

THE GAIN IN GIVING Sunday School- October 25, 2009

Unifying Topic: OPTING OUT

Lesson Text

I. A Rich Man's Claim (Mark 10:17:20)

II. Jesus' Tough Answer (Mark 10:21-27)

III. Forsake All For Jesus (Mark 10:-28-31)

The Main Thought: Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (Mark 10:21, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People wonder whether eternal life exists and how they may obtain it. What leads to eternal life? Jesus teaches that to become true followers and so inherit eternal life we must submit our possessions and ourselves to God.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand how Jesus patiently taught His disciples about riches.

Life aim: To teach how Jesus can help us get our priorities in the right place, making Him first in everything. With the Lord's help, we serve His kingdom and enjoy the riches and blessings of life.

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- 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?
- 10:18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.
- 10:19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.
- 10:20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.
- 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.
- 10:22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.
- 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!
- 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!
- 10:25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.
- 10:26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?
- 10:27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.
- 10:28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.
- 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,
- 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.
- 10:31 But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

HISTORY:

Jesus has completed His ministry in Galilee. He has left Capernaum and in this section of **Chapter 10:1-16**, Jesus comes into the coasts of Judea still on his way to Jerusalem, and the crowds began to gather as He taught and ministered again. This area is ruled by Herod Antipas and the Pharisees are there at it again. These men are trying to trap Jesus in a theological debate. They are trying to undermine His credibility in the eyes of the people. Their question this time, *"Is it lawful for a man to put away (divorce) his wife?" v.2* Remember in Mark Chapter 6, John the Baptist had been murdered because he preached against Herod's adulterous marriage.

POINT:

No matter what position Jesus took, He would offend and stir up a large number of people and become embroiled in a mean controversy. Also the intent of the Pharisees would be to trap Jesus to such an extent that there would be an opportunity for the authorities to arrest Him. If Jesus says no, it would seem as though He were speaking against the Law of Moses. If He says yes, He would be contradicting His teaching on commitment to a permanent relationship.

To understand the nature of their attack,* we need to first understand the state of marriage in Israel in that day. There are **two positions or schools** of thought on divorce. Moses had said that any man could divorce his wife if she found no favor in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her (*Deu.24:1*).

1. The School of Shammai (*conservative*) said that the words “*some uncleanness*” meant adultery only. She could be as loose and as mean as Jezebel, but she was not to be divorced unless she committed adultery. The Law commended that adulterers were to be put to death by stoning *Lev.20:10*. By the New Testament time period, however, stoning for that reason had been outlawed, and divorce became the remedy for adultery in the marriage.
2. The School of Hillel (*liberal*) said that the words “*some uncleanness*” meant anything that was not pleasing to the man. A person should remember that women were counted as nothing but property to be possessed by men. They had no rights whatsoever, except as a man might wish to give. Women were abused: neglected, used, discarded, and violated. If she took down her hair in public; if she was seen talking to another man; if she ruined a meal by burning the food or by putting too much salt into it; if she spoke evil of her mother-in-law; if she was infertile, she could be divorced.

NOTE:

*It is ironic that the Pharisees, who were so strict in every other area, were so liberal in this area. Most of the Pharisees married and divorced as it pleased them. Of course, this is the way of a legalist. They always find loopholes to allow the flesh to be gratified. They were not interested in the truth. They were only interested in justifying their own sinfulness in their own eyes (legalism).

Of course, Jesus never falls for their traps. Instead, Jesus turns the tables on them and takes them back to the Word (*Deuteronomy 24*), but not as they thought; Instead He reveals the condition of their sin hardened hearts. He answers a question with a question. “*What did Moses command you?*” **v.3**

The Pharisees believed that the Law was “the” standard* of perfection. They believed that following the law would provide them salvation. They felt like divorce was not just a right, but an obligation to be followed. In ancient Israel, divorce was out of control. Men were divorcing their wives for all kinds of frivolous reasons.

NOTE:

*All a man had to do, was to say to his wife three times, “**I divorce you!**”, and in the eyes of man, they were divorced. These women were being sent out of their homes by their husbands with no legal protection. A “*bill of divorcement*” told society that the woman was not a harlot, but that she was free to remarry.

