

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Lecture 16, Mark 9:30-10:31, Discipleship, Divorce, Children, Rich Ruler

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This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 16, Mark 9:30-10:31, Discipleship, Divorce, Children, Rich Ruler.

Picking up where we left off in chapter 9, we've been looking at this understanding of faith and of discipleship.

We're seeing, too, how the disciples aren't expressing a full and complete understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. In fact, they often understand things through their own cultural norms, their own pride, and their own arrogance. We looked at that a little bit at the end of last time, this teaching about child and social status and the reversal of social status that a follower of Christ thinks differently in terms of who it honors and that there isn't to be these social distinctions of value within those who are following Christ.

I want to pick up this idea because I think it also plays into what Mark tells us here in verses 38 with this conversation that he has with John regarding this figure who is exercising demons. So, 9:38, John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he was not following us. Interesting things here in verse 38 before continuing through.

This is a very rare occurrence, where it's a conversation between John and Jesus, where John brings something up. I think it's important that we do know that John brings this up because of the earlier episode where the disciples had been unable to cast out this demon, and Jesus said it can only come out through prayer, and we talked about how prayer is a sign of humility and dependence on God. Now, that group of disciples that couldn't cast out that demon didn't include John because it was Peter, James, and John who had been with Jesus and were leaving from the transfiguration, and they came to those disciples and to that group.

So, John hadn't been a part of that group that had ostensibly been showing a lack of full dependence on God and maybe an over trust in their own ability and power. But here in verse 38 we know that John himself is not perfectly clean in all of this. So, John says that they saw someone casting out demons in the name of Jesus and they tried to stop him.

Why? Because he was not following us. Notice the language doesn't say he was not following you. It's he was not following us, and I think that's important because I

think what we have a picture of here is that there's this group of people who somehow are not associating with the disciple group, this twelve, but are almost another party on their own, another group of followers and he's casting out demons in your name. So, one of the things you have to ask is if this is similar to what the seven sons of Sceva that Paul talks about in Acts, but given Jesus' response, I don't think so.

What ends up happening to those seven sons who are trying to use the name of Jesus as a power formula, similar to what they see Paul doing, doesn't end well for them. The demon wins in that. The possessed man strips them of their clothing, beats them, and sends them out naked.

It seems that they are casting out the demons, and John's problem is that this man is not one of them. And that seems to be ostensibly the problem. The irony, of course, is that the disciples had shown an inability to cast out a particular demon, and here's a figure who's having some success casting out a demon.

But Jesus' response says, do not stop him. For no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. And so, in reference to Jesus stopping, he affirms what that man is doing.

He said actually this person is probably on the road, if I can use that language, to coming to speak of Jesus and proclaim Jesus. And then you have verse 40, this proverbial statement. For the one who is not against us is for us.

A way of Jesus saying that you need to not count people who belong to you in terms of if they're part of your group. This man who's casting out demons has associated himself with me. So, he's not against us.

He's one of us. For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.

Now I think the logic here of 41 and 42 is that the response of the interrelationship of people who are following Christ is to be one of edification and support, not one of rejection. Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to me is doing something right. And so, the positive statement is, will not lose his reward.

And the idea is an eschatological reward of enjoying being part of God's people. The opposite of that is 42. Whoever caused one of the little ones who believed in me to stumble, it would be better if the millstone was drowned.

And I think the idea is better for them to have been drowned and thrown into the sea than to have received the judgment that comes from causing one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble. And so, this little one's idea, again, this little one's is a status language. These little ones are not about innocent ones.

It's about lowly ones or perhaps ones who are vulnerable to stumbling, falling into some sort of sin, or receiving a rebuke. Perhaps this concern is what is the effect of John, one of the special three among the special twelve, going to someone and telling them to stop. There's even a concern that in doing so, you are actually stopping someone who is affirming Christ, and might that be causing that one or one like that to stumble, to stop in their faith.

