. And in as much as God has commanded it. God will give me the capacity if I am willing.

But I've got to be willing. And so I have to pray. Oh God give to me that spirit of forgiveness.

God I am bitter. God I am angry with what they have done. Lord I am upset over this thing.

And I don't want to forgive. I want vengeance God. But I know that that is not of you.

Father give to me the spirit of forgiveness. Give to me forgiveness in my heart. God take away this bitterness.

Take away this unforgiving spirit that I have. And I will receive God's help if I am willing. But I must be willing.

But I must do it. That is a must. Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished these things.

He departed from Galilee. And he came to the coast of Judea. Now that is the borders of Judea.

So he's moving south towards Jerusalem. For Jerusalem lies in the area of Judea which is in the southern kingdom. So he's left the area of Naphtali and Sycharim in the north.

And he's come down now to the area of Judah. There beyond Jordan. And great multitudes followed him and he healed them there.

Then the Pharisees also came unto him. And notice this. They were tempting him.

This is a test question. It is a leading question. It is a question of entrapment.

They are trying to trap Jesus in his words. And it is important that you realize that this is a trap question by the Pharisees. So they came unto him.

Tempting him or trapping him and saying unto him. Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Now under the Mosaic law it says. If a man finds an uncleanness in his wife.

And he is not content to remain with her. Let him give her a writing of a bill of divorcement. Now what is meant by finding an uncleanness in her? According to the liberal theologians of those days.

An uncleanness could be. Her not fixing the kind of breakfast you enjoy. So if she.

You know. Boiled the egg too long. And the yolk was too hard.

You can say that is it. I have had it. I divorce you.

And you can hand her the paper. And she had to leave. I mean she had no recourse.

She was just out. And so they had applied a very liberal interpretation to this. Finding an uncleanness in her.

Other of the rabbis said that the uncleanness was a moral uncleanness. You discovered she was not a virgin. When you married her.

Or if. She would break the marriage vow. That it was a moral uncleanness.

And so there was the division. Among the scribes and Pharisees of two. Which of the two schools.

They subscribe. Whether Hillel who took the very narrow. Moral uncleanness.

Or the other school that took a very. Much broader view. So they were questioning Jesus.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife. For every cause. And he answered and said unto them.

Have you not read. That he which made them in the beginning. Now notice Jesus is going back.

Not to the law. But he's going back to the beginning. He who made them in the beginning.

And made them male and female. Now there's quite a move on foot today. To change what God has done.

They'll never be successful. God help poor sick humanity. I don't know if there's any transvestites here.

But I cannot for the life of me. Understand that kind of a sickness really. God made them male and female.

And said. For this cause. Shall a man leave father and mother.

And shall cleave to his wife. And they too. Shall be one flesh.

Wherefore. They are no more two. But they are one.

There is a unity. That is brought about by marriage. Where the two become.

One flesh. Of course that is. Literally true.

In your offspring. The two of you have become. One flesh in your offspring.
As 23 of the chromosomes. Come from each of you. To begin.
That new life. How beautiful. You dad can say.
That's your kid. You know take care of him. Because he's.
Half yours too. 23 chromosomes from you. And so it is a. Perfect.
Combination. The two shall become one. Flesh.
Wherefore. They are no more two. But they are one.
What therefore. God hath joined together. Let not man.
By a writing of divorce. But or whatever. Put asunder.
Now in those days. Women didn't have the. The power of divorce.
And that's why God said. Don't let man. Put asunder.
Don't let man. Break it. God has made.
The two of you one. Now don't let a man. Break that.
By writing out a. Divorcement. For his wife. Now they said unto him.
And. Now. Picture the trap.
Closing. How these. Fallen into it.
You know. Because it was a trap question. And he fell right.
Into it. All right. We got him now.
And they said unto him. Why did. Moses.
Then. Give. To give.
A writing of. Divorcement. And to put her.
Away. Now. All.
Of them. Recognized. That.
The law. That. Moses.
Gave. Came. From.
God. If. Anything.
Was inspired. In the Bible. It was.

The law. Of Moses. And there were.
Many of them. That only. Many.
Believe. That. That.
Part. And today. Still.
Many. Only. Believe.
That. The first. Five.
Books. Of the Bible. Are.
Inspired. But. They.
All. Hold. That.
That. Is. The.
Inspired. Word. God.
Gave. Us. The.
Law. By. Moses.
Now. You. Are.
Contradicting. God. You.
See. This. Is.
The. Whole. Idea.
To. Put. Him.
In. In. Contradicting.
What. God. Said.
And. God. Said.
Let. Him. Put.
Her. Away. You're.
Saying. You. Can't.
You. Shouldn't. If.
God. Is. Joining.
You. Together. You.

