

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Mark 10:17-31

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, March 13, 2016

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, March 13, 2016**, is from **Mark 10:17-31**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. If you are a Bible student or teacher, you can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the **International Bible Lesson Forum**.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Mark 10:17-31

(Mark 10:17) As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus traveled to meet those who needed to hear the good news without waiting for the people to come to Him. The young man who ran up to Jesus and knelt before Jesus in homage did so before Jesus left where He had been teaching and healing. He acknowledged Jesus as his Teacher or Master, and wanted to know what he could do to add eternal life to his possessions as an inheritance. To inherit from the Father, he would first need to become a child of God, an adopted son of God through faith in Jesus.

(Mark 10:18) Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.

Jesus asked him why he called Him good. Did he recognize the fact that Jesus never sinned? Did he think Jesus' teaching was good teaching? Did he believe Jesus had come from God? Did he think Jesus was a prophet who knew what people must do to inherit eternal life? Jesus indicated that God alone is good – all other human beings have sinned against God. Though fully human, as the Son of God, Jesus never sinned.

(Mark 10:19) You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false

witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.””

Jesus named commandments that involved personal relationships with other people. Jesus did not name the commandments that began the Ten Commandments regarding worshiping God alone (not worshiping idols) and loving God supremely. The young man would show by his responses to Jesus' words that he was not loving and worshiping God alone or supremely.

(Mark 10:20) He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.”

He could say that he had outwardly kept all of the commandments Jesus listed. As a wealthy young man interested in eternal life, he would probably try to keep those commandments and do what he thought he needed to do to inherit both from his parents and eternal life from God. He probably also knew that something was missing in his life. From Jesus teaching him about obeying the commandments and later the importance of giving and following Him, he would begin to understand that he was not really “good” for only God is good. He would begin to understand that he loved money more than God.

(Mark 10:21) Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Jesus may have loved this young man because he had really tried to obey the law of God by not doing bad things. But rather than tell the young man he was not obeying the commands regarding love for God and others, and that he really loved money instead of God and others, Jesus gave him something practical to do that would demonstrate his disobedience to God and speak to his conscience. Love for God and others requires more than avoiding doing harm to others. By his actions, the young man would reveal that he trusted more in his wealth than in the “Good Teacher” Jesus and what Jesus said.

(Mark 10:22) When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

The young man had great wealth, and to follow Jesus he needed to give all that great wealth away and use it to help others in positive ways. Then, he would have great treasure in heaven and have something to inherit from his heavenly Father after he died and went to heaven. It seems he wanted to add to his accumulations, and he was serving money instead of God. He went away sad rather than do what the “Good Teacher” told him to do – this was a sign of unbelief in Jesus as Good Teacher or Good Master.

(Mark 10:23) Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

The rich are tempted to love their wealth and what their wealth can buy them. They are tempted to trust in their wealth in this life, and they may suppose that their wealth is an indication of God's blessing upon them. This was a popular notion at the time, and still believed by many. Therefore, it is hard or difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. They must look to God first, and put their future, wealth, and possessions in God's hands – to use their wealth as God wants – some rich people will do this, some will not.

(Mark 10:24) And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

The disciples probably thought as many did in Jesus' day – that wealth indicated God's love and special blessing upon someone. Jesus indicated in reply to their surprise that it is hard or difficult for anyone to enter the kingdom of God, not just the wealthy.

(Mark 10:25) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

A camel must kneel and have its load removed to squeeze through a gate in the wall to enter a city or earthly kingdom (this is sometimes called “going through the eye of a needle”). A wealthy person must humbly kneel before God and become willing for God to remove the burden of

his wealth in order to enter the kingdom of God. It is difficult for a truly wealthy person, especially one who has endeavored with all his heart and mind to become wealthy or retain his inheritance, to bow before God and become willing for God to remove all of his possessions or freely give all he has to God, for God to use his wealth as God wants. It is difficult for people to give up their control of their lives and turn the control of their lives over to God.

(Mark 10:26) They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?”

The disciples are so amazed at Jesus' teaching they ask each other, "Who then can be saved?" If a rich man cannot be saved, even with all his wealth (which they thought was a sign of God's blessing upon him), then what chance does a poor man have, or even they as Jesus' disciples have, of being saved? How could they possibly give enough to be saved?

(Mark 10:27) Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

Jesus said that it is impossible for us to save ourselves. There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. We must trust ourselves and everything we have and are to Jesus Christ and follow Him. It is not impossible for God to save us, and by His grace lead us to saving faith in Jesus Christ. A sign that God has saved us is our putting God first in our lives and using our wealth, talents, time, and possessions

to serve God and others. Doing so does not save us, but doing so is a sign that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, that we truly love and trust in God.

(Mark 10:28) Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.”

Peter exclaimed that since they had left everything to follow Jesus that they had no more to give to God in order to be saved. Therefore, they could do nothing more to save themselves. Jesus will indicate to them that because He had called them to follow Him and they had done so that was a sign that they were saved, had entered the kingdom of God, and would inherit eternal life.

(Mark 10:29) Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news,

What is of central importance is our relationship with God in Jesus Christ. The wealthy young man wanted to keep all he had and do a few more good things to ensure his future after death. The question is “Are we following Jesus?” The wealthy young man needed to leave all he had acquired behind to follow Jesus: he chose not to do so. The disciples had left all they had behind to follow Jesus – a sign of God’s saving grace at work in them.

(Mark 10:30) who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters,

mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life.

In this life, in this present age, the followers of Jesus will have hundreds of homes opened to them and hundreds of brothers and sisters and mothers and children (only one heavenly Father and Savior) for Jesus' mother and brothers are those who do the will of God — the sign they are saved. They will have many homes and many friends of Christ in heaven, and they live with them forever. This inheritance is greater than all the world's wealth. Jesus also prepared His followers for the future by telling them they will also suffer persecution in this life, another sign they are different from the world.

(Mark 10:31) But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

In many societies, the first or most important people are the wealthy who have hoarded their money rather than use their money to do the will of God; they will be last in regard to the future and eternal life with God's people. They may forfeit eternal life altogether if they did not repent and put God first through faith in Jesus Christ. The followers of Jesus, who appear to be last because they have given up everything to follow Him will be first in the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, they will have far more friends, who will be like brothers and sisters, than those in this life who put money and acquiring possessions and wealth first before God and others. Jesus specifically told the young man to follow Him. Giving away money is

insufficient to inherit eternal life, especially when that giving sometimes helps those who oppose the truth and destroys the lives of others through the organizations they support. In this world, the disciples of Jesus may appear to be last, especially when persecuted, but they will be first in the Kingdom of God. Unless they repent and follow Jesus, many of the first and most important people in this world will not inherit eternal life and will not even be last.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What did the rich young man want to inherit after he died? What did Jesus say he would need to do?
2. What might his refusal to do what Jesus said have indicated?
3. What can someone do which indicates they have entered the kingdom of God?
4. What had Peter and the other disciples left behind to follow Jesus?
5. What did Jesus say His followers would receive?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly
International Bible Lesson.

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