

Almighty God, grant us thy Holy Spirit to be our interpreter, leading us through the written word to him who is the incarnate Word, such that we may know thee more fully, love thee more truly, and to serve thee more faithfully to the honor and glory of thy Name. Amen

Gollum, what a great name! It's the name of a character in the Tolkien series, "The Lord of the Rings" and he got the name because of his horrible deformity. (Lovable!)

- You see – he was a hobbit named Smeagol – simple, friendly, loving kind of guy – but one day he found a ring. His obsession with this ring caused him to become transformed, bent, and so possessive of the ring that he became a slave to it.
- "My precious!" (cute and pitiful at the same time)
- The warrior Arragon (in the book) said, that in Gollum's defense of the ring he "had a strength hardly to be imagined".
- Was his possession bad? No? His obsession, idolatry and focus was the problem!
- The possession began to possess him! He became the slave to the ring.
- Tim Keller offers this potent definition of sin: "Sin isn't only doing bad things, it is more fundamentally making good things into ultimate things.

? What is your ultimate thing ?? Jesus wants to free us from our good and replace it with Himself.

P1 – Jesus Loves to relive our burdens... if we come to him (17-22)

17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life ?" 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone .

- People want to know what they can do to inherit eternal life

Jesus had just answered this question... Follow me!

- Follow me to the Cross!
- Follow me like a child (previous chapter)... with simple abandon; become like a child! Dependent, with no resources of your own
- Follow me... and cut off anything that hinders... (eye, arm, selfish desires...)
- Follow me... innocently abandoned to the journey... to the Cross!

Now a rich man will be challenged -- Will he follow? Will he cut off everything to follow? Will he become like a child?

- The man wanted to know what HE COULD DO!!
- Jesus wants to give gifts to his children... not timeshares to investors!

He starts off well... respectfully kneeling, addressing the teacher.

- But something else is going on
- Cultural issue – Jews only called God good... so there's a clue into this exchange.
 - Jesus wants him to think about his words... They mean something!
 - Does this man acknowledge Jesus as God... or is he looking for a trick?
 - Is he willing to follow?
- A great contrast: Blind Bartemaeus in later part of chapter... Calls out, Kneels, "SON OF DAVID"
 - The Blind man knows exactly who Jesus is
 - The Rich man (who has access to all the news, education, resources... still isn't sure)
 - The Rich Man has heard the stories... and Jesus clear teaching... and still calls him Teacher.
- Important: There's a heart issue at play here!

19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.' 20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven

- Jesus is trying to uncover this man's ultimate thing... What is "good" to him?
- Pop quiz... What about the commandments. (Asks only the one's related to human relationships... a good starting place).
- Incredibly the man says, "I'm good"
- To say one's not sinned... is incredible! (AND TIRING!!)

- To not sin... especially when Jesus says to look lustfully on a woman is to commit adultery... and when he says, if you've hated your brother you've committed murder...
- Jesus has compassion!! Trying to be good is tiring!
 - o Not busting his chops...
 - o Realizing how tired the guy must be!!

Ryle: So long as we think we can keep the law of God, Christ profits nothing... [but if our] eyes [are] opened to the spiritual demands of the commandments WE WILL NEVER REST UNTIL WE FIND CHRIST

