

Mark 10:1-31

Date: Sunday, 20 June 2021

Scripture: Mark 10:1-31

Sermon: Learning to Live for Jesus

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Passage

Mark