Jesus offers a different look at the law. He says, “*It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law.*” **v.5**. Jesus went on **v.6-9**, to teach that if you look back to creation you can see that God’s intention was for marriage to be a lifelong commitment. It is only because your hearts have been hardened by sin and warped and distorted the most intimate of relationships, that Moses permitted divorce. The law Moses gave them was given to control a sinful system that arose out of man’s refusal to honor God’s ideal for marriage. And the Law including their ideal standard, always falls short.

In **verses 10-12**, the scene shifts. The Pharisees did not get what they came after. In a separate discussion, alone with His disciples, they are concerned about the things they heard Jesus say. Jesus saw divorce and remarriage as adultery. **Adultery** is the unfaithfulness and the turning away from a spouse to another person sexually; to walk away from marriage for another relationship. Jesus is saying, it is an issue of a hardened heart.

Marriage and Divorce will have to be explained more extensively using other verses at a later time.

There is another story about legalism in this section **v.13-16**. It has to do with the children. The parents were bringing their children to Jesus. Why? That He might simply touch them and in touching them, their children would be blessed. To bring is the same connotation /word used in connection with offerings. The idea is that whatever is brought is being brought as an offering, a dedication to God. The disciples were rebuking the parents for bringing the children. The word **rebuke** (*epitimao*) is a strong word; it means actively rebuking, hindering, and reproving. The disciples were actually holding the parents and pushing them back, trying to stop them. Why? Very simply, the disciples saw

a problem with children. They felt children could contribute nothing to the adult world, nothing in adult affairs, and that Jesus was too busy to be disturbed. When Jesus saw the children mistreated, he was displeased (moved with indignation). Jesus says, *“Suffer (let, allow) the little children to come unto me, and forbid (hinder, prevent) them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” v14.*

When Jesus says that the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these, He’s talking of their simplicity and innocence heart to believe. **Verse 15** *“...Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” NIV.* He is challenging the Pharisees and their legalistic view point. In Judaism a “little child” was not considered to be under the Law* until their twelfth or thirteenth birthday. Only then could they begin to relate to God through the Law.

NOTE:

*Receiving the kingdom like a “little child”, was a rejection of the Law, as a way of entering God’s kingdom. It had always been said that the “age of accountability” was twelve. It surprises some people when they find out that the Bible does not mention a specific “age of accountability”. A child becomes accountable for his or her sins when they come to a place where they can understand the difference between right and wrong and when they are able to choose between right and wrong, *Isa. 7:16*. However, it has been different for every child when:

- 1) The child trusts and depends upon Jesus –Trusting what they hear.
- 2) The child responds and surrenders to Jesus – Willing to give up what they are doing.
- 3) The child is obedient to Jesus – Listens and does exactly what Jesus says.

POINT:

This whole matter of children coming to Jesus was used by our Lord to illustrate the way all believers must come to Him, in child-like faith.

Jesus received and blessed the children. It reveals that children hold a special place in His heart. It also shows, He took the time and placed His hands on each and every child there and blessed them. We see the Saviors’ heart and His hands. This contrasts the image of childlike faith in the next passage, when the Rich Young Ruler comes to Jesus.

Mark 10:17-20: A Rich Man’s Claim

There is a vast difference in attitude toward Jesus: the innocence of children and the rich young ruler. Jesus rebuked His disciples for turning the children away, and He then used them as an example of who can enter the Kingdom of God. Children are completely dependent. That seems to be a major characteristic Jesus was conveying here. The rich man, however, was independent. He did not view his riches as gifts from God but as his own and as also his foremost priority. He depended on his abilities, works and possessions for all he needed.

He had just heard Jesus speak on the topic of a child being able to inherit eternal life, and wanted to ensure that he, too, would inherit eternal life. Who is this man who comes running and kneeling before Jesus asking, *“Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (v17)*. We usually refer to him as the rich young ruler. He was rich in possessions, young, but old enough to seek wisdom, and he held a position of authority which led him to respect another in such a position.

John Calvin speaks of him as one who “did not come treacherously, as the scribes were wont to do, but from a desire of instruction; and, accordingly, both by words and by kneeling, he testifies his reverence for Christ as a faithful teacher.” In the same manner we should come to Jesus.