- External conformity / behavior modification / knowledge alone won't ever solve the problem of the heart
 - AND... This man is asking a question of the heart -- something the pharisees, teachers, and even disciples haven't asked...
 - How do I get eternal life... a share in the Kingdom of God
 - This man knelt while the Pharisees and Scribes despised him...
 - But the man was blind to the issue of his heart...
 - "we are objects of God's love even when we are unaware of the depth of our need" (FOBC)
 - So... Jesus doesn't let him off the hook!! Jesus loves the man enough to challenge him!
 - To relieve him of his wealth was simply a way to expose his idol
 - This man has everything... the question is: Will he become like a little child who "possesses nothing and lack nothing"? Or will he walk away possessing everything and gaining nothing...
 - The call to discipleship involves the cost of discipleship!
 - Wealth isn't the problem... Wealth is like wine: Neither wealth or wine is inherently bad >>> But it will get you in deep trouble real quick
 - **Wealth is simply a tool to show what's important in your life**
 - Whatever good thing we're making into an ultimate thing... THAT's the problem!!
 - An idol is anything we use to justify our "goodness" or we go to for "comfort" that isn't Christ alone!
 - Jesus wants to bless him with Eternal Treasure / Infinite Wealth
 - An iPhone that never needs updates
 - Car that goes 1 million miles and more
 - Elon Musk Rockets to go to Mars and back without needing fuel
 - He wants to earn what is meant as a gift
 - Joe Gutierrez tells five stories from his 42 years as a steelworker in the book, *The Heat: Steelworkers' Lives and Legends*. In one story, called "Snow Danced in August," he describes a scene of silvery dust flakes that frequently floated to the floor in an area of the mill where steel strips rolled over pads in a tall cooling tower. For years, workers and visitors alike flocked to the sight, which was especially picturesque at night.
 - Then they discovered the dust was asbestos. "Everybody breathed it," wrote Gutierrez. He now suffers from the slow, choking grip of asbestosis, as do many plant workers.
 - "Who am I? I'm everybody. Can't walk too far now. I get tired real fast and it hurts when I breathe, sometimes. And to think we used to fight over that job."
 - How many things in our culture resemble the silver flakes in that steel mill? Enchanting but deadly.
- v. 21 Jesus... said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**
- There aren't two kinds of Christians... regular and disciples.
 - There's only one: To be a Christian is to be a Disciple.
 - Jesus is saying, "To have anything to do with me is to follow me in the way I define it: setting a new priority, finding a new identity, living out of a new mercy" (Keller)
- ? What is your ultimate thing ?? Jesus wants to free us from our good and replace it with Himself.**
- My parents take the kids to the Upside Down House in MB... decide to take Anna and I along one time. Kids have described this magical house where all is upside down... with climbing ropes, games, laser tag... all cool stuff.

- When we get there... what we see is exactly as described... and UPSIDE DOWN HOUSE... but what's more challenging is the entrance. Long black tube with spinning lights... If you don't focus... you're going to fall down!

P2 – The Kingdom of God is upside down difficult to enter – all you have to do is give up everything... and follow him! (23-31)

23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”

- The disciples thought rich people were blessed and it would be easier for them
 - Nothing against wealth!! Money won't make you happy... but it sure helps!
 - Ironic Seems incredible in our age to think of Rich People as ultimately blessed and “good” >> We seem to think that wealth is tainted somehow... >> Unless we have it!!
 - Jesus isn't picking on the wealthy... he's picking on everybody who has an ultimate thing!!
- The pursuit of happiness: Keller - ***Most people spend their lives trying to make their heart's fondest dreams come true. Isn't that what life is all about, 'the pursuit of happiness'?***

- We search endlessly for ways to acquire the things we desire, and we are willing to sacrifice much to achieve them.
- We never imagine that getting our heart's deepest desires might be the worst thing that can ever happen to us.
- What if you don't have **children**? Children get sick? Children decided to be missionaries rather than doctors? Do you get disillusioned and walk away from God?
- **Beauty**... what do you do when it starts to fail? ... **Money**... when do you ever have enough?... Importance... what do you do when people don't ask your opinion?
- **Religious** people have idols too!! ... Buildings >> Can you worship in a coffee shop? / Liturgy >> Could we handle some freedom? // Music. Can you imagine Christian Rap Music?
 - ***I'm not asking your preference***... Can you see it? Can you imagine it? Could you rejoice if Jesus asked you to move, change, use those things in order to worship with a community different than what we have right here?
 - Being comfortable and religious might just be more dangerous than wealth!
- Keller cont: ...***If we look to some created thing to give us the meaning, hope and happiness that only God himself can give, it will eventually fail to deliver and break our hearts.***
- Trusting Jesus means trusting our hopes, dreams, and highest goals to another! 100%... every day... no leap year clauses!
- Our hearts are funny... it isn't until the things of this world become strangely dim... that we can love Jesus

And there are no templates

- One guy says, “I'm ready to follow wherever you go”... Jesus says, “Go home and think about it...”
- Another says, “I want to go home and think about it” Jesus says, “Follow me”
- Jesus tells one to be silent... another to tell everyone what's happened...
- Jesus calls you EACH OF YOU to follow him...