Shouldn't. Break. It.
By. Writing. Out.
A. Divorcement. So. You're.
Against. God. Is.
Whole. Idea. And.
Jesus. Said. Into.
Them. Moses. Because.
Of. The. Hardness.
Of. Your. Hearts.
Allowed. You. To.
Put. Away. Your.
Wives. But. Again.
He's. Going. Back.
Before. Moses. Ever.
Came. On. The.
Scene. From. The.
Beginning. It. Was.
Not. So. In.
Us. In. The.
First. Part. He.
Said. In. The.
Beginning. God. Made.
Them. Be. And.
Female. Now. He's.
Saying. In. The.
Beginning. It. Wasn't.
So. Moses. Because.

Of. The. Hardness.
Of. Your. Heart.
Gave. The. Law.
For. Divorcing. But.
In. The. Beginning.
This. Was. Not.
God's. Intention. In.
The. Beginning. This.
Is. Not. What.
God. Desired. Or.
Planned. And. I. Stand.
To. You. Now.
Moses. Said. But.
I. Say. Whosoever. Shall.
Put. Away. His.
Wife. Except. It.
Be. For. Fornication.
And. Notice. He.
Does. Make. The.
Exception. And. Shall.
Marry. Another. Commits.
Adultery. And. Whosoever.
Marries. Her. Which.
Is. Put. Away.
Death. Committed. Adultery.
His. Disciple. Said.
Her. In. Lord.

If. That's. The.
Case. Better. The.
Guide. Not. Mary.
Now. Jesus. Is.
Being. Very. Straight.
He's. Telling. You.
What. God's. Original.
Plan. For. Man.
One. Marriage. For.
Life. In. The.
Beginning. This. Is.
What. God. Intended.
When. He. Made.
Them. Male. And.
Female. That. The.
Two. Become. That.
The. Children. Will.
Always. Have. Both.
Parents. And. The.
Security. Of. A. Home.
And. A. Home. Environment.
In. Which. To.
Grow. Up. And.
Wherever. That. Breaks.
Down. Find. Its.
Effects. Throughout. Our.
Entire. Social. Structure.

And. We. See.
It. Today. The.
Tremendous. Breakdown. In.
Our. Society. In.
The. Social. Order.
Because. Of. The.
Many. Divided. Families.
And. The. Children.
Are. Always. Hurt.
As. A. Byproduct. Of.
This. Division. Now.
Jesus. Did. Give.
The. One. Cause.
And. That. One.
Cause. Is. Fornication.
And. That. If.
Put. Away. Their.
Wife. Except. For.
Fornication. And. Marry.
Another. But. The.
Exception. Is. There.
Now. Jesus. Said.
Unto. His. Disciples.
When. They. Were.
Shocked. At. The.
Straightness. Of. His.
Declaration. All. Men.

Cannot. Receive. This.
Saying. Except. To.
Those. To. Whom.
It. Is. Given.
Now. This. Is.
The. Next. Saying.
That. He. Signed.
About. For. There.
Some. Who. Are.
Eunuchs. Which. Were.
So. Born. From.
Their. Mother's. Womb.
There. Are. Others.
Who. Are. Eunuchs.
Which. Were. Made.
Eunuchs. Of. Men.
And. There. I. Desire.
To. Be. Then.
Were. There. Brought.
Unto. Him. Little.
Children. That. He.
Should. Put. His.
Hands. On. Them.
And. Pray. For.
Them. And. His.
Disciples. Rebuked. Them.
That. Is. The.

Parents. That. Were.
Bringing. Them. But.
Jesus. Said. Allow.
The. Little. Children.
Don't. Forbid. Them.
To. Come. To.
Me. For. As.
Such. Is. The.
Kingdom. Of. Heaven.
And. Laid. His.
Hands. On. Them.
And. He. Departed.
From. There. All.
I. Can. Get. Just.
Such. A. Beautiful. Picture.
Of. Jesus. And.
The. Little. Children.
Thronging. Around. And.
Love. And. The.
Interest. That. He.
Had. In. These.
Little. Ones. And.
Here. The. Disciples.
Thinking. They. Were.
Protecting. Said. All.
Don't. Don't. Bother.
Lord. For. Kids.

She's. A. To. Get.
All. The. Way.
Peter. Let. That.
Little. One. Come.
To. Me. Don't.
Forbid. Him. Such.
As. The. Kingdom.
Of. Heaven. And.
Lay. His. Hands.
On. Bless. Them.
Love. It. And.
Behold. One. Came.
And. Said. To.
Him. Good. Master.
What. Good. Thing.
Shall. I. Do. That.
I. May. Have. Eternal.
Life. Well. Here.
Is. The. Moralist.
We. See. Them.
Today. People. Who.
Are. Looking. For.
Some. Work. Whereby.
They. Might. Obtain.
The. Gift. Of.
Eternal. Life. There.
Are. Always. Those.

