

Mark 10: 1-27 (Part 1) - Marriage, Divorce and Grace Through Faith

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Mark chapter 10, verse 1, *“And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.”*² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”*³ He answered them, *“What did Moses command you?”*⁴ They said, *“Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”*⁵ And Jesus said to them, *“Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.*

*’*⁶ But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’⁷ *‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’* So they are no longer two but one flesh.⁸ *’*⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”¹⁰ And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter.¹¹ And he said to them, *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”* (ESV)

Let's stop there. We'll try to get farther in the chapter, but let's pray.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word today and speak to us, Lord. Let your Holy Spirit bring wisdom and insight. Direct our hearts, Father, we pray, in Jesus' name, amen.

The reason that the Pharisees asked Jesus this question in a public setting is because back in Jesus's day, just like today, divorce was a controversial subject, and it gets people's ire up today. It got people's ire up back then.

And since the Pharisees were always looking for ways to get Jesus in hot water they thought, what better way than to bring up a hot button topic like divorce in a public setting. Mark records their question as, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”*

But actually, in Matthew's account we find that a little more detail is given. What they actually asked Him was, *“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife*

for any reason?" That's what was really being asked, and that's what the controversy was all about, because you see there were two rather famous rabbis who had come before this time, and they had postulated two very different interpretations regarding the legality or the propriety of grounds for divorce.

And one rabbi said husbands could basically divorce their wives over pretty much anything including burning the dinner. I mean, if he came home and decided she didn't look as nice as he thought she should, he then had grounds for divorce. Sounds like a guy doesn't it?

The other rabbi took a more conservative approach, and he basically said that divorce was only possible or there were, I should say, there's only grounds for divorce in the case of sexual immorality, but it all centered around an interpretation of a particular Old Testament verse that I'll put up on the screen for you so that you can see it for yourselves. It's Deuteronomy chapter 24, verse 1. And it says,

Deuteronomy 24:1 (ESV)

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes, because she has found, or he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand, sends her out of the house, and she departs out of the house...

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes, because she has found, or (excuse me) he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand, sends her out of the house, and she departs out of the house... (and da, da da)

And the entire controversy centered around the meaning of the words, as you look at that verse, some indecency. Now, it might be different in your Bible, but that is the essence of it right there.

Now, again, the liberal position was that some indecency was anything, and whatever the husband decided. And the conservative position was that some indecency referred, again, to sexual unfaithfulness, and the people of Israel were frankly divided on the issue.

And so, let's look again at the response that Jesus gives here in this passage. Verse 3, *"He answered them, What did Moses command you?"* I like that. Jesus brings it back to the Word and they said, *"Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away."* And that was basically all their response.

Moses actually had other things to say about divorce because you remember Moses was credited as writing basically to writing the first several books of the Old Testament.

And then Jesus goes on and He says in verse 5, *“because of your hardness, of heart he wrote you this command.”* In other words, what Jesus is saying here is that Moses allowed you to divorce your wife because of sin. Now He uses the term hardness of heart but let's face it, that means sin.

That means because sometimes you're stubborn and you're idiotic and you do really, really dumb things and you can very well put a woman in great peril. So, God allowed, He permitted divorce within the context of the Law. But understand this, it was because your hearts were hard. That's why there was a place for divorce.

In other words, what He's saying is divorce is a reality because sin is a reality. That isn't a popular conclusion, but fortunately enough, it's not mine. It's what the Lord is basically saying here. Because there is sin there are bad marriages. We like to think we have marriage problems. We have sin problems, and that is the fact of the matter.

And I know that's not an easy thing to hear, but it also means that if you have a good marriage, or maybe I should say it this way, a good marriage, on the other hand, will be affected by the willingness of the members of that marriage, the spouses, to be willing to confess their sin and surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. That's what makes a good marriage.

We've come up with all kinds of counselling methods, and conferences on marriage, and different steps to take, and different things to do. But just remember this, Jesus said that the very presence of divorce was because of sin. And obviously there's none of us who are going to not sin.

As someone who's been married for over 38 years, I have sinned horribly in my marriage and done some terrible things. But the fact that I have a good marriage today isn't because Sue and I went to a marriage conference or learned some powerful secret of what it means to this or that.

It's because we learned how to look each other in the eye after we had looked God in the eye and said, I'm sorry Lord. And then we look at each other and say, I'm sorry. I was wrong. Would you forgive me? It doesn't take sin away, but it begins to loosen the power of what sin would otherwise cause in our lives which is destruction.