The only way to apply a text like this is in Life Groups... 3-12 people who help you ask

- What's the ultimate thing in your heart?
- And then help you leave it to follow Jesus!

Who can be saved? V. 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” 28 Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”

Peter wants to go down the same road as the Rich Young Ruler... « But Jesus... We've given up everything!

- How often do we do that!! That other guy... he was crazy... but, me... I'm good, right?!!!!
- Jesus ups the ante again... Leave everything... and get back 100X... INCLUDING PERSECUTIONS.
- Temptation is moralism... Take an inventory, see what you're holding back and give more! Problem... there's always more to give up. There's always something we're still holding on to...

- Try to make it into an equation... something you can control... something you can organize
- But that just leads back to the “Kingdom of Me” that Bp. Thad talked about last week.

So what’s the answer? The answer is found in Jesus who becomes last. v. 31 many who are first will be last, and the last first

Here’s the Gospel... there’s no good advice here!!! The Good News is that eternal life... eternal bliss... true happiness... is possible with God! Only when we abandon ourselves to Jesus who takes Last Place!

- Jesus himself will say in the Garden... praying before finishing his journey to the cross, “Father, if there is another way let this cup pass by”
- But... he also says, of his own journey, “all things are possible with you”
- Jesus abandons himself to the Father -- knowing that if he becomes least... if he becomes last... he can be first out of the grave in Resurrection and Salvation.

He is the only one who left everything and never once looked back... even when he was about to face horrible torture, he didn’t run away but said, “not my will, but YOURS be done”... so that on the cross he could say, “It is finished”.

- Your wealth... or your religion... are never good enough. Only Jesus is! And if you’ll lay down whatever your ultimate thing is... to follow him... He will do the miracle of changing hearts and affections to Him.

Jim Elliott... one of my favorite young college students said it this way in his diary... God, deliver me from the dread asbestos of "other things."

? What is your ultimate thing ?? Jesus wants to free us from our good and replace it with Himself.

P1 – Jesus Loves to relive our burdens... if we come to him P2 – The Kingdom of God is upside down difficult to enter – all you have to do is give up everything... and follow him!

Is Jesus your ultimate thing?

Notes

Mark 10:17-31

Theme of the entire book

- Seeing Jesus for who he really is

Context of Passage (before and after)

- They have asked (c. 4) “Who is this that even the wind and waves obey”
- They have expected a military leader to feed and care for them
- They have seen partially (like the partial healing of the blind man) and are now on the course towards the Cross where they will truly see.
- They are coming off of the mountain top where they saw Jesus transfigured.
- The position of this section (vv. 17–31) in Mark’s overall outline is significant. It follows Jesus’ teaching about the importance of childlikeness—viz., a recognition of the necessity of weakness and dependence for entrance into the kingdom (EBC)
- it precedes Jesus’ third prediction of his passion. (EBC)

Text and Commentary

17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” 20 And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” 21 And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- ***17 am man ran and knelt... Good Teacher***

- The rich man in the present story, with his possessions and social status, is a striking contrast to the simple children of the previous story (Pillar)

- His enviable assets, however, prove a greater liability in inheriting eternal life than do the deficits and paucity of the little children (Pillar)
- Jesus is still in Judea, continuing “on his way” to Jerusalem (Pillar)
- No one who heard Jesus teach in Galilee asked a question of such magnitude, nor indeed have Jesus’ own disciples. At last Jesus is asked the essential question, capable of divulging the meaning of his ministry. (Pillar)
- He apparently thought that some action by him would clear up the whole matter once and for all, and this suggests a high measure of selfrighteousness (FOBC)
- He showed a disposition to reverence our Lord, by kneeling to Him, while Scribes and Pharisees despised Him. Yet all this time this man was profoundly ignorant of his own heart (RYLE)