Who. Are. Wanting.
To. Work. Their.
Way. Into. God's.
Blessings. If. You.
Just. Pray. Then.
God. Will. Bless.
You. If. You.
Will. Just. Give.
Then. God. You.
How. Many. Want.
A. Blessing. Then. Dig.
Deep. And. Give.
Tonight. You. Know.
And. There. Are.
Always. Those. Who.
Want. To. Do.
Some. Work. To.
Obtain. God's. Blessing.
Upon. Their. Lives.
What. Good. Work.
Must. I. Do. That.
I. May. Inherit. Eternal.
Life. There. Is.
Not. A. Single. Work.
That. You. Can.
Do. Jesus. Is.
Not. Works. Lest.

Any. Man. Should.
Boast. We. Are.
His. Workmanship. And.
Jesus. Said. Unto.
Him. Why. Call.
Us. Thou. Me.
Good. There. Is.
None. Good. But.
There. One. That.
Is. God. Here.
He. Said. Good.
Master. Jesus. Said.
Why. Did. You.
Call. Me. Good.
There. Is. Only.
One. That. Is.
Good. And. That.
Is. God. Now.
Obviously. Jesus. Is.
Saying. One. Of.
Two. Things. He.
Is. Saying. I. Am.
No. Good. Or.
He. Is. Saying.
I. Am. God. Which.
Do. You. Think.
He. Is. Saying.

What. He. Is.
Doing. Is. Trying.
To. Awaken. The.
Consciousness. Of. This.
Man. To. The.
Fact. That. He.
Is. Received. A. Divine.
Revelation. He's. Getting.
Close. Why. Did.
Call. Me. Good.
The. Reason. Why.
You. Call. Me.
Good. Is. Because.
You. Though. You.
Don't. Realize. It.
Have. Recognized. Something.
About. Me. Why.
Did. Did. Call.
Me. Good. Flesh.
And. Blood. Didn't.
Reveal. This. Is.
The. Divine. Revelation.
Here. You. Call.
Me. Good. But.
There. Is. Only.
One. That. Is.
Good. And. That.

Is. God. You.
Call. Me. Good.
Because. I. Am. God.
You. Recognize. Something.
Here. What. Must.
I. Do. To. Have.
This. Eternal. Life.
This. Age. Abiding.
Life. This. Quality.
Of. Life. That.
You. Have. This.
Quality. That. I'm.
Observing. And. Am.
Drawn. To. And.
Jesus. Is. Beginning.
To. Point. Out.
The. Way. First.
Of. All. The.
Recognition. Of. Who.
I. Am. Why. Did.
You. Call. Me.
Good. There. Is.
None. Good. But.
God. And. He.
Said. And. Jesus.
Said. But. If.
You. Enter. Into.

Life. Keep. The.
Commandments. And. He.
Said. And. To.
Him. Which. And.
Jesus. Said. Also.
Do. No. Murder.
Also. Not. Committed.
Adultery. Also. Not.
Steal. Also. Not.
Bear. False. Witness.
Honor. Thy. Father.
And. My. Mother.
And. Also. Love.
Thy. Neighbor. As.
I. Self. Notice. Now.
Nothing. Is. Said.
Of. The. First.
Table. Of. The.
Nothing. Said. Of.
Man's. Relationship. To.
God. He. Did.
Not. Give. Him.
The. First. Four.
Commandments. Also. Have.
No. Other. Gods.
Before. Me. Also.
Not. Make. Any.

Graven. Images. To.
Bow. Down. To.
Them. To. Worship.
Them. I. Know. What.
Happened. That. All.
My. Buttons. Also.
Not. Take. The.
Name. Of. The.
Lord. Thy. God.
Vain. Remember. Sabbath.
Day. To. Keep.
It. Holy. He.
Didn't. Bring. Out.
Any. Of. The.
First. Four. Man's.
Relationship. With. God.
He. Only. Dealt.
With. Man's. Relationship.
With. Man. Because.
This. Man. Was.
A. Moralist. He. Was.
That. Typical. Man.
Who. Was. Looking.
For. A. Good. Work.
That. He. Might.
Do. In. Order.
To. Inherit. Eternal.