Sin always causes death you guys. The wages of sin is death. You can be born again and still experience death in your life due to sin. You can be a born again, washed in the blood of the Lamb Christian, going to heaven and experience the death of your marriage because of sin.

It's happened many times because the wages of sin is death, and the only way to turn that around, the only way to have power over sin in our lives, is through the power of the cross. That's it. It's a one step program, you guys. One step to the cross. We lay it all down. We confess our sin to God. We ask Him to forgive us. Then we go to our spouse, and we do the same.

Jesus goes on here in this passage to do something, or actually kind of to say something that only, I think, God could say. God in human flesh. He begins to explain the insight of the intent of marriage. God's original intent for marriage. Look at verse 6.

He says, *"From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female, therefore (and He's quoting Genesis two now) a man shall leave his father and mother."* That speaks of a man coming out from under his family's structure. The unit that he was raised in as a young man, he comes out from under that family structure, and he begins to form a new family structure at the time of his marriage.

And it says, *"He will then hold fast to his wife."* (That's what it said back in Genesis 2) *"For this reason, a man will leave and hold fast."* Or as the old King James says, *"he will leave and cleave."*

That was the theme, I guess, of our marriage, right? It was a long time ago, and I'm trying to forget some of it because it was the 70s, for one thing, and there was nothing much good that we wore in the 70s. We won't let people look at our pictures because it was the 70s, and it was like we looked like a couple of poor hippies, and it was not good. Anyway, I had long hair and Sue was 17 years old.

I don't know what her parents were thinking. And I think our bulletins, they said leave and cleave on it or something like that. That's a Biblical concept. I had no clue what it meant back then. Not a clue. But that's the idea that Jesus is saying here. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother. He will then pull away from this family structure he's been raised in and with, along with this woman, with whom he holds fast, he creates this new family structure.

And He says, “*and the two (verse 8) will become one flesh.*” Interesting here, He says they're no longer two but one. Of all the relationships on earth, this one is called one flesh.

The fact of the matter is it seems I am more one flesh with like my brother. We came from the same parents. We have much the same kind of DNA physical background. We each look kind of like our dad and yeah, and yet this woman who I've taken into my life who came from different parents, because we've joined together and come together in this institution that God created called marriage, He says, you are now one flesh. Wow, that's pretty amazing. And then He gives this final declaration.

“*Because He has made them.*” He has made them one flesh. He says in verse 9, look with me in your Bible. “*What, therefore, God has joined together.*” Can I stop for just a moment? I'm going to step up on my soapbox here for a second.

The state does not join people in marriage. Do you understand me? God joins people in marriage. The state recognizes your marriage and extends legal rights, and that's fine, that's their prerogative. The state gives you the legal right to own property together, have control over your assets, do various other things that take legal standing, to be considered family and so forth.

But listen, the state does not make you husband and wife. I used to say many years ago when I would do weddings, by the authority granted to me by the state of so and so. I don't say that anymore. I haven't said that for years because it dawned on me finally. What a stupid thing to say.

There's not, it's not biblical. I said all kinds of things just because of tradition. Now by the authority granted me by the state of Oregon. The state of Oregon?! Who the heck are they?! They didn't create marriage! Do you know what the problem is when we start thinking that somehow the state joins us in matrimony? Here's the problem.

We think the state can unjoin us. And so, we go to the courthouse, and we file the right papers, and the state says, alright fine, you're not married anymore, and we think we're not married anymore because we thought the state joined us and we think the state can unjoin us. “*What therefore God has joined together,*” not the state, “*let man not separate.*” What God has done, let man not undo. That's what's being said here.

Isn't it interesting, the Pharisees asked Jesus about divorce, and He starts talking about marriage. Jesus, what do you think about divorce? Let me tell you about marriage.

It's a really interesting thing too because you know what, the best way to understand the dynamics of divorce is to understand the dynamics of marriage. You want to know about divorce? Let's go back and talk about marriage. You want to understand biblical divorce? Let's talk about biblical marriage first.

Don't leapfrog over the one to try and understand the other because what you're going to do is you're going to interject things from the world, things from your own desire. Well, I think, who cares? Who cares what you and I think? It's what God's Word says, right? God says I joined these people together.

This is my institution. Not yours. It doesn't belong to the state; it doesn't belong to you. It's not privately owned. It's me. I own; I started it. I originated; I created marriage God says. It's mine. That means I get to set the rules. I get to set the guidelines, and Jesus is telling the Pharisees and the people who are listening and you and I, that when He created marriage, His intent was that the man and the woman would join in an unbroken union for life. That was His intent. Now we know that everything God intended doesn't always come to pass. Why? Because we're sinners.