17 What must I do to inherit eternal life

- To “inherit eternal life” meant to share in the life of the coming world, the life of the kingdom of God. (IVPBBC)
- What must I do
- He wanted to do something to merit eternal life, whereas Jesus taught that eternal life (the kingdom of God) is a gift (EBC)
- **18 Jesus said, “Why call me good... no one is good except God...”**
- Without denying that he himself is good, Jesus reminds the man (IVPBBC)
- addressed him by the revered title of “good teacher,” thus expressing his high regard for Jesus. (EBC)
- Jesus’ reply seems unnecessarily abrupt. But we must remember that he was calling attention to the man’s unthinking use of language (EBC)
- What does the epithet ‘good’ mean? It belongs to God who is good; and it should not be used unthinkingly or as a flippant gesture of praise (EBC)
- Jesus’ unexpected counterquestion intends to move the man beyond confidence in his moral rectitude to the ultimate purpose of his life, which is to know God. (Pillar)
- we are the objects of God’s love even when we are least aware of the depth of our need. (FOBC)

19 You know the commandments (murder, adultery, steal, lie, defraud, honor)

- Jesus gives the man a digest of the ethical commandments in the Decalogue in v. 19 (Exod 20:12–16; Deut 5:16–20). (Pillar)
- a condensed summary of the second table of the law (EBC)
- fraud being a manifestation of coveting (EBC)
- the commandments Jesus had listed were kept by most well-raised, educated Jewish people. (IVPBBC)
- defraud the poor. This commandment is not found in the Ten Commandments but may have been added because of its relevance to the rich man, since wealth is often gained at the expense of the poor. (Pillar)
- Myriads of professing Christians at the present day have not an idea of their own sinfulness and guilt in the sight of God. They flatter themselves that they have never done anything very wicked.—“They have never murdered, or stolen, or committed adultery, or borne false witness. They cannot surely be in much danger of missing heaven.”—They forget the holy nature of that God with whom they have to do (RYLE)
- So long as we think that we can keep the law of God, Christ profits us nothing. (RYLE)
- He whose eyes have really been opened to the spirituality of the commandments, will never rest till he has found Christ. (RYLE)

20 ... I have kept these from my youth...

- boyhood
 - probably refers to the age of thirteen, when every Jewish boy became bar mišwāh (“son of the commandment”) (EBC)
 - At that point in a Jewish boy’s life he became responsible to live by God’s commands (EBC)
- keeping the law was a matter of external conformity (EBC)
- he understands behavior to be the ultimate requirement of religion (Pillar)

21 Jesus... looked... loved... said, “You lack one thing... see all you have... give to the poor... you will have treasure in heaven

- Christian readers often assume that the man was hypocritical in bringing his moral report card to Jesus (Pillar)
 - loved him.” Jesus did not look on hypocrisy with love. (Pillar)
 - his ready presentation of his goodness was childlike, unreflective perhaps, but not arrogant (Pillar)
 - There must have been something rare and admirable in the man, for of no one else in the Gospel does Mark say that Jesus “loved him.” (Pillar)
- Greek teachers, made such demands on rich students to see if they would value true teaching above their wealth (IVPBBC)
- How profoundly ironic is the kingdom of God. The children in the former story who possess nothing are not told that they lack anything, but rather that the kingdom of God is theirs; yet this man who possesses everything still lacks something! (Pillar)
 - Only when he sells all he has—only when he becomes like a vulnerable child—will he possess everything. (Pillar)
 - full adherence to the moral law, good and necessary as it is, is no substitute for following Jesus (Pillar)
- We may safely assume that the man has kept the law, for Jesus does not challenge his statement (Pillar)
- unless obedience to the law leads to discipleship with Jesus it is incomplete and futile (Pillar)
- The one thing that prevented this young man from having eternal life was the security of his wealth. Jesus put his finger on the sensitive place by commanding him to go, sell all he had, and give. (EBC)
 - His wealth and all it meant to him of position, status, comfort, and security prevented him from entering into eternal life (EBC)
 - there is no indication that in this incident Jesus’ prescription for the young man was meant to be binding on all Christians (EBC)
- life’ is through the narrow gate of full surrender (EBC)
- He makes no reference to the heart, but without doubt his words showed that he knew the man’s riches had found their way into his inner being (FOBC)

21 ... come follow me...