He was eagerly seeking eternal life –a spiritual matter often shunned by the rich. He went to the right source. *First*, He believed that eternal life existed. He came running and kneeled before Jesus. *Second*, he openly confessed his eager concern for eternal life. Few of the rich ever confess an open concern as he did. It was also an inner peace and a sense of completeness, fulfillment, and satisfaction. He was the man who had everything –except eternal life.

The **first major error was**, he called Jesus *“Good Master.”* He conceived Jesus to be only a highly regarded teacher. He didn’t consider Jesus to be the divine Son of God, but a mere man –one capable of teaching the great truths of God and life, not him being God. He did not call Jesus, *“Lord.”* He also asks, *“what shall I do that I may inherit*

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eternal life?" This was the man's **second major error**. He had a religion of works, not of faith. He felt that if he could just keep some great rule or law, and live a moral and clean life, then God would accept him. To be respectable is not enough to receive eternal life. And yet his heart seems to lack a full conviction that this inheritance of which he seeks can be agreed to him. Eternal life* is a free gift, inherited from our heavenly Father through the acceptance of Jesus.

NOTE:

*Christ defines eternal life, speaking to his Father, saying that *"this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"* (John 17:3). Those who come to know God in such a way are those who Christ ransomed with his own blood. He had said that the Father had given him authority over all flesh, *"that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"* (17:2). How then can we inherit eternal life except that it is given us by the Father through the Son?

Jesus was the exemplar of teaching (asking the right questions; answering a question, with a question)! Jesus' provocative response is designed to test his motive. Jesus had to correct these gross errors by asking, *"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God."* (v18). He was saying, 'If I am but a mere man, a good teacher, then I am not "good", and do not have the words to eternal life. But if I am God, then you can address me as "good" and I do have the words to eternal life.'

POINT:

Therefore, Jesus is claiming to be God, not a mere man, which would be the only way the man could ever receive eternal life!

Jesus responded by referring to the commandments: *"do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, and honor thy father and mother"*v19. Keeping the commandments God gave to Moses thousands of years earlier was very important. The man answers, *"Master, all these have I observed from my youth"*v20 - quoting the five laws of respectability that had to do with his duty toward his neighbor. The young man, as he declared how well he had kept* with the Ten Commandments shows great confidence. Jesus proceeds to lead him to the truth of inheriting salvation by pointing him to that which he already knows. In other words, Jesus is saying 'Keeping the commandments is good, but I want your heart.'

POINT:

Jesus draws the young man to the Word of God (The Law of the Ten Commandments), in both a positive and negative sense: positive, because the Word of God alone holds the answer; negative, because it will show him as a mirror where he is wrong.

There is no eternal life in the keeping of the Commandments, had there been, he would not be seeking.

NOTE:

*He of course, had not kept them perfectly, not in God's eyes, not in the spirit in which God intended them to be kept.

Mark 10:21-27: Jesus' Tough Answer

To be loved by Jesus was not enough to receive eternal life, not enough to save the man. Jesus *"beholding him loved him"*, speaks to a soul, which acknowledges that something is missing, saying, *"One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."** It is recorded that this young man was sad at what Jesus said, and *"went away grieved; for he had great possessions."***

NOTE:

*To follow Christ is to deny self completely –all that we are and all that we have. To deny self is a hard saying, but

Christ demands it. Our attempt to soften it does not annul His demand. The young man **rejected Jesus for three reasons:**

1. Unbelief –He was not willing to entrust his life to Jesus.
2. Self-righteousness and pride –His concept of religion was keeping laws and doing good in order to secure God’s acceptance.
3. Love of the world –He was rich and unwilling to give up the comfort and possessions he had obtained.
 - a. He loved the things of the world more than he loved people.
 - b. He loved the things of the world more than he loved the hope of eternal life.
 - c. He loved the position, recognition, esteem, and power of the earth more than he loved Christ.

POINT:

To give everything is required to receive eternal life. Giving everything is the one thing lacking, the one thing that causes so many to lose eternal life.

NOTE:

****** Were his possessions the one thing? Actually they were the stumbling block not the actual lack. It was his love for his possessions that made him grieve. His thought was on being materially poor. However, he had to become poor in spirit. He had to hear the words of Jesus, saying, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*” (Matt. 5:3). We must be in poverty of spirit realizing that there is no strength within oneself. The natural man says that God helps those who help themselves. The Christian says, God help me because I cannot help myself.