Life. He. Was.
Used. To. Doing.
Good. Works. That.
His. Life. Was.
Spent. In. Doing.
Good. Works. And.
So. Jesus. Gave.
To. Him. Those.
Commandments. That. Dealt.
With. In. Relationship.
With. Fellow. Men.
And. As. Jesus.
Flashed. These. Before.
His. Eyes. He.
Answered. And. Said.
To. Him. All.
Of. These. Have.
I. Kept. From. My.
Youth. But. Lack.
I. Yet. Now. Here's.
A. Man. Who. Is.
Rich. He. Is.
A. Moralistic. He's. Kept.
His. Relationship. With.
His. Fellow. Men.
All. That. It.
Should. Be. Throughout.

He's. Tried. To.
Do. The. Good.
Thing. The. Right.
Thing. To. His.
Fellow. Men. And.
Yet. He. Is.
Conscious. That. There.
Is. A. Lack. In.
His. Own. Life.
That. There. Must.
Be. Something. More.
Than. Just. Living.
A. Good. Life. And.
Being. Wealthy. What.
Lack. I. Yet. And.
Jesus. Said. Into.
Him. If. You.
Will. Be. Complete.
Totally. Complete. Perfect.
Then. Go. And.
Sell. What. You.
Have. And. Give.
It. To. The.
Poor. And. Thou.
Shall. Have. Treasure.
In. Heaven. And.
Come. And. Follow.

Me. Now. I'd.
Like. To. Read.
To. You. What.
Jesus. Is. Essentially.
Saying. To. Him.
If. You. Will.
Be. Perfect. Or.
Complete. Come. Follow.
Me. The. Rest.
Is. Only. Incidental.
With. There. Is.
No. Universal. Application.
That. Was. An.
Individual. Commandment. To.
That. Man. It.
Is. Not. A. Universal.
Application. This. Was.
Not. A. Requirement. To.
Any. Person. Who.
Is. Going. To.
Be. Complete. Or.
To. Have. Eternal.
Life. It. Doesn't.
Mean. That. You've.
Got. To. Sell.
Everything. You. Have.
And. Distribute. It.

To. The. Poor.
Now. In. Early.
Church. There. Was.
A. Movement. Of. This.
Sort. It. Ended.
In. Financial. Disaster.
It. Also. End.
Ended. In. Some.
Personal. Calamities. When.
The. Church. First.
Started. People. Were.
Very. Excited. About.
What. Was. Happening.
And. They. Were.
Anticipating. The. Lord.
To. Return. Immediately.
And. A. Lot. Of.
Them. Began. To.
Sell. Their. Properties.
And. The. Price.
And. Lay. It.
At. The. Apostles.
Feet. And. There.
Was. One. Couple.
Ananias. And. Sapphira.
Who. Sold. Their.
Property. And. They.

Brought. In. Part.
Of. The. Money.
And. At. Peter's.
Feet. And. Peter.
Said. Hey. Wait.
A. Minute. Why. Have.
You. Conspired. In.
Your. Heart. To.
Lie. Against. The.
Holy. Spirit. You.
You. You. You.
You bring. Everything. In.
It yet. You're making, This pretense of bringing everything. You're.
Trying to deceive. God. And.
So there. Was. Swift.
Judgement. Upon. Ananias.
In. His wife's. Sapphira.
Not. Because. They didn't bring everything.

And Peter makes it very clear that they weren't required to sell their possessions. They weren't required to bring the money in. It was something that people did out of their own volition and free will.

And so Jesus, when he says, go and sell what you have and distribute it to the poor, is not making a universal demand for those who would have eternal life. What is the universal demand is come and follow me. You cannot have eternal life apart from following Jesus Christ.

But he will always put the finger on whatever it is in your life that's keeping you from following him. And with the case of this rich young ruler, the thing that was keeping him from following Jesus Christ was his

riches. That was his God.

Jesus said, you cannot serve God and man, and you can't have two masters. If you have a false God that is controlling your life, then you've got to go and get rid of it, whatever it be. And you've got to have the true God on the throne of your life.

Jesus says, come follow me. Why did you call me good? There's only one good. That's God.

You call me good because you recognize that I'm God. Now follow me. Get rid of the false gods.

Get rid of the empty gods. Follow me, the true and the living God. And it's important that you observe this, because a lot of people make a big deal over, you know, well, you've got to go and sell everything you have and distribute to the poor and all.

Not so. That is not of universal application. The universal application is come follow me.

He is the way to completeness. He is the way to eternal life. There is not any real life apart from him.

Now, when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Sorry because he was so rich. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again, I say, it is easier for a camel to go through an eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And when his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed saying who then can be saved. And with Jesus beheld them and said unto them with men, it's impossible.