Because we've injected our life, our will, into God's creation. We've been - we do it all the time. But you have to understand though, divorce is a violation of God's original intent, and we can't say anything else and be biblical about it. And I'm not trying to make anybody feel bad, and I'm not suggesting that divorce is the ultimate unforgivable sin. It's not. But let's not soft pedal it either from the standpoint of at least what God's Word has to say. Let me show you a quote on the screen here. Guy by the name of J. Murray says,

Divorce is contrary to the divine institution, contrary to the nature of marriage, it's contrary to the divine action by which the union effected. It is precisely here that its divorce's wickedness becomes singularly apparent — it is the [separating] by man of a union that God has constituted. Divorce is the breaking of a seal which has been engravened by the hand of God. J. Murray, Divorce, p. 33

Divorce is contrary to the divine institution, contrary to the nature of marriage, (He says) it's contrary to the divine action by which the union is (brought together by God) effected. It is precisely here that its divorce's wickedness becomes singularly apparent — it is the [separating] by man of a union that God

has constituted. (established) Divorce is the breaking of a seal which has been engravened by the hand of God.” J. Murray, Divorce, p. 33

It's in a book that he wrote called, Divorce. Now, I'm assuming that that definition probably makes you uncomfortable. Makes me uncomfortable too. As well it should. This definition should make all of us uncomfortable, because it's defining something for us that we typically don't like to hear, and that is sin. Sin. It's a violation of God's plan. It's a violation of God's intent, and God's purpose for marriage, and it made the disciples uncomfortable too.

Mark gives us an abbreviated conversation along these lines. But it goes on in verse 10. It says, *“in the house, the disciples asked Him about this matter.”*

In fact, we learned from another Gospel account, they basically said to Him, wow, who should get married then? I mean, if it's that sort of a situation. Look at verse 11. He said to them, *“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”*

What is the key to committing adultery? It's actually the phrase, *“and marries another.”* Did you catch that? It occurs twice in there. That is what constitutes adultery. *“And marries another.”* And the reason that it's an act of adultery is because they go off and they get married to somebody else, but they're still married to their first spouse.

You say, well, pastor Paul, that's not true, they went and got a divorce. Only in the eyes of the state, right? Because the state doesn't unmarry. Because the state doesn't marry anybody, it can't unmarry you. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know what you're thinking, there are biblical grounds for divorce. We'll deal with it.

But He's not talking about it right here he's just making a flat statement. You're married. You're married before God. God has overseen that marriage. It is His institution. His intent is that you would remain married for life. You divorce your spouse, you marry somebody else, you've committed adultery.

Simple as that. Yeah, there are some other circumstances. In Matthew's account, Jesus explains the biblical grounds for divorce. Let me show you this on the screen. Matthew chapter 19.

Matthew 19:9 (ESV)

“And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

“And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

And that explains the exception for remarriage, or the freedom to remarriage within the context of a broken marriage, and that is if one of the spouses violates the sexual union of the marriage by becoming unfaithful sexually. In other words, having a relationship outside of marriage.

And in that case, we know that the spouse that remained faithful in the marriage is granted grounds for not just divorce, but remarriage. Now, it is not mandated that that person has to divorce. Unfaithfulness is horrible, horrible. But can I just tell you that I've seen many marriages come back from it?

I would not wish it upon my worst enemy, but I have seen people come back from it and have a stronger marriage than before. But again, the reason that this is given as grounds is because the offending spouse already broke the marriage covenant by being unfaithful, and the idea here is not just they were unfaithful once. The idea here is you've got a spouse who is consistently unfaithful, and who refuses to change their way.

Now let me just say this subject is very complex. It's complex because of our sin too. Our sin has made marriage divorce and remarriage a very complex issue, and there's really no way on a single Sunday morning that I could cover every situation, every circumstance, every condition that might have precipitated such a situation in the past or maybe even in your life.

I want to suggest if you have questions about this subject, and I'm typically talking about this for as short a period as I have, will cause people to have a lot of questions. So, I want to suggest a couple of things.

First of all, when we went through this similar passage in our study of Matthew, back in 2013, I took an entire Sunday to talk about what Jesus said about divorce. Let me put up on the screen what our, what that page looks like on our website. We took two and a half years to go through Matthew.