And so I think this picture is also a rebuke of John and of this idea that somehow they have a special status and are the determiners of who actually is allowed to do things in the name of Jesus or not. Instead of a posture of affirming this great display against the kingdom of Satan and this exorcism and this display being associated with Jesus that this man is doing the very things they were doing when they were in the ministry instead of affirming that, they seem to have a problem with that. Because maybe it takes away from some of their own honor or sense of greatness.

And then, after this, Jesus enters into a series of hyperbolic examples. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It's better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to Gehenna, to the unquenchable fire.

If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell or Gehenna. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.

It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. And I think we need to be clear that what Jesus is not calling for is self-mutilation. That would have been something prohibited in Second Temple Judaism.

These are hyperbolic statements where he's saying that, and I think by using hand, foot, and eye, he's getting the idea of the totality of the person, sort of with the picture that the hands are doing of something. The feet are taking you someplace.

And the eye is the look. And so, he's using three elements that I think would have understood the whole person. If there's something in you that is contributing to you seeking the truth, seeking your own status in this context, and seeking your own glory, you need to urgently remove that because that is the path to Gehenna and hell.

And Gehenna is this place by this time in Second Temple Judaism has become a symbol for divine punishment. It's actually a valley on the southern side of Jerusalem. In the Old Testament times it was a place where Canaanite sacrifices were offered.

King Josiah, one of the things he does is he desecrates that area to stop its practices. And so, it moves, it refers to an actual place, but by this time when you look at the literature of the time period it's also symbolic of God's judgment. I mean it goes from a cultic place to really a trash reservoir, a dumping ground, to this symbol of judgment.

And this is what Jesus is saying as he finishes out here with Chapter 9 is the danger of seeking your own is the type of posture that is judged by God. And this whole way through on this end of Chapter 9 has been focused on these very elements of discipleship, on prayer, on dependence, on recognition of who Jesus is, on help my unbelief, I believe, that humility reference, to John not being humble and not being accepting of someone else doing that which that group has been doing. This is all connected to Jesus' statement, his second passion prediction that we began our discussion with, that the Son of Man will be delivered into human hands and they will kill him.

And when he is killed after three days, he will rise that the picture is the Son of Man suffering, being handed over by God to human hands. That's the picture of humbleness and humility and obedience and suffering, which is discipleship, something that the disciples are not yet understanding and grasping.

I want to move in now and leave Chapter 9, there's a few bits there at the end, but I really want to move in to Chapter 10 here and begin looking at some of the other of Jesus' teaching. You know, with Chapter 10, 1-12, we'll be talking about Jesus' teaching on divorce. It's set in Jesus' journey from Judea to Jerusalem.

Verse 1: And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And we're getting some instruction here that is similar to the type of interaction that we saw in the first eight chapters, where Jesus is going to be interacting with religious leaders over an understanding of Scripture. Some have argued that this is out of place and that Mark's Gospel actually belongs in the first eight chapters.

However, I don't think it's because one of the things that we're going to see is Jesus doesn't just talk about divorce here. He also gives teaching to the disciples on it. So, it fits that pattern that we've seen after Chapter 8, which is instruction to the disciples.

So, it's not just a conflict story, etc. Now, one of the things as we read through this is Jesus' teaching here on divorce in Mark lacks what is known as the exception clause, which we find in Matthew. And I'll point that out when we get to it.

And some, you know, it's been argued, has Mark taken out the exception clause? Has Matthew inserted the exception clause? Or has Jesus taught on numerous occasions and taught differently on one or the other? And I think for our purposes as we think about this, one is to recognize because when we deal with divorce, divorce is a reality that so many of us have experienced or are connected to people who have experienced it. And that the Scripture's voice on divorce is not limited to just one verse or two verses, but there is a larger teaching on it. And I think that's probably true, and even Jesus himself taught about divorce in numerous places.

But let's look through here with what we see in verses 1 through 12. He left there and went to the Judea region beyond Jordan. The crowds gathered to him, and again, as was his custom, he taught them.

And Pharisees came up in order to test him, that is, find a way to discredit him, asked if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Now, that question itself is interesting. So, the place where Jesus is talking here is into this area, you know, through the trans-Jordan or across the Jordan, maybe Pariah here, or anywhere, we're in this area where we're talking, Herod Antipas would have had some influence at it. And so, we may even be thinking about this question of divorce and John the Baptist and why they're asking it here.