- The call to discipleship involves a cost of discipleship (Pillar)
- Fishermen must leave boats and nets (1:16–20), a tax collector his tax table (2:14), and Peter his false conception of the Messiah (8:33) (Pillar)
- The call to follow Jesus does not constitute an additional obligation in life, but rather judges, replaces, and subordinates all obligations and allegiances to the one who says, “ ‘Follow me.’ ” (Pillar)
- Anything, even the obligation to parents (Matt 8:21), is a hazard if it impedes the following of that call (Pillar)
- Personal relationship AND Reaffirmation of faith (FOBC)
- He needed to give his heart to Jesus,
- if I am being asked to give up all I have, does it really matter greatly how much that actually is? (FOBC)

22 Disheartened he went away (he had great possessions)

- He was gloomy and sullen with a double disappointment; no perilous exploit was required of him, but he was asked to part with what he valued most (EBC)
- To obey Jesus was too great a risk for him to take. So the security of wealth kept him out of the kingdom of God (EBC)
- As long as the man stands on his own merits he is self-assured; but the word of Jesus calls him beyond his safe haven (Pillar)
- A person who leads an exemplary life—who even endears himself to the Son of God—can still be an idolater. (Pillar)
- What should we deduce about wealth and poverty from this account? (Pillar)
 - On the one hand, wealth was commonly regarded as a sign of God’s blessing (Job 1:10; 42:10; Ps 128:1–2; Isa 3:10) (Pillar)
 - On the other hand, however, the OT champions the cause of the sojourner, widow, orphan, fatherless, and poor. (Pillar)

- The greatest enemies to faith and obedience are self-satisfaction and pride, and nothing removes those bulwarks more effectively than poverty. (Pillar)

23 And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God"

23 Jesus said to his disciples, "How difficult for wealth[y] to enter the kingdom

- Jesus turns the social order upside down. The well-to-do were often hailed for their generosity (IVPBBC)
- being less educated in the law, the poor were sometimes seen as less pious (IVPBBC)
- Jesus saw how wealth could hinder one from putting his trust and dependence in God (EBC)

24 disciples were amazed

- Jesus looks to see whether the disciples will follow the rich man's example (Pillar)
- It is not so much the having money, as the trusting in it, which ruins the soul. (RYLE)

24 Jesus said again, "Children, how difficult to enter the kingdom

- to leave Jesus is to forsake the kingdom of God and the possibility of life (Pillar)
- Security in a building... or in a favorite priest ... or any other religious idol (Pillar)

25 it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich person enter the kingdom

- The saying, a hyperbole, refers to a literal needle. (IVPBBC)
- It is easier to thread a needle with a great big camel than to get into the kingdom of God when you are bursting with riches (EBC)
 - the eye of the needle" a small city gate through which camels might enter Jerusalem by kneeling—as though the rich may enter the kingdom of God if only they humble themselves (Pillar)
- Those who think Jesus refers here to a gate in Jerusalem called the "eye of a needle" are mistaken, because that gate was built in medieval times (IVPBBC)
- A wealthy person could relinquish wealth only by God's grace (IVPBBC)

26 astonished, "... who can be saved"

- Most of Jesus' disciples had not been poor (being fishermen and tax gatherers) but had abandoned their economic position to follow him (IVPBBC)
- They, too, are "amazed" (Gk. *thambein*, v. 22) and "even more amazed" (Gk. *perissōs eklēssesthai*, v. 26). "Who then can be saved?" they reply. (Pillar)
- The disciples' sense of inadequacy at the command of Jesus is, in fact, a "severe mercy" (Rom 11:22), a beneficial handicap that is intended to draw them away from trust in their own abilities to the one who would be their saving Lord. (Pillar)
- futility, is, unbeknown to them, a doorway to hope (Pillar)

27 ... "With man - impossible, but not with God"