Watch Listen	Matthew 13:44-52 - Parables of the Kingdom	Paul LeBoutillier	April 21, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 13:53-58 - Rejection at Nazareth	Paul LeBoutillier	Apr 28, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 14:1-13a - The Death of John the Baptist	Paul LeBoutillier	May 05, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 14:13-21 - Jesus Feeds the 5,000	Paul LeBoutillier	Jun 04, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 14:22-36 - Jesus Walks On The Water	Paul LeBoutillier	Jun 9, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 15:1-20 - Confronting Meaningless Religion	Paul LeBoutillier	Jun 16, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 15:21-28 - The Faith of a Canaanite Woman	Paul LeBoutillier	Jun 23, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 15:29-16:12 - Jesus Heals, Feeds and Warns	Paul LeBoutillier	June 30, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 16:13-20 - Who Do The People Say I Am?	Paul LeBoutillier	July 7, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 16:21-28 (Part 1) Two Sides of Peter	Paul LeBoutillier	July 14, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 16:21-28 (Part 2) Two Sides of Peter	Paul LeBoutillier	July 21, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 17:1-9 - The Transfiguration	Paul LeBoutillier	July 28, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 17:9-23 More On John the Baptist	Paul LeBoutillier	Aug 18, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 17:24-27 - Jesus and the Temple Tax	Paul LeBoutillier	Sept 22, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 18:1-4 - Who is the Greatest?	Paul LeBoutillier	Sept 29, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 18:5-14 - The Good Shepherd	Paul LeBoutillier	Oct 7, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 18:15-20 - If Your Brother Sins Against You	Paul LeBoutillier	Oct 20, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 18:18-20 - Binding and Loosing	Paul LeBoutillier	Oct 27, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 18: 21-35 - The Unforgiving Servant	Paul LeBoutillier	Nov 3, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 19:1-12 - Jesus Teaches on Divorce	Paul LeBoutillier	Nov 10, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 19:13-15 - Let the Children Come	Paul LeBoutillier	Nov 17, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 19: 16-22 - Good Deeds and Eternal Life	Paul LeBoutillier	Nov 24, 2013
Watch Listen	Matthew 19:23-30 - Wealth and the Kingdom of God	Paul LeBoutillier	Dec 01, 2013

But notice in the red, if you've ever looked at our website, that's the study of Matthew. That's not even the whole study. But the part in red there is outlining where Jesus teaches on divorce, Matthew chapter 19, verses 1 through 12. I was much more exhaustive in how I dealt with it. And so, you're welcome to go to our website: lifebibleministry.com. You can listen to that anytime or even watch the message. The other thing that I wanted to suggest is that you know how we have the text number that we put here while I'm teaching.

If you've got other questions, text them to me. If they're private, if you don't want it to be seen by anybody else, just say so in your text. Keep this private. I'll just text you back or email you. If you give me an email, it might be easier if it requires a longer answer, but I'd be happy to answer some questions that you might have about these things.

Let's go on. Verse 13. *“And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. (the moms who were bringing kids, the disciples were like get away, get away!)”* ¹⁴ *But 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.”* ¹⁵ *Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”* ¹⁶ *And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.”*

Boy, I tell you, these disciples, they were often misreading situations. They gave more importance to things that weren't important, they gave less importance to things that were very important, and here the disciples think that the mothers are bothering Jesus, so they actually rebuke him. Tell them to get away, this is Jesus.

And you'll remember last week we talked about the fact that culturally, in the Jewish culture, children were considered to be of lesser importance. And that's probably why they felt the way they did, but notice it says Jesus was, and it uses the word indignant here in the ESV.

And that word basically means He was displeased, highly displeased at His disciples. And He said, *"Let them come to me. Don't hinder them."* Then He made this interesting statement. *"For to such belongs the kingdom of God."*

What does that mean? Oh man, I've heard some really whacked out interpretations of what that means. What it means is that children provide for us an example of the kind of faith that is required to enter the kingdom of God.

Children provide the example of that faith, and that's why He went on to say in verse 15, *"Truly I say to you whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. Like a child."*

It's interesting. First of all, children have this natural faith that they place in their parents. There's just a natural faith. And by the way, that's what we call childlike faith, which is not to be confused with childish faith. Childlike faith is a wonderful thing. It's a quality of belief that chooses to trust and receive from God without issue. Childish faith says, I believe even when there's absolutely zero evidence to support it.

And that's very popular today. People express childish faith, and they think that because they believe it, it's true. People will say things to me all the time. Well, I just don't believe.