But even more, I want us to think about the question, is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? The reason I point that out is that's not really the question that was typically asked. The question that was debated in Second Temple Judaism was not, is it lawful, but when is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? So, it wasn't a question, does the law allow for divorce, Torah, the Old Testament, but when does it allow for it? And so even asking this question might be a bit of a setup of a trap. Perhaps they've already heard Jesus teaching on divorce, and they're now in an area where they want Him to publicly state against divorce.

And He answered them, what did Moses command to you? Now when we're looking at the Moses command, notice what Jesus says is He simply says, what did Moses command? He doesn't tell them exactly where to go in Moses. In the books of Deuteronomy, He leaves it a little bit broad, but the Pharisees understand Him to be referencing Deuteronomy 24 verses 1-4. They said, Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.

Now, this passage in Deuteronomy 24 states what Moses is giving a command about divorce, which says if a woman does something that is unpleasant, In fact, it may be

useful for us to even think a little bit about the context of Deuteronomy 24. So, Deuteronomy 24, 1-4 real quickly.

When a man takes a wife and marries her if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies who took her to be his wife, then her former husband who sent her away may not take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord, and you shall not be sent upon the land that the Lord your God has given you for an inheritance. So, we are going to put this out as a couple of things here. One of the main parts of the debate in Second Temple Judaism was trying to determine what indecency was.

If a man found some indecency in her and wrote her a certificate of divorce, the idea was that the man could write her a certificate of divorce if he found some sort of indecency. Well, the question was, what is indecent? If we look at the Mishnah, where we see some of this debate taking place, the school of Shammai, which had been a particular rabbi, said that indecency referred to only unchastity, whereas the school of Hillel had a more liberal view of indecency where indecency could even be extended to spoiling a dish when cooking, that the husband determined indecency in that respect. So, the debate was when it is legal to write a certificate of divorce, when it is lawful, and when something is indecent. But I hope you heard in reading the context of 24, 1-4, notice how very particular that context was.

This wasn't a general teaching on divorce; it was actually a teaching about when remarriage is prohibited. So, when a divorce occurs because of indecency, and then that woman goes and marries another man, and then that marriage ends, whether by divorce or by death, the first husband is not allowed to take back his wife. And I think the sense of that is the first man is not allowed to benefit or profit in some way, does not have a claim still on that woman, the first husband doesn't have a claim upon his wife now where she's expected to return as his wife.

In fact, the entire context of the law in Deuteronomy has protective measures put in place to try to dampen or mitigate the harm that sinful actions may have. I'm trying to determine when something is proper and when it's not. So, for example, if I was looking at Deuteronomy 23:24, verse 24, this is right before our text.

If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your bag. If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain. So, even those references deal with the idea of stealing.

What is stealing, and what isn't stealing? Well, it's not stealing if you grab a few grapes because you're hungry, and your neighbor can't charge you for stealing on that. And so, the temptation to take something out of someone's hunger in a covenant relationship is not considered stealing. But if you start putting it in your bag, which means to help out later, starting to harvest, if you will, that is.

That is stealing. And so, this measure, this entire measure of the law, and when it's stealing, when it's not stealing, can someone who's divorced in this situation not remarry or remarry, what is happening there? The whole context is a legislated way of trying to control and define what is sin and what isn't sin, not affirming stealing but trying to say what is stealing, what isn't stealing, not affirming divorce, but putting into practice protection against the wife from being used, if you will, by the men in that situation. And so, I think it's interesting at least to think about the context of 24, that the context of 24 is helping the Israelites navigate through some of the reality of being in covenant with God and in covenant with one another, but yet sin and the presence of sin and evil.

But they go to that. They simply say, take it as a given, that Moses allowed for a certificate of divorce. And Jesus then responds, because of your hardness of heart, again, now locating the people that Moses is talking to and the Pharisees together, he wrote you this commandment.

So, the rebuke here, if you will, or the correction is, is that they're going to a part of scripture that was given because, almost as a concession, because of the hardness of the heart. They're looking at something that the reason that that piece of passage even exists is because the people are resisting God's instruction. And this is to help mitigate through that.