- If you are dismissive or offended by the idea of tithing... you're probably in danger. ... let that sink in! (EBC)
- Apart from the grace of God, it is impossible for any man especially a rich man—to enter God's kingdom (EBC)
- what we can never do for ourselves, God does for us (EBC)
- eternal life," "salvation," and "entrance into the kingdom" are all used synonymously here. (EBC)
- Jesus will himself be cast upon the all-sufficiency of God in Gethsemane, when, before the imminence and terror of the cross, he will confess, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you" (14:36). (Pillar)
- the deficiency that appears as inability, even futility, appears to Jesus as openness to the potential of God (Pillar)

28 Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands,

for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

28 Peter "... we have left everything to follow"

- If "with man [discipleship] is impossible," of what value are human sacrifices (Pillar)
- Do Peter's sacrifices of having left all things to follow Jesus count for anything, or are they ultimately worthless? (Pillar)
- we" is emphatic, begging for affirmation in the face of a standard that threatens to reduce not only Peter but all disciples to insignificance (Pillar)
- One cannot follow Jesus with one's former baggage: one must give up his nets, another his riches (Pillar)

29 Jesus... "Truly... no one who has left house, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, lands (for my sake and the gospel)

- THE RICH NEED NOT DESPAIR. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: Let this teach the prosperous that they are not to neglect their own salvation, as if they had been already foredoomed, nor, on the other hand, to cast wealth into the sea, or condemn it as a traitor and an enemy to life, but learn in what way and how to use wealth and obtain life.
- AUGUSTINE: It is hard to be saved if we have them; and impossible if we love them; and scarcely can we have them, but we shall love them inordinately.
- Where is the saint who will dare to say in the face of these glorious promises, that there is no encouragement to serve Christ? (RYLE)

30 ... will not receive 100X (with persecutions)... and eternal life

- Christian existence is not utopia, and Christian faith is not an insurance policy against adversity and hardship (Pillar)
- to conceive of discipleship solely in terms of its costs and sacrifices is to conceive of it wrongly—as though in marrying a beautiful bride a young man would think only of what he was giving up (Pillar)
- Simple, humble, yet costly acts of discipleship are like the despairing seeds that against all odds yield a harvest a hundred times greater (4:8, 20). From the perspective of a bumper crop one looks back on the labor and risk of sowing in a vastly different light. The miracle and plenty of the harvest verify the inherent rightness of the costly act of sowing; likewise, the reward of eternal life makes the sacrifices of discipleship look insignificant in comparison to the lavish blessing of God. (Pillar)
- The hundredfold return in this life (v. 30) is to be understood in the context of the new community into which the believer in Jesus comes (EBC)
- multiplication of relationships, often closer and more spiritually meaningful than blood ties (EBC)
- God takes nothing away from a man without restoring it to him in a new and glorious form" (Lane)
- Jesus is also realistic about the Christian life. There will be persecutions (EBC)
- They must not conceive of their discipleship in terms of rewards. Discipleship entails suffering and service; it must be entered on in terms of love and commitment to Jesus, not because of what one hopes to get out of it either in this life or in the life to come (EBC)

31 many who are first last... and last first

- Jewish people understood that the day of judgment would turn things upside down; those who appear great in this world will be nothing in the next, and those who were nothing in this world will be great in the next (IVPBBC)
- Jewish people applied this principle to the exaltation of Israel over the other nations (IVPBBC)
- Jesus applies it also to individual rank and status. (IVPBBC)
- still thinking in terms of material rather than spiritual values (EBC)
- a profound irony of discipleship. The kingdom of God topples our cherished priorities and demands of disciples new ones. (Pillar)
- It takes from those who follow Jesus things they would keep, and gives to them things they could not imagine. (Pillar)
- He had absolutely everything except eternal life (Pillar)
- How true were these words, when we apply them to the history of Christian churches! There was a time when Asia Minor, and Greece, and Northern Africa, were full of professing Christians, while England and America were heathen lands. Sixteen hundred years have made a mighty change. The

churches of Africa and Asia have fallen into complete decay. The English and American churches are labouring to spread the Gospel over the world. Well might our Lord say, "the first shall be last, and the last first." (RYLE) (GMS - This is ironic given our current situation of potentially losing our building and having to be rescued by those in Africa!)