I was having a conversation with a friend of mine from many years ago and she was saying, I just can't believe that earth is the only planet that God populated with life. I get that, but I explained that you have to understand that your belief is based on zero evidence, you see? Zero!

And the more we learn about our universe, the more we realize how unique our world is. I mean, everything is just so, to support life. And whereas, many years

ago they thought, oh, there's probably lots of planets that could support life. The more we learn about the universe the more we're saying, eh, not so much.

So, the belief that God populated life on other planets, if you believe that, you're welcome to believe that. I'll even respect your belief, but I have to tell you something. You have a big, fat goose egg for evidence. And so why do you believe it? It's called childish faith. I just I believe it. I just believe it.

People say to me they use childish faith all the time. I just don't believe there's a place called hell. Okay, why? I just don't believe, I don't believe a loving God could do that. What if that loving God said there was a place called hell that was created for the devil and his angels and that human beings choose to go there by rejecting the salvation that He provides?

What then? Well, I just don't believe it. You see what that is? That's childish faith. That's not childlike faith. Childish chooses to believe regardless of the evidence, right? And I love how Jesus says, unless you receive the Kingdom of God like a child. There's something so wonderful about the quality of childlike faith to just receive.

I've never had a kid refuse a gift that I've offered to him. In fact, I raised four kids. I never had, I never gave one of them a birthday present and heard one of them say, oh dad, I can't accept that. I just need to earn it myself. Never once did they say that to me, because they're kids.

They're like, yeah, and they just receive with just such joy and there's no misplaced pride or sense of responsibility. Like, oh, I don't think I've been good enough for this. But that's what we grow up and do right? We grow up and either it's our pride or our misplaced idea of our worthiness keeps us from receiving the blessing of the Kingdom of God.

And Jesus said unless you receive the kingdom like a child. How does a child receive I'll take it right? I, they don't stop to think about whether they're worthy. I'll take that. Thank you. It's really a very beautiful thing

Verse 17. Do I have time? Yeah. *“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.”*

By the way, Jesus is not saying He's not God and He's not saying He's not good. We'll talk about this. *“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.* 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,...*

Guys, did you catch that? That's the key to the whole passage, with, and if you don't have that underlined, that's a good thing to underline, highlight, write it on your forehead, wherever. With man it is impossible. He's talking about salvation, *“but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”*

Stop there. This is a great passage, and it's interesting that it comes right on the heels of Jesus speaking about only those who receive the Kingdom with childlike faith can enter it. It begins with a question this young man posed. Would you look with me again? He begins by saying, *“good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

Now listen, if you're going to understand this passage it is immensely important that you understand and take note of how, first of all, this man addresses Jesus. He says, good teacher. That alone is very telling. He doesn't know who Jesus is, in the sense of God in human flesh.

So, he comes to images as good teacher. What does that tell you about the man? He believes people can be good. You might say, well, what's wrong with that? I believe people can be good. Well, you're both wrong, because the Bible has something else to say on the subject. We'll talk about it, but this man believes people can be good. Okay? You with me?

The next thing he, that, that says a lot about him, and particularly what he believes, is his question, which is, what must I do? What must I do to inherit eternal life? What must I do?

So here you have a man who believes people can be good, and his question is regarding what must he do to earn his way into heaven. Make no mistake about it, people. This guy wants to know how to earn his way because he believes people can be good. He also believes he has been good. Did you catch that too? Well, Jesus understands immediately what he's dealing with here. He's talking to somebody who's attempting to earn his way to heaven by being good. So, he engages him on that level.

And in verse 19, he says, *"You know the commandments."* And then He lists some of them. Now be very careful here, Christians, just because Jesus responded to this man by listing commandments in response to, how can I be good? How can I do this? What can I do to have eternal life? Doesn't mean that the way to heaven is by keeping the Law.

Remember, he's confronting a man who believes you can be good enough. There are good people. He's a good person, and it's possible to be good enough to impress God and make his way into heaven. All right? What Jesus is going to do here now by talking about the Law, He's going to press this man to the point of getting him, hopefully, to see his understanding of sin and how that plays into it. So, what does the man say in response after Jesus lists these commandments?

Look at verse 20. Interesting. And he said to Him, *"Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth."* Again, what does that tell you about this man? It tells you he believes it is possible to keep the Law. He says it right there. He says, so Jesus names a bunch of these commandments and he goes, yeah done it, been doing it since I was a kid.

What do you see what's going on? Do you see the disconnect in this guy's life? He thinks he's got it dialed in. All right, but did you also notice? Even though he claims to have kept the Law he still doesn't have a peaceful heart.