The one thing lacking was the man did not hold God in the highest position in his heart. He would not **Sell whatsoever** he had. The treasure he wanted was not that in heaven but that on earth. The First Commandment teaches not to have any other god before Him. *Matthew 6:33* corroborates that our needs will be met, but our obligation is to seek first what God wants and to do what is right, then everything else will be added to us. Jesus takes the rich young man’s rejection of heaven and warned his disciples about the problem and dangers of wealth. “*How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.*” **v23**. They, being astonished because they thought that riches, was apart of God’s favor. Jesus says again, “*Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 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*” **v24-25**. They being astonished again and says, “*Who then can be saved?*” **v26**. Jesus immediately had to stir up their faith by saying that humanly this thing *is impossible*, **** but not with God, for with God all things are possible v27**.

NOTE:

*Camels had to be left outside of the gate entrance because they simply couldn't fit. The gateways were too low and too narrow and the camels had to be unloaded before they could be led through to the other end, where they are reloaded with their packs once again. The small door inside the gate was common in walled cities to protect them from marauders and enemies. A camel’s legs bend the opposite way from many animals. A camel would have to get on their knees and crawl through, which if tried, would lead to a camel blocking the gateway. Only with the assistance of strong people-struggling, pushing and shoving, could a camel on its knees, squeeze through the door. Furthermore, an obstinate camel could not make it; only a compliant camel could achieve success.

POINT:

We cannot enter heaven without Jesus, just as a camel cannot squeeze through the small door without help. The kingdom of God demands trusting in God completely and totally without distractions. This rich young man had several difficulties on the way to his salvation. These difficulties were caused by all of his riches. First, he was rich in the knowledge of the law. Second, he was rich in his own righteousness according to the law’s external standard. Third, he was rich in physical wealth. When Jesus chose to speak in parables, he chose the most common and ordinary thing to express His meaning.

NOTE:

****** “*With men it is impossible*”; rich people cannot by their own skill or resolution get over these difficulties, but the grace of God can do it, “*for with him all things are possible.*” Jesus is forced to let the rich man make his own decision, just as He has allow us to walk away because he cannot violate our free will.

Mark 10:-28-31: Forsake All For Jesus

Peter raises his voice, still thinking about what they have done in following Jesus: *"Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee."* Peter is speaking materialistically not spiritually. Jesus answers his disciple: *"Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come Eternal Life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first"* **v28-31**.

Christ takes the worse scenario- to forsake a father, a mother, a brother, a wife, for Christ, those whom He knows they love, is hard. Just as the rich are to live as sacrificially as the poor (parting with or giving up what you think you've earned or secured and/or is yours) in order to have what Jesus is giving. And yet they must do so, rather than deny or disown Christ. Secured wealth is not secured salvation; neither is giving up everything with the wrong motive. Really you can't hold on to what is not yours, 'temporal possessions'. The person's **motive** has to be that, he is giving or sacrificing for Christ's sake and the spreading of the gospel with a pure heart.

So now Jesus turns this around and says, even though giving up and forsaking all, there is a promise, a reward. 'You have not done this for nothing!' The promise **rewarded** will be that of an hundred-fold now in this time of what he gives up and sacrifices, but we can't forget about the persecution on the way to the promise! Some had been rejected by family and lost their home when they turned to Jesus for salvation or set out to serve Him. **Why Persecution?** –a believer suffers for righteousness. **What comes from persecution?**

- A special closeness, a oneness, a deep intense consciousness of the Lord's Presence. It is beyond imagination and unexplainable.
- It conveys a special identification with Christ. As the Lord suffered on behalf of the disciples, the disciples, suffers on behalf of the Lord, and therefore completes the sufferings of Christ for the church.

However, these experiences are gained only through suffering. But what is given, is given for Christ's sake, and the gospel's! The true believer, the disciple of Christ will be abundantly rewarded, in fact a hundred-fold. They shall have abundance of comfort while they live, sufficient to make up for all their losses. Jesus teaches us a wonderful truth while holding in His hands our blessings. To close this, he tells them, though they were first called, that there should be disciples called after them, that should be preferred before them; Israel, although first, will be last, because of rejection of Christ; the Church of the Gentiles although last, will be first because of acceptance of Christ!

