**Jesus and the Rich Man**

**The Word**

Read together Mark 10:17-31

**The Big Idea**

Jesus saw beneath this man’s external righteousness to the deep attachment he had to wealth, and he decided to take a drastic action to try to free this man to follow him. As we follow Jesus, we are similarly called to hold all else loosely in order to seek first his kingdom and righteousness.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. The disciples clearly assumed that wealth was a sign of God’s blessing and favor. Do you think that assumption is still alive and well in the evangelical church? And, in your mind, is wealth, at least in some ways, a sign of God’s blessing and favor?

2. What have been the most impactful experiences, people, or teachings (good or bad) that have impacted the way you deal with your own financial and material resources?

3. Take some time to read together 1 Timothy 6:17-19. Where does that passage convict you? Where does it encourage you?

4. As we discussed the “disordered attachments” and “counterfeit gods” that lie beneath the surface of our lives, what came up for you? And what would it look like for you to hold that more loosely in order to follow Jesus more wholeheartedly?

**Digging Deeper**

Read Luke 12:13-21 which offers another of Jesus’ teaching on wealth. What does that passage add to this conversation on wealth?

**Sermon Outline**

I. The rich man

 A. This is a very good by all external measures

1. He is eager (ran up to Jesus) and respectful (fell on his knees, “Good Teacher”)

2. He is moral: Let’s assume he has largely kept the commandments Jesus mentions

 3. He is probably respected due to his wealth

 B. But below the surface he has a idolatrous attachment to his wealth

1. Disordered attachments: these can be good things that our hearts attach to in a disordered way. We grip too tightly to these things, and they end up gripping and controlling us

2. Counterfeit gods: things we go to for security, significance, satisfaction

3. One way to discover what these are is to consider what triggers deep anxiety or anger in us.

B. Jesus

A. Jesus’ severe approach towards this man is rooted in his love for him and his desire for his freedom and devotion (v. 21). Sometimes love looks like severity.

B. He starts with the tip of the iceberg and points this man to the commandments (conveniently leaving out the 10th regarding coveting and the 1st regarding no other gods)

C. Then he goes under the surface and gets at this man’s idol

 D. Jesus gives him several commands but the essential one is, “follow me”

 1. “Follow me” is the ultimate answer to “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

2. The other commands are necessary only inasmuch as they create the opportunity for this man to actually follow Jesus wholeheartedly

C. Wealth and the Kingdom

A. It is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom (v. 23)

1. This totally blows apart the disciple’s view. Their assumption was that wealth is a sign of God’s blessing and favor. So if it’s hard for someone as blessed as this rich man to enter, then who can possibly be saved?

2. Jesus is reconstructing their view of wealth and God’s kingdom

 a. His statement is not particularly theological but rather practical

b. Wealth actually puts a person at a spiritual disadvantage when it comes to God’s kingdom by presenting additional barriers and obstacles

B. Why is wealth an obstacle to the kingdom

1. Wealth naturally creates a sense of self-sufficiency

a. Revelation 3:15-17: ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’”

b. The Kingdom of God fundamentally about trust, dependence, and surrender

c. Practically speaking, it’s harder to depend on someone else when I have so many resources at my disposal and can trust them

2. Wealth naturally takes our hearts away from the treasure of God’s kingdom by fixing them on other treasures

 a. Mt 6:21: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

b. Our hearts naturally follow after our treasures, so the more treasures we have, the more our hearts will be distracted and divided.

3. So practically speaking, if our goal is to have a flourishing spiritual life with Jesus, we would choose not to have much wealth. Proverbs 30:8-9: Lord, give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

 C. Consider Paul’s perspective on wealth

 1. If your goal is to be wealthy, that will destroy your spiritual life (1 Tim 6:8-10)

 2. Alternatively, if you happen to be wealthy, practice kingdom living:

 a. Don’t be arrogant

 b. Don’t fix your hope on your wealth

 c. Be grateful for what you have

 d. Hold it loosely and give it away generously for the kingdom

D. The Kingdom Economy (see v. 29-30)

1. If we let go of earthly treasures (whether possessions, people, etc.) to follow Jesus, we will receive eternal life

2. If we let go of earthly treasures (whether possessions, people, etc.), we will actually receive back these treasures in this life albeit in a different form

a. We may have to let go of our biological family to follow Jesus, but we will receive back a new family (= other followers of Jesus)

b. We may have to leg go of our personal possessions to follow Jesus, but we will receive back possessions (= the homes, resources, helps of our church family)