But from the beginning of creation, Jesus continues, God made them male and female. Notice he's still in Moses. This reference is still from Moses.

And so when he asks, what does Moses say, part of the criticism is they're not considering all of what Moses has written. They're looking at what Moses said on divorce, but not looking at what Moses said about marriage. From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

So we're seeing Genesis 1 and 2 come into play here. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh so that they are no longer two but one flesh. But therefore, God has joined together; let not man separate.

And so, what Jesus does on this question of whether it is lawful for divorce, is to say, well, let's first begin considering why marriage. And that marriage, the union of male

and female, is part of God's creation design. That he created humanity to be two that become one.

That he created not male and male, not female and female, not even some sort of male, female, male, female, but two separate. Not simply for separate, but so that the two separate could become one flesh. That design of marriage is woven into the fabric of God's design of creating male and female.

In fact, with this unity, therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife; the idea of marriage then is a departure from the family unit of mother and father to the new family unit of husband and wife. And so, even the whole design is to leave and then join. And so, when he's talking about this question of divorce, one of the things that is going to be created is to notice the significance of male and female, father and mother. This pair continues, but this pair is now ontologically considered one.

They become one flesh. They're now considered one body, one unit. That almost makes divorce into this idea almost figuratively of an amputation, if you will, because they're not considered two separate bodies together, they're now considered one body.

And then so what God has joined together, meaning the union of male and female, let not man separate places divorce sort of within this antithetical relationship that to give a certificate of divorce was a human designation, that these two are now separate. The implication of verse 9 is that humanity, man doesn't have the right to separate what God has joined together in an authority context. Now, nowhere in here is the exception clause.

You get a very similar teaching in Matthew where you have this with the exception of porneia, which is inserted as an allowance for divorce. And so here I think what Mark is trying to convey is not Jesus' full teaching on divorce, porneia being sexual immorality. What he's trying to give is to draw a distinction between the Pharisees are consumed by the hardness of heart exception concession and what that means, and not with what was original intent by God, which is what we've seen throughout the Gospel of Mark where the Pharisees and religious leaders are being accused of setting aside the will of God for human traditions and for human considerations.

Now, it doesn't simply end there because we're in this part where the disciples are getting more information. I'll finish this passage. And in the house, again privately, the disciples asked him again about this matter.

And he said to them, whoever divorces his wife, no exception clause, and marries another commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. And so we've got this further statement where

they're asking just exactly what Jesus means, and what he sets forth is that just because a written human certificate of divorce may be issued doesn't mean God has recognized that marriage as now being divorced.

And this is where the exception clause would come in for in the Gospel of Matthew. And the implication is that they're still married and that the allowance of a divorce to occur on a human standpoint results in adultery from God's perspective. It is interesting that the woman is also presented in this as well, which could have a reference here to Herod Antipas and Herodias and her separation from Herod Philip.

I want to finish out this part on divorce. Notice one of the things that is being issued here, I think, is a stacking up of the sins that the religious leadership have allowed to be committed based on their human traditions. We already saw that they allowed for the disillusion of honoring mother and father by declaring something corban.

So, that is part of the commandment their system has allowed for. We've already seen the religious leadership on the Sabbath violate the Sabbath by a desire to seek to kill Jesus, which is lawful on the Sabbath. We've seen them actually be accused of using the Sabbath to promote human instead of divine intent.

And here I think the sense is they're also allowing for adultery to occur because they're more concerned with the human tradition of divorce. Even to debate whether a man can divorce someone over indecency that isn't porneia, that isn't sexual immorality. So, the allowance of divorce that isn't sexual immorality allows parties to behave as if they're no longer married to each other when they are still, from a divine perspective, married to each other.

And so, we're getting a stacking up of how the religious leadership here has put in systems that allow the violation of the Decalogue. And we continue to see that play through. And I think this is what Jesus is, and Mark is wanting us to gather.