SUMMARY:

Many scholars believe that when a person is nameless in one of the stories about Jesus, it gives us an opportunity to insert our own names in the story. What does this story sound like if we read it aloud with our names in it? Jesus is approached by a man who inquires what he must do to inherit eternal life. **QUESTION:** *"Good Master, what shall (I) do that (I) may inherit eternal life?"* **v17**. For in fact, *"He had been keeping these commandments since his youth (since he was a little boy)."* **v20**. While this man had followed the letter of the law, he had no concept of what keeping those commandments actually meant. Jesus knew from the man's question that he lacked knowledge of spiritual things. In the conversation that follows, it is clear that Jesus looks into the heart of this man and sees just what is needed. It was love that moved Jesus to tell the rich man that even though he had learned and followed all of the commandments, there was yet one thing he lacked. **ANSWER:** *"...Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."* **v21**. **Three things:** sell, give, and follow.

The directions were precise and to the point. The young man needed to discard his material possessions and follow Jesus. In doing so, his temporary treasures he possessed would be replaced by eternal ones. Like many today, this man could not bear the thought of parting with his wealth and the status it afforded him. It was too great a price to pay, for he had great possessions. He was accustomed to having others serve him and had no desire to engage in a life of service himself, as Jesus was calling him to do.

In his silent answer to Jesus, he broke two very important commandments. He did not love God with all his heart, <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

soul, and mind. He did not love his neighbor as himself, willing to share his wealth with the poor *Matt.22:37-38*. He turned his back on eternity for the temporal things of this world. He walked away from the Savior bewildered, sad, and grieved because he wouldn't give up something that would eventually be lost any way. He had chosen wealth as his idol and would not part with them. His wealth had become his barrier of intimacy, cancelling his freedom to serve others and God, as he should. According to the Law, whosoever is guilty of transgressing part of the law is guilty of transgressing the whole. Though rich in all these ways, the young man was poor regarding compassion for the poor. In his eyes the poor could not repay him. The rich man had not yet received salvation. He was still under the bondage of sin. So, what is the **gain in giving?**

One of the most tragic and dangerous tendencies of men is to set their riches upon a pedestal. Everything we have today can be taken away tomorrow. Every gift is from above. It must be carefully stewarded in a way that honors God. In fact, when we are comfortable, it can reduce our dependency upon God and fool us into thinking we are powerful and do not need God. *Matt.10:37-38* says, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

There are a myriad of things that we can never possess in life; one of these, and *the* most significant one, is having ultimate control over our lives.

*Jim Elliot a missionary to the Auca people in Ecuador, often expressed
"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."*

That is to say, When we give up what we cannot keep (*our life and control over it, for a life in God*), we gain (get to keep something) we cannot lose (**Eternal Life**) provided we remain in Him. We do not gain this world and lose our soul, but we give our soul to God to gain Eternal Life. It was only through Christ's totally sacrificing His life that we were able to receive the gift of eternal life. In gratitude, we should follow His example and give our all to tell of the awesome sacrifice He did for us and what we've gained through it. In giving we really gain more than what we really had before. Don't look at it with your fleshly eyes but your spiritual eyes. Giving what is tangible to receive the intangible may be a sacrifice at times when we really don't want to. God can at anytime out-give us. So be prepared to come out of the closed-minded mode of the rich young ruler. Don't lose what God wants to give you.

APPLICATION:

Just as each of us are unique. Our encumbrances, our burdens, may be different from the young man's fixation with wealth. The one thing that we lack may evidence itself in myriad ways, but it is still failing to put God first and failing to find our way through Jesus Christ.

You gain when you **Believe in Jesus**; when you **Love the Lord** your God with a total heart; when you **Confess** that you cannot achieve the Kingdom of God without Jesus' assistance. **Put Jesus first** and then everything else will be added as a bonus [God –Family –Finances –Ministry] *Matt.6:33*. Then God can see that He can trust you. Be courageous and be sincere if you need help in your vulnerability.

Prayer: "Jesus, I need your help; what do you want me to do? That, that I give up of me, Lord be glorified. And that, that I let go of me, every area of my heart, Lord be glorified!" In Jesus Name! Amen!

Listen to the answer by studying the Bible with an open heart. Then, there will be peace and joy, unlike the sadness which overwhelmed the rich young man.