But with God, all things are possible. Now, when you go over to Israel today, the guides, when you get to the or the Church of the Nativity, they will show you a little sub gate under the gate into the church. And they'll tell you that that little sub gate was called the eye of the needle.

And that in the gates of the cities, they always had this little sub gate, which was called the eye of the needle. And in order to get the camel through it, they had to take all of the burden off of the camel's back and it had to get down on the ground and a couple of guys behind it, pushing and one guy in front of it, pulling to get it to squeeze through this little eye of the gate in the eye of the needle in the gate. And they say, now, that's what Jesus was talking about.

Isn't that interesting? They make it a possibility. If you struggle hard enough and if you grunt and groan enough, you can actually save yourself. A lot of people would like to have you think that, but Jesus points out that that is entirely false.

He's talking not about some little gate that you can, by a lot of effort and grunts and groans, squeeze and get through. He's talking about an eye of a needle that a woman is sewing with and you try and get the camel through that. And that's why the disciples said, Lord, who then can be saved? And note, Jesus said what? With man it is impossible.

Remember that. He didn't say you've got to strain, you've got to struggle, you've got to grunt and groan. Give it your best.

He is saying it's impossible. Man cannot save himself. The moralist cannot save himself.

No man by good works can save himself. No man by a good work can inherit age-abiding eternal life. It is a gift of God and it is only wrought by a miracle of God in our hearts and lives.

For though it is impossible with man, with God all things are possible. It's even possible to save you. And God has done the impossible in saving us tonight.

And remember that. With man it is impossible. That eliminates the moralist completely.

You cannot by your good works obtain for yourself a place in the kingdom of God. You've got to come as a little child and be converted and just simply trust in Jesus. Then answered Peter and said unto him, O Lord, we've forsaken all and followed you.

What are we going to have therefore? You see, they're always looking for that. What have I got coming, Lord? Am I going to be the greatest? Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that you which have followed me in the regeneration, the recreation, in making this new order, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon the twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Now in heaven, John saw the throne of God and there were twenty-four thrones around the throne of God, upon which were seated twenty-four elders.

There are many who believe that those twenty-four elders are actually representative of the church. And of course, if so, then twelve of them would be the apostles. There are some problems with that interpretation, but it is at least one of the interpretations that has been suggested for those twenty-four thrones, lesser thrones about the throne of God.

But nonetheless, Jesus said that they will be sitting upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken, now you've said you've forsaken all to follow me, but everyone who has forsaken his house or his brothers or sisters or his father or his mother or his wife or his children or lands for my name's sake. If you've done it for his name's sake, that is, your wife will not follow you in your commitment, total commitment to Jesus Christ.

And as Paul said, if the unbelieving husband is not content to remain, let him depart. No one has left these things, forsaken these things for my sake, but what he shall receive a hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life. So not only does he give you a hundredfold now, but then eternal life to boot.

But many that are first shall be last. I think that he is here referring actually to the Jewish nation to whom the gospel was to be preached first. Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, the power of God into salvation to all that believe to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

But it was to go to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles. Now they're going to be judging the twelve tribes. Why? Because the twelve tribes basically rejected the Messiah.

So those that were first shall be last and they that are last, that is the Gentiles, shall be first. And so in that kingdom that Jesus establishes, we shall be one with him, joint heirs with the son of the glorious kingdom of God throughout eternity. The gospel came to us last, but we have the first privileges in his glorious kingdom who have believed on Jesus Christ, where we who believe in Jesus Christ are neither Jews nor Greeks, barbarians, Scythian, bonders free.

But Christ is everything. We are a whole new nationality. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

We are a new creation, a new race of people. So you really can't say, well, I'm a Irishman or an Englishman or a Scotsman. You must say, I'm a Christian.

You're a new race, you see. We're not related any more to the whatever ethnic group we came from. We're all one in Jesus Christ.

We now relate to a new source. Well, you know, that's my old Irish temper. Oh, no, no.

That old Irish temper died when the old man died and you became a Christian. Can't pass it off now on the old Irish temper anymore. You're a new creature in Christ.

You're a new creation. You're a new race of people in our Lord Jesus Christ. And so the last many that are first shall be last and the last shall be first.

Next week we'll continue in the next three chapters of Matthew's gospel. Shall we pray? Father, again, we thank you for your word. Truly it is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path.

May we walk in its light, be obedient unto its truth that we, Lord, would not seek to mold and shape your word to our concepts, but that we would have our concepts molded and shaped by your word. Help us, Father, that we might bend our necks to the authority of your truth rather than trying to bend the truth to fit our loose lifestyles. Jesus, let thy word penetrate our hearts and give us, O God, a spirit of obedience and a spirit of forgiveness.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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