

# WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

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Lent 2023 #3, Mark 10:17-31

March 26, 2023

*Jesus looked at him and loved him.  
"One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have  
and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.  
Then come, follow me."  
Mark 10:21*

## **When Jesus doesn't answer a question with another question**

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

<sup>20</sup> "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

<sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> 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."

<sup>26</sup> The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

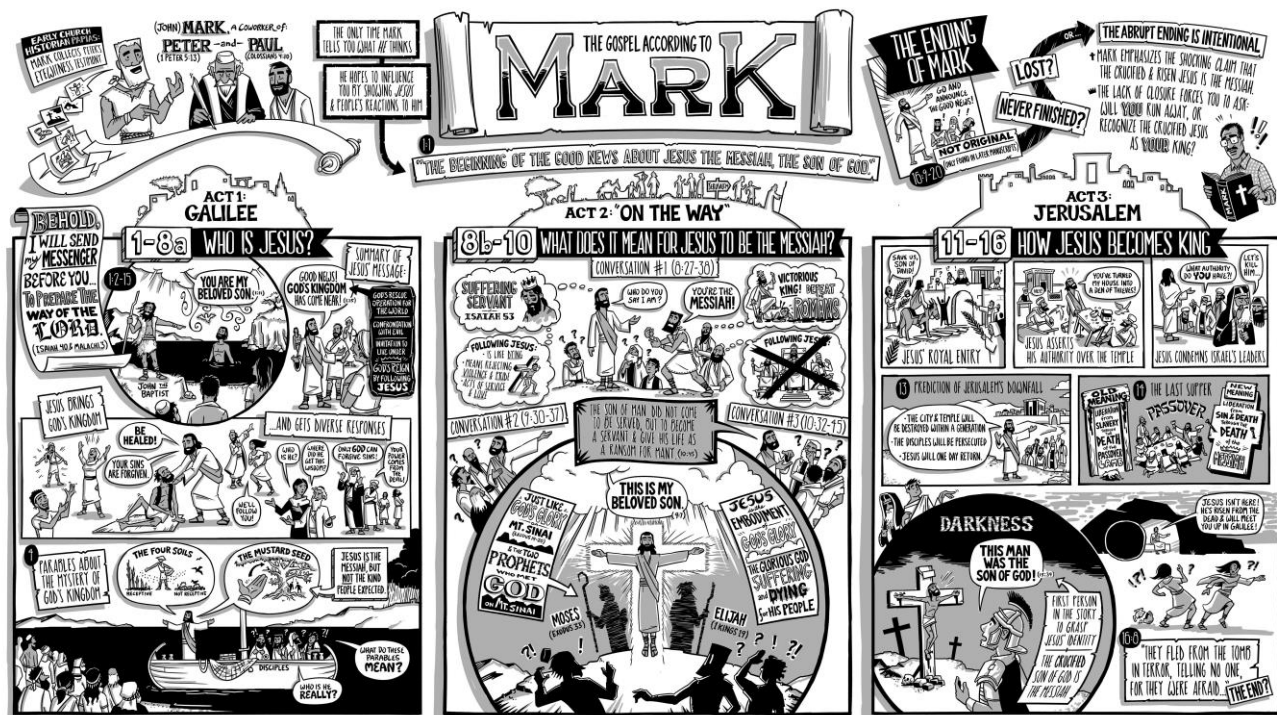
<sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

<sup>28</sup> Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!"

<sup>29</sup> "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Mark 10 (but have the parallel passage in Matthew 19:16-20:16 open)

1. Jesus doesn't think the young man really understands goodness (or in the NT, "righteousness")
2. In his love, Jesus reveals the young man's heart
3. The disciples are amazed that no one's righteous is good enough to enter into God's kingdom
4. Jesus makes the main point his righteousness, and that's good news for his followers!



## The amazement of “eternal life”

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Mark 10 (but see how Matthew explains this hyperbole)

1. Eternal life and the entering the kingdom are two ways to experience salvation, and rich people aren’t the only ones who need Jesus’ righteousness to enter
2. Matthew ends this encounter by showing just how much I depend on God’s generosity!

## Messiah lessons learned on the way

<sup>42</sup> Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 10

### 1. Jesus is going to reveal Messiah’s love in ways that will be even more amazing

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

*<sup>6</sup> You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*<sup>9</sup> Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

Romans 5 (but begin at 4:13 for the whole OT story of Abraham’s faith)

### 2. We learn some surprises about Messiah-followers

*<sup>29</sup> “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

Mark 10 (this would be a good time to remember Pastor Lanting’s message!)

