

# THE MERCILESSNESS OF MONEY – WEEK 4

## Mark 10:17-31

### Intro

- Read Mark 10:17-20

The scriptures teach that money, whether one has little or plenty of it, is not the real issue. The issue is our heart attitude towards it. Both the rich and the poor can make money their idol. In this passage we see how a very wealthy man was enslaved to his wealth.

He was clearly a powerful, well respected Jewish man who did his best to live according to the law. Yet, he still came to Jesus in a posture of humility, enquiring about his eternal destiny. According to the Jewish traditions, his wealth and right living was an indication that he was on doing just fine on his path of righteousness. But Jesus taught differently. He continually taught that we cannot do anything to make ourselves righteous. Even if we were to keep all the laws perfectly, our sinful hearts would still condemn us. And this man was no different.

### 1. The Real Problem With This Young Man Is Not His Wealth But His Self-Sufficiency

- Read Mark 10:21-22

In order to reveal what was in the man's heart, Jesus asked him to give up everything. Though he had kept all of the moral laws, he could not follow the very first commandment, which was to love God above everything else. In this case it would mean putting God above his money, which represented so much more than just his comfort. He understood what Jesus was asking of him, and he simply could not do it, and it grieved him deeply.

It's easy for us to judge him for this, thinking that we would give up our wealth if God asked us to. But the truth is that our hearts are so deeply tied to our idols that if God asked us to give one up, we may also say no and choose to walk away.

### 2. The Things We Fight To Own Often End Up Owning Us

When Jesus asked this rich young man to give up his possessions, he was essentially asking him to give up what was at the centre of his identity, and for him that was success, capability and subsequent wealth. Jesus was not opposed to the man having money, but he was extremely opposed to the man being enslaved to it. If there is anything in our lives that we refuse to lose then we are enslaved to it, and it owns us.

- ❖ Q: Why is it possible for both the rich and the poor to have the idol of money?
- ❖ Q: Was Jesus' primary concern about the man being rich? Explain your answer.
- ❖ Q: Why could the rich young man not give up his money to follow Christ?
- ❖ Q: Is there anything you would not be willing to give up if Jesus asked you to? (Your house, your job, your lifestyle, your security, your kids private education, your time, your space, your car, your holidays, your career path, your pension, your medical aid, your privacy, your status....?)
- ❖ Q: If you have identified an idol in your life through this message, what are you going to do about it?
- ❖ Q: Dealing with our idols is not something just confess and deal with once-off. The temptation to go back to them will surface regularly. So how can we as a Gospel Community help one another to overcome these idols in our lives?



# THE MERCILESSNESS OF MONEY - WEEK 4

## 3. When It Comes To Entering The Kingdom Of God, Wealth Is A Hindrance and Not A Help

- Read Mark 10:23-25

The tricky thing about the kingdom of God is that it works differently to how things operate on earth. Here, having lots of money makes things much easier, while poverty sets up all sorts of barriers for people. Yet in God's kingdom wealth is the barrier. Jesus warns us in the scriptures many times about the dangers of wealth. So, although our culture presents wealth as the ultimate fulfillment of our dreams, those very dreams could be obstacles to us entering the kingdom of God and this should cause us to pause and consider what we are living for.

## 4. Losing For The Kingdom Now Will Be Rewarded In The Kingdom Then

- Read Mark 10:26-31

In response to Jesus' warning about wealth, Peter reminded Jesus just how much he and the other disciples had left behind in order to follow him. Jesus affirmed that their sacrifices would be rewarded. But a large part of the reward would only be experienced in the next life. Jesus continually brought the disciples' attention to living for the life to come. Most of us live every minute for *this* life, and spend very little thought or energy on building our rewards for the *next* life and yet this life is so short. Most of us Christ-followers need to make some significant changes to the way that we live so that our lives reflect what we believe about eternal life.

- ❖ Q: Why is wealth a hindrance to entering the kingdom of God?
- ❖ Q: Why is it so difficult for us to live for the next life?
- ❖ Q: What can we as individuals do to cultivate lives that live for eternity rather than lives that focus on maximizing our pleasures in this life?
- ❖ Q: What changes can we make as a Gospel Community that would prioritise the kingdom of God, rather than our comfort? (E.g. in the way we meet, who we bless, how we serve one another, where we focus our mission etc.)

## 5. Practical Steps for Change

1. Get a proper understanding of where you fit financially
2. Confess your failings in this area
3. Fight against idolatry through radical generosity
4. Gear towards radical generosity through radical simplicity
5. Consider the example of Jesus