Why? He's coming to Jesus and saying, what do I got to do? And then he tells Jesus in the next breath, I've been keeping the Law, all of it. Now, he's deluding himself, but he believes it at least himself. But did you notice people? He does not have assurance of salvation.

What does that tell you about the Law? Keeping the Law, keeping rules, keeping regulations, trying to be good enough. What does that tell you? You will never have an assurance of your salvation by trying to be a good person, by trying to keep the Law by trying to keep rules and regulations.

You'll never have that assurance. Okay? And that so the Law, that's because the Law can't give assurance. What does the Law do? Check out this passage from Romans chapter three, beginning at verse 19. It says,

Romans 3:19-20 (NIV84)

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore (look at this guys) no one (Paul writes) will be declared righteous in his sight by (doing what? Observing) the works of the law; (So, if the law doesn't declare me righteous, what does it do?) rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

That's the role of the Law. It makes us conscious of our sin. When God puts the Law in effect, we look at it and we go, Bro, busted. Thou shalt not do this and this. And every time He mentions it, I'm just ah, I'm dead. I'm dead. That's exactly what the Law is supposed to do. What did it do in this man's life? No, I've kept all those things. Law? Yeah, kept them all, ever since I was a kid, I've been keeping the Law.

What we see right here is this man did not have a conscious understanding of his sinful condition because he was convinced in his mind, there are good people, I am a good people, and good people can impress God and earn their way to heaven.

So, what Jesus is going to do here is He's going to shake this man up a bit and force him to look at what he doesn't want to look at, and that is his belief that he keeps the Law.

Look at what it says again in verse 21. *“And Jesus looking at him loved him and said to him, “You lack one thing. Go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven and come follow me.””*

Why did Jesus say this? This is, it's the most important thing in the world that you ask that question. Why did Jesus say that to this man?

I'll tell you why. One of the elements of the Law goes like this. *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* This is part of the Law that this guy was saying, oh

yeah, done it, done. Been doing it all my life. So, Jesus is testing the reality of that. And He's not doing it to be demeaning or whatever. It says that Jesus looked at him and loved him. And He was compassionate toward this man. He was like, oh son, son, son. You really truly believe that you keep the Law, and you've kept it all your life ever since you were a child. Do you understand my son that part of the Law says, love your neighbor as yourself. So, I'm going to test you, son.

There's one thing you lack, take all of your wealth, and I know it's great, and give it away to the poor. And if you truly have kept the Law, including love your neighbor as yourself, your response should be to me, no problem. No problem. Because I love my neighbor as myself so I'm going to give everything I have away.

Look what verse 22 says. It says, *“disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions.”* In other words, this young man was caught believing a lie. Do you know it's very possible, very common for us to believe lies about ourselves?

This man believed these various lies. People are good. I'm good. We can be good enough. And after bragging in the presence of the Son of God, I have kept the Law. Jesus lays one element of the Law, just one on this young man, and it says he goes away sorrowful. I can't do that.

This man had to come to terms with the fact that he wasn't good, and he couldn't be good enough and Jesus had to break this bubble he was living in to make this man understand you need a Savior. You need me. That's why I've come, young man, to be your Savior, to do what you cannot do. I have come to keep the Law because I can keep the Law.

And then, having kept it perfectly, I have come to die for you on the cross that you might have life when you look to me. But see, this young man wasn't willing to see all of that at the beginning. I hope and pray that he did at some point in his life come to terms with his own depravity and realize there's nothing I can do. I can't do this.

And there's something about money that makes trusting other people and stuff more challenging. That's why Jesus said in verse 23, *“As he looked around, he said to his disciples how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.”*

And you can see that the disciples were pretty amazed by this statement, and so he repeated it. *“He said, children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”*

He's talking about a real camel, and a real eye of a needle. And so, you see that this is the lesson that Jesus was talking about earlier when He was mentioning the Kingdom of God being populated by childlike faith. Money tends to cause people to pay their own way. That's what money does. When you have money, you have the ability to pay your way.

I don't need any handouts. Self-made man. If there's a cost, I'll pay my way. And they start thinking of heaven in the same way. If there's a cost, I'll pay my way. What do I got to do? I'm used to paying my way. Just tell me what the cost is, I'll pay it.

And that's why Jesus said how hard it is for somebody so accustomed to paying their way to enter the kingdom of God because you see you can't pay your way into the Kingdom of heaven. You can't pay your way. You have to receive it like a child receives a free gift. They just receive it. Only Jesus can pay that price.