

FOR CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL

Mark 10:28-34

Intro: The account which we come to today in the study of the Gospel of Mark, is found also in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In the Gospel of Matthew you will find it in the last four verses of chapter 19 – verses 27 through 30. In the Gospel of Luke you will see it in chapter 18 in a much more abbreviated form – verses 28 through 30.

In all three of the Gospels these words of the Lord Jesus followed the account of our Lord's conversation with the rich young ruler, which is the title given to him by combining the way he is described in all three of the Gospels. Matthew called him a "young man" in Matthew 19:22. Mark did not describe him except to indicate, along with Matthew and Luke, that he was a very rich man. Luke is the one who called him "a certain ruler," meaning, according to most expositors, that he was the ruler of the local synagogue. But it is evident in all three Gospels that his possessions were worth more to him, at least at that point in time, than was eternal life. Or, as we could also state his condition as, *when it came to a choice between his possessions and eternal life, he chose to keep his possessions.*

As I sought to explain last Sunday morning, it was not that he could have been saved by getting rid of his riches, but it was that he looked upon his riches as providing him with greater security than eternal life would have given him. I think that we have the hope that he changed his mind later and really trusted the Lord. That hope is given to us by the statement here in Mark's account that Jesus, "beholding him loved him," which probably meant that he was one of the elect.

But we need to be sure to notice that the Lord did not simply tell him to get rid of his riches, but to "come, take up the cross, and follow me." The evidence that a person has really trusted in Christ for His salvation, is that he comes to Christ, depending solely upon the Lord's work on the Cross for salvation, and he follows Christ in a life of submission and obedience.

So to have eternal life not only means deliverance from hell, but it means living a new life. To be "in Christ," as a true child of God is described in the NT, means that old things become a thing of the past, and everything becomes new. Cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

There are a lot of people in this world who are like this rich young ruler.

They don't want to change. They are satisfied with their lives. You sometimes hear a person say that when he has lived his life, he will think about becoming a Christian before he dies, as though his life was in his hands, and he could become a Christian anytime he would decide to receive Christ and be saved. The Bible warns us in Proverbs 27:1 not to boast about what we are going to do even tomorrow. None of us knows if we will even have a tomorrow. That is why the Bible says that "today is the day of salvation." God is the One Who saves. Faith comes from Him. It is a dangerous thing to tell God "no," or that we will wait, when He is obviously dealing with us. I hope this rich young ruler came back to the Lord and was saved, but we really can't be sure.

The disciples evidently were with the Lord when this young man came to Him asking what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. They heard what the Lord told him, and they saw the young man's disappointment and that he had gone away "grieved." And they listened to the Lord when He explained to them how hard it was for rich men to be saved. This "astonished" them "out of measure." This is in verse 26. In verse 24 they had also been amazed when he told them to begin with how difficult it was for a rich man to be saved. They obviously had other ideas about rich men, that they could get whatever they wanted at any time that they wanted it. And that is why they came back at the Lord saying, "Who then can be saved?"

I think that it is very important for us to see that there were truths related to salvation that were not really clear to the apostles. The Lord's response was to turn their thoughts from man, even rich men, to God. That is the reason the Lord then said to them, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). That was the Lord's answer to the question the disciples asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" Nobody can be saved if you are talking about what any man can do for his own salvation. Salvation is a work of God. And it depended upon what the Lord had told them that He was going to do at Jerusalem. We will see more about that in a few minutes.

But now, coming to our text, notice what Peter said.

I. PETER'S RESPONSE TO THE LORD'S TEACHING (Mark 10:28).

"Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee." Peter was not just speaking for himself, but for all of the apostles. He said "we." The word

translated “Lo” is the word that is often translated, “Behold.” It is a word which men used in those days to call attention to something which they wanted the person they were speaking to, to be sure to notice. This was something that was very important to the disciples. And it was true. Probably Matthew had left the most because, being a publican, he had more than the others. We don’t know about all of the apostles, but we know about Peter, Andrew, James, and John. They had left their one means of support, the fishing business. They had left their boats. It is emphasized about James and John that they had left their father with whom they were involved in the fishing business. We don’t know what “all” they had left, but they had left “all,” as Peter said, to follow the Lord. I don’t know exactly what Peter had in mind, but it may have been that he was asking if they didn’t get some credit for what they had left behind.

Now notice the Lord’s response because that is the important part of their discussion. I am going to read to you again what the Lord Jesus said in verses 29 and 30. **(Read.)**

The word “verily” is the translation of the Greek word ἀμήν. Transliterated into English it is *amen*. Thayer, in his dictionary of Greek words, says that this word has different meaning when it is used at the close of a sentence from what it means at the beginning of a sentence. This is the word that we use at the end of our prayers. There it means *so it is*, or *so be it*, or *may it be fulfilled*. It expresses our desire that the Lord will answer our prayer. But at the beginning of a sentence, like it is here, it means *truly*, or *of a truth*, or *surely*. So when the Lord said ἀμήν at the beginning of verse 29, followed by “I say unto you,” He was declaring that what He was about to say was the absolute truth. It was the truth, and nothing but the truth on His divine authority.

Now verse 29 tells what they had done. It was past action. Verse 30 tells what the present results will be of that action *plus* a promise for the future.