All right, moving on here, continuing in Mark chapter 10, looking at here now verses 13 to 16. And here we have Jesus' statement about discipleship as it relates to a child or child-like posture or faith. It's interesting, we've just talked about husbands and wives and fathers and mothers, and now we talk about children.

So, we're obviously working within a household metaphor, but I want us to remember what children are like from social status because I think this is important. And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. And when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, let the children come to me, do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hand on them. It's interesting when we look at this setup.

So, we have, again, here we have the disciples taking this position of refusing to allow people to take children to Jesus. And that might sound really harsh, especially when we think of children, again, as innocent kids who are looking to sit on Santa's lap, if you will, at Christmas time, just pure bundles of joy. Well, in the ancient world, the children would have had such a low social status that the idea of children coming out to be with this figure like Jesus would seem to be such a disconnect.

And so what the disciples are doing is they're declaring themselves the prequalifiers of who has the right social status to come be in Jesus' presence. And children don't meet that. They don't meet their prequalification.

And if we understand how Mark has been presenting children, how he wants us to understand that in terms of social status, Jesus becomes indignant, not because he's not allowing the innocent ones to come, but because they're not allowing the lower social status ones to come, that they are making decisions at who should be in Jesus' presence. And remember, this is the exact same criticism the religious leaders gave to Jesus when he was eating with tax collectors and sinners. They were saying he should not be eating with those who are shameful.

Here are the disciples doing almost the same thing in a different way: determining who is right for Jesus to be in the presence of and who isn't. This stems from Jesus's continual conversation with the disciples about how they are closer to the crowds and to the Pharisees. There's a hardness around them that tells them they need to be wary, to watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees.

This is an example of how they are doing the very same activity. And so, it's no wonder Jesus is indignant. Mark is very expressive of Jesus's human emotions, and here we have a good example of this.

Let the children come to me. Do not hinder them, for to such belong the kingdom of God. And I don't think this is speaking to at all in any shape, way, or form the age of conversion or the age of belonging or infant baptism.

I don't think any of that is being discussed in this passage. Rather it is to those like this, to the sick, to the outcasts, to disenfranchised, blessed are the poor, as Luke picks up, to them belong the kingdom of God. And then the statement of verse 15, in English, there's a string through, you really see it in the Greek, where it says, truly I say to you, which Jesus will often use to introduce a very firm statement.

And then whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. The phrasing that is used is a way to structure statements in the Greek to stress emphasis. And here there's a particular structure that is used here, where the hardest stress could be made.

There's this phrasing that almost reads, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child by no means shall enter it. For those of you who have studied Greek, there's an *oo* and a *may* plus a subjunctive in the verb. And that's the stress that is being made here.

So, it's a very strong statement. And I don't think what he is saying is, whoever doesn't come with that innocent child-like faith. Rather it is, whoever doesn't come understanding the Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.

Whoever doesn't come without pretension of their status? To come to Jesus saying I am someone is a faith that is insufficient and disqualifying. It's only the one who comes like a child who comes knowing that they are lower and weak and dependent upon God.

That the child-like faith is not an innocent faith, but it is a humble faith, if you will. Remember the Syrophenician woman. She understood this when she said, even the dogs receive the crumbs from the children.

And Jesus affirmed her statement. That the affirmations of faith is always an affirmation of Jesus as the stronger one of coming to Jesus, of dependence on Jesus, and not a declaration of their own value. Which the disciples all through chapter 9, here into chapter 10, are failing in.

They are affirming their value. That they saw a distinction between themselves and these children in terms of value, of being a social value, status value, and being around Jesus. So, this is a harder teaching method for the disciples sometimes than is often recognized.

Looking here then, just introducing, we'll be discussing parts of the rest of Mark chapter 10, 10-17 through 31. We'll have to pick up some of this when we get into our next section, but I'd like to begin it. As he was setting on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? It's an interesting question.

Here, we have the story of this rich man seeking Jesus. The interesting question is, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Often when we think of doing and inheriting, these are completely different realities. You inherit because you were born, not because you did anything.

I suppose you could do something to lose your inheritance. But that's a little bit the idea. In this concept, Israel was chosen to receive the inheritance.