### 3. Jesus’ love is what allows us to discern the “rubbish”

*<sup>7</sup> But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. <sup>10</sup> I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Philippians 3:7-11

## Resources for studying Mark

The poster for Mark can be found at [bibleproject.com](http://bibleproject.com)

Redeemer Presbyterian's Lent devotions are online at <https://gospelinlife.com/lent-devotional/>

There is a wonderful series of sermons by Kim Riddlebarger (though I think he gets the "don't go into the village" part at least partly wrong) at <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/> Kim Riddlebarger has a traditional sermon on this text at <http://kimriddlebarger.squarespace.com/downloadable-sermons-on-mark/With%20God%20All%20Things%20Are%20Possible%20%20revised%2031.pdf>

J. C. Ryle has an interesting commentary on Mark's gospel at <https://www.gracegems.org/Ryle/mark10.htm>

Doug's favorite Mark commentaries include

J.R. Edwards *The Gospel According to Mark* (Eerdmans, 2002)

France's NIGTC volume (Eerdmans, 2002)

Hendricksen's *Expository Commentary* (Baker, 1975)

Walter Wessel's volume on Mark in *Expositors' Bible Commentary* (Zondervan, 1984)

Note: For this teaching, I think Hendricksen has the best analysis.

Archibald Alexander has an interesting analysis at <https://www.monergism.com/one-thing-you-lack>

Spurgeon and Ryle have several sermons on Mark at <https://www.biblebb.com/brefindex/mar.htm>

I appreciate Ray Stedman's work on this text at <https://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/mark/the-child-in-our-midst>

This is one place where bible.org misses the point with its summary application at <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-jesus-and-rich-young-ruler-matthew-1916-30-mark-1017-27-luke-1818-27>

**Application:** *When the love of money (or the love of stuff) grabs onto your heart, you find yourself walking away from Jesus.*

*Ask yourself if there is anything in your life "blocking the way" to a deep relationship with Jesus. Is there anything or anyone that you love more than God? Do you trust any person more than you trust God? Do you spend way more time thinking about soccer or ballet than about God? If so, ask God to change your heart!*

*The Bible teaches us that we are to love God MOST, above all other things (Exodus 20:3). This is actually the very first commandment! And this was the one thing that made it so hard for this young man to be a true follower of Jesus.*

*Just like with the young ruler, Jesus offers you the opportunity to be freed from the slavery of money and things to find true freedom, peace, and joy in God. Those who love money or stuff are constantly worried that they will lose it! We can never lose the love of Jesus!!!*

Archibald Alexander's summary:

And evidently, he was confident that he was *willing to do whatever should be prescribed*. Oh, deceitful heart; how little did he know of its true state! But Jesus knew, and in a moment brought him to a fair test. He knew that, notwithstanding all his fair professions, amiable character, and courteous demeanor—he was an idolater in his heart, and worshiped mammon with supreme affection. He therefore said, "Go, sell all that you have, and distribute to the poor; and come, follow me; and you shall have treasure in heaven."

O what a test for a lover of riches! See, the young man's countenance changes; he remains silent. His heart is undergoing an evident conflict. Heaven and earth, with all their charms, are before him. For a moment, perhaps, he hesitates; for he sincerely wishes to possess eternal life—but, O upon what a hard condition! to give away all his riches, to which his heart was wedded! No, no! He cannot do it!

See, he turns his back on the Savior! He turns his back on all the treasures of heaven! He goes away sorrowful indeed, very sorrowful to lose the opportunity of securing eternal happiness, but deliberately resolved not to relinquish his hold of this world. He will have his "good things" in this life, whatever may become of him in the next. Here is a picture of the true state of thousands—of thousands of well-instructed, moral, and amiable youth!

But was not this a hard test? Was it not more than is required of others? Not at all. All may not, in fact, be put to this same test; but every true disciple has already passed this ordeal, and has renounced the world as a portion—as an object of supreme affection. And every true Christian, however much of this world he may possess, would instantly resign it all at the command of Christ. It is the characteristic of every genuine disciple, that, for the sake of Christ, he has been made willing to forsake father, mother, wife and children, house and lands, yes, life itself.

It is true, this test, if made practical in our churches, would detect the hypocrisy of a multitude of professors; or rather, their lack of supreme love to Christ is already but too evident, from the ardor with which they pursue the world, and from their unwillingness to part with even a small portion of their wealth to promote the cause of Christ.

This young man possessed many excellent qualities and advantages, and lacked but ONE THING. Yet that was the main thing—the one thing needful—a heart to love God supremely—a heart to prefer heavenly treasures to earthly riches. Though his character and conduct were so correct and amiable, yet his heart was not right in the sight of God. He went away sorrowful.