- **(Consider adding v. 32-34)**

Structure

Outline the structure of the text in a way that represents the author's organization of the text. Please provide an outline that clearly indicates verse breaks for each unit and provide headings for each. [Consider plot—setting, conflict, climax, resolution, and new setting—as well as characters, particularly the reactions of the disciples/other characters.]

- This section is made up of three parts (EBC)
 - (1) vv. 17–22, which describe Jesus' encounter with a rich man
 - (2) vv. 23–27, a logion on the difficulty of a rich man's entering the kingdom of God;
 - (3) vv. 28–31, Peter's statement about leaving all to follow Jesus and Jesus' reply to it
- 17-22 Who and what is good?
- 23-27 It's tough to climb to heaven on your own!
- 28-31 Is there any benefit to leaving everything?

What emphasis does the structure reveal?

- The absurdity of attempting to be good with God on one's own
- In one sentence, what is the author's aim for his audience in this text? Given that aim, what implication(s) and/or application(s) for your audience would you draw out in your sermon?
- Wealth (or buildings or people or anything but Jesus) is not sufficient to secure Eternal Life. The Grace of God is all we can trust in.
 - Security is a high value for our congregation -- are we willing to abandon all security in order to be truly secure?

Fallen Condition Focus (Issues and Idols) state what sin or consequence of sin the passage and exposes and Gospel solves

- What am I afraid of? Am I willing to risk everything in order to jump into the arms of Christ?
- Money/Things... never have enough
- Power... you will feel weak and need more power to keep fear at bay
- Saved >> Rescued from hell and given life! >> nothing to fear

Interpretational Issues that need to be explored

Gospel Trajectory (In one or two sentences, briefly explain how you will preach the Gospel from this)

- Jesus will abandon all security in exchange for the vulnerability of the Cross. He eschews the ranks of heavenly angels to give us a security that can not be taken away.

Propositional Statement (In one statement what is your sermon about)

Outline

Application Prompts

- Gospel... repent and replace
- Disciple... know and do remember
- Ambassador... share rejoice

Illustrations

- The dreadful state of being dependent upon God alone
- TO MARY WILLIS SHELBURNE: On the hard task of learning to depend only on God and on nothing and no one else.
6 December 1955
I was most distressed by the news in your letter of Dec. 2nd. . . . And I can't help you, because under the modern laws I'm not allowed to send money to America. (What a barbarous system we live under. I knew a man who had to risk prison in order to smuggle a little money to his own sister, widowed in the U.S.A.) By the way, we mustn't be too sure there was any irony about your just having refused that other job. There may have been a snag about it which God knew and you didn't.

I feel it almost impossible to say anything (in my comfort and security—apparent security, for real security is in Heaven and thus earth affords only imitations) which would not sound horribly false and facile. Also, you know it all better than I do. I should in your place be (I have in similar places been) far more panic-stricken and even perhaps rebellious. For it is a dreadful truth that the state of (as you say) ‘having to depend solely on God’ is what we all dread most. And of course that just shows how very much, how almost exclusively, we have been depending on things. That trouble goes so far back in our lives and is now so deeply ingrained, we will not turn to Him as long as He leaves us anything else to turn to. I suppose all one can say is that it was bound to come. In the hour of death and the day of judgement, what else shall we have? Perhaps when those moments come, they will feel happiest who have been forced (however unwillingly) to begin practising it here on earth. It is good of Him to force us: but dear me, how hard to feel that it is good at the time....

All’s well—I’m half ashamed it should be—with me. God bless and keep you. You shall be constantly in my prayers by day and night.