I am sure that I don’t know the full extent of what the Lord promised His disciples with all certainty, but perhaps I can suggest some truths from these words of our Lord that you can take away with you as special blessings today. I am sure that the Lord was promising His disciples, and the same would apply to all believers, all of us who are here today as people who are trusting the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, that there is no comparison that can be made between the life of a non-Christian and the life

of a Christian. People who don't know the Lord are inclined to feel that there is too much that they will lose in this life if they become Christians. And I am not talking this morning just about a church member; I am talking about people who forsake all to turn to the Lord. Notice that the Lord said that those who have left all to follow Him are going to "receive an hundred fold now in this time." You don't have to wait until you get to heaven to reap the harvest; it begins now!

And you will notice that the very same things and people are mentioned in verse 30 that you leave in verse 29. What does this mean? Remember that it is not total restoration, nor is it necessarily immediate restoration, but the Lord said that what you leave to follow Him, He will give back to you with more meaning, and a deeper relationship than you had with them before you were saved. If you want to be a blessing to your family, and do the best for them, you will find such blessing when you become a Christian. But you might respond to these words from the Lord by saying that since you became a Christian, your family and friends have not wanted to have anything to do with you. But I would remind you that the story is not fully told yet. And there is a precious truth tucked away in these verses that I want to point out to you.

It is in those words at the end of verse 29, "for my sake, and the Gospel's."

What is more precious to most people than the house they live in, or the people that they have grown up with – brothers, sisters, father, mother, and then later along came marriage with a wife or husband, and children – and property that we own. In a normal home these are the things and the people that we love and live for. But in coming to Christ, as A. W. Tozer once wrote in an article on this subject, "Let the reason back of your daily conduct be Christ and His glory, not yourself, nor your family, nor your country, nor your church. In all things let Him have the preeminence.

You see, God never intended that we should live without Him. He never intended that we should live without Christ. But our sins have turned us away from God, and away from Christ, and we have focused our attention primarily on ourselves, our families, our careers, our possessions, and so the happiness that we so much desire evades us. When we come to Christ "for His sake, and for the Gospel's," He makes all things new, not only in us, but those around us. And He gives all that we have forsaken back to

us as we make it our purpose to live for the Lord's glory, for His sake. We are to love Him first and the most, with all of our hearts and souls and minds and strength. So that we find that we don't lose anything, but we gain Christ and the Gospel. And the more we live "for Jesus' sake, and the Gospel," the more we see the Lord in all of our relationship so that those we have loved for themselves before, we now love "for Jesus' sake," to please Him, to glorify Him, and we praise Him from Whom now we realize all of our blessings flow.

Our failure to live "for Jesus' sake," and for the Gospel, explains why even we as Christians can be such a poor testimony to each other, and to a world that is being torn apart with sin. Dr. Tozer wrote:

Like it or not, this is the world in which we find ourselves, and we are charged with the responsibility to live soberly, righteously, and godly right in the middle of it. The danger is that we allow ourselves to be too much affected by the degenerate tastes and low views of the Hittites and Jebusites among whom we dwell and so learn the ways of the nations, to our own undoing, as Israel did before us.

We all need to pay more attention to that little phrase from Scripture, "for Jesus' sake, and the Gospel." Is the Lord Jesus really preeminent in our lives? Do we live to please Him? When we pray, we often close our prayers with the words, "for Jesus' sake, Amen." Is that really why we pray, because we are concerned about His will, His glory, and that we may live that others may see their need of Christ?

Psalm 23 which we all know by heart, says in verse 3, "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." In Isaiah's day the Lord said to Judah through his prophet:

25 I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins (Isa. 43:25).

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth with these words:

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor. 4:11).

But doing things for Jesus' sake is not to be restricted to this life. It extends to "the world to come," which is eternity. It will be a very different kind of a world because there we all will only do that is for the Father's sake and for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what is

going to make heaven heaven. So we can live a heavenly life now, but it will never be perfect here. But that perfection is what we have to look forward to when we all get to heaven. This makes it imperative that we learn to live “for Jesus’ sake, and the Gospel” now.

Our Lord’s words on this occasion end with a warning: “But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.” There is probably more to this statement than most of us have understood. But, spoken as it was to the disciples, who were first, it was a warning that they who had the opportunity of being the leaders, pointing the way to future generations to live “for Jesus’ sake and the Gospel’s,” might fall from the privileged place that they held, and fall below some in future generations who had not had the privilege of seeing the Lord. Perhaps Peter had these words of our Lord in mind when he wrote in his first epistle to the believers who had been scattered for their faith, “whom having not seen ye love . . .” (1 Pet. 1:8).

Before we go, let me say just a few words about verses 32-34.

The Lord steadfastly was making His way toward Jerusalem. He knew why He was going there, and He took this occasion to speak to them about it once again. After exhorting them to live for His sake, and the Gospel’s, He now spoke to them about what He was going to do *for their sakes*. *He just told them what was going to happen and what He was going to do. He did not tell them why.* But now we know. We know this is the Gospel. This tells us the price that He paid for our redemption. There is no message of greater importance than this.

Concl: May the Lord enable us to live for Jesus’ sake, and to spread the message of the Gospel to the people of our generation. There is no other way of salvation. Cf. Isaiah 53:3-6:

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.