Second Temple Judaism understood grace. It understood grace in the choosing of Israel. This idea that Jews only had a works understanding of righteousness isn't actually fully correct.

They understood that Israel as a people was chosen to receive this inheritance and the inheritance of eternal life, that's that blending of the promises that were given to Abraham and would even extend into Moses and the Promised Land and the Davidic Kingdom. It has this idea of the eschatological vindicated. So, he's talking about this whole picture.

But while there wasn't this idea of earning your right to get in, there was the idea of needing to do and to obey to remain in. That one could be removed from the right to live in. One could be kicked out if they violated the law and could be excommunicated from the people.

So, I think the question is, what must I do to demonstrate that I'm a part of the group that is going to be blessed by God eschatologically? So, the group will inherit. What must I do to be a part of that group? It's interesting. There's no indication here at all that he's coming to test Jesus, that he's coming to trap him.

This isn't the Pharisees. The way this plays out is this is a genuine question. Jesus responds, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

This idea is a very interesting play where maybe he's attacking the flattery of the young man here who's run up. Maybe he wants to begin to create a sense of irony, of stress, that it's right actually to call him good and that's what he wants to receive is the man to acknowledge that you are good in the way that God is good. Regardless, the man is undaunted, and he stays there.

So, Jesus continues, no one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, and he begins to list several of them, though not all. Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

Do not defraud. Honor your mother and your father. What's interesting is that Jesus refers to the second half of the Decalogue here.

Those elements are the interactions between humanity. One he doesn't mention, which is you shall not covet. I think his not mentioning of covetousness is one of those where the silence is actually louder than what he said.

But he also, in Absinthe, is the first part of the Decalogue, which deals with devotion to God. So, when he cites the commandments, he leaves silent the ones that focus on honoring God as well as coveting and speaks to the other ones, the ones that the man replies that he's kept from his youth. And Jesus said, looking at him, loved him like this is not the reference that he has towards the religious leaders, loved him and said, 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. Notice the come, follow me is the exact same language he's used for the discipleship calls.

There's no other language. Also, notice that Jesus doesn't say, go, sell what you have; contribute it to my ministry. Jesus is gaining no value from this.

So, there's no opportunity even for the man to have to sell it and maybe gain from it by now contributing financially to it. He's to give to the poor. Again, the lower status of society.

He has wealth, they don't and he's to absolve himself as well. And also, this isn't a command that Jesus gives to everyone. And so, when we look at this, the question becomes, Jesus says, you lack one thing.

The man had just said that he'd kept all the commandments, but he told him that he lacked one thing. He gave him a commandment of what he must do: You must do these things. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And thus, we come back to the commandments that Jesus gave. And so, he did not mention it. He did not mention the commandments of having no other gods.

He did not mention the commandments of coveting. Before there were commandments, I think it's being brought up that this man had not been following the Decalogue. To express his desire to be obedient to God, he meant to do what Jesus said.

If he truly was obedient to God, he wanted to know about what he must do to inherit eternal life, he is to obey what Jesus said. And what Jesus told him was to go and sell, to divorce himself, if you will, from his covetousness and his desire for wealth. And the man could not do it.

It's a very sad tale because he had such great wealth, and Jesus loved him, but he could not surrender that wealth. And then, disheartened by the saying, he went away. Jesus looked around and said to his disciple, how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

And they were extinguished, exceedingly astonished, and said to him, then who can be saved? And even there in that question of who can be saved, and we'll finish it up here, the disciples are probably dismayed because in their sense of honor and status, the man who had wealth, who has seemingly been also devout, would have a status where the wealth would be seen as a blessing that God had given to him. And if the requirement is for those who have wealth to disconnect wealth, disconnect the importance of wealth, and be willing to give it all away, for the disciples, that seems like an impossibility. One that they would be unable even themselves to do.

They're here as people who have left everything, yet they are extinguished, astonished by what Jesus requires. We'll pick this up as we continue finishing up this story, talk about the camel proverb, and then move on to the rest of chapters 10 and 11 next time. Thank you.

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 16, Mark 9.30-10.31, Discipleship, Divorce, Children, Rich Ruler.