- Following with no templates
- Are you becoming more gentle? More tolerant? More gracious with people around you? More kind? Follow Jesus. He’ll give you what you need. He’s a wonderful counselor. One guy comes and says, ‘I’m ready to follow you wherever you go.’ Jesus says, ‘Go home and think about it.’ Another guy says, ‘I want to go home and think about it.’ Jesus says, ‘Follow me.’ What? Because he’s the perfect counselor. All other counseling theories look flat next to his, because he never gives you a template. He gives you exactly what you need. Follow him, and he will give you exactly what you need. He will love you singularly. He will love the real you. He will love you into a whole new identity. (Keller)
- Lucy, you follow me
- “If you go back to the others now, and wake them up; and tell them you have seen me again; and that you must all get up at once and follow me—what will happen? There is only one way of finding out.”
- “Do you mean that is what you want me to do?” gasped Lucy.
- “Yes, little one,” said Aslan.
- “Will the others see you too?” asked Lucy.
- “Certainly not at first,” said Aslan. “Later on, it depends.”
- “But they won’t believe me!” said Lucy.
- “It doesn’t matter,” said Aslan. . . . Lucy buried her head in his mane to hide from his face. But there must have been magic in his mane. She could feel lion-strength going into her. Quite suddenly she sat up.
- “I’m sorry, Aslan,” she said. “I’m ready now.”
- “Now you are a lioness,” said Aslan. “And now all Narnia will be renewed. But come. We have no time to lose.”
- He got up and walked with stately, noiseless paces back to the belt of dancing trees through which she had just come: and Lucy went with him, laying a rather tremulous hand on his mane. . . .
- “Now, child,” said Aslan, when they had left the trees behind them, “I will wait here. Go and wake the others and tell them to follow. If they will not, then you at least must follow me alone.”
- From Prince Caspian
- The pursuit of happiness
- Keller - Most people spend their lives trying to make their heart’s fondest dreams come true. Isn’t that what life is all about, ‘the pursuit of happiness’?
- We search endlessly for ways to acquire the things we desire, and we are willing to sacrifice much to achieve them.
- We never imagine that getting our heart’s deepest desires might be the worst thing that can ever happen to us.
- • What if you don’t have children? Children get sick? Children decided to be missionaries rather than doctors? Do you get disillusioned and walk away from God?
- • Beauty... what do you do when it starts to fail? ... Money... when do you ever have enough?... Importance... what do you do when people don’t ask your opinion?
- Keller cont: ...If we look to some created thing to give us the meaning, hope and happiness that only God himself can give, it will eventually fail to deliver and break our hearts.
- • Trusting Jesus means trusting our hopes, dreams, and highest goals to another! 100%... every day... no leap year clauses!

- Our hearts are funny... it isn't until the things of this world become strangely dim... that we can love Jesus
- Discipleship is not just a matter of bending your will to Jesus' will; it's melting your heart into a whole new shape. A disciple is not someone who simply sets a new priority; a disciple finds a new identity.
- Gold being smelted
- ...discipleship is not an option. Jesus says that if anyone would come after me, he must follow me. If you want to come after me—it's a general term—if you want to have any experience of me, any relationship with me, you have to be a disciple.
- There are not two kinds of Christians: regular Christians and people who are really disciples. There's only one: to be a Christian is to be a disciple. To have anything to do with me is to follow me in the way I define it: setting a new priority, finding a new identity, experiencing living out of a new mercy.
- Second, having said that it's not an option—on the other hand, it is a journey. It's narratively brilliant of Luke to note this. In verse 51 Jesus sets out on a journey toward Jerusalem. It's Jesus' journey of discipleship, "He sets his face to go to Jerusalem." And it's from the moment he begins his journey toward the cross that he begins all his teaching about discipleship.
 - Have you left? To go on the journey means saying, "I take my hands off my life." To go on the journey means saying, "I give up my right to self-determination." To go on the journey means saying, "I will obey you, Lord, and I'll get rid of all the ifs. Not 'obey you if,' but obey. Period. I drop my conditions. I drop the ifs; they're gone!" Not until you say that have you begun the journey.
 - However, after your decisive beginning, the fact remains that it's a journey. It's a process that takes time. You're not going to have it all together. It's very important to keep that in mind, because if you think that discipleship is the way you're saved—that by being committed and focused and giving Jesus the priority you're going to please God and that will get you saved—you're missing the point. Look at the order. He doesn't say, "If you follow me, I'll go to the cross for you." He says, "I'm going to the cross for you, so follow me." You're not saved because you're a disciple; you're a disciple if and only if you understand what he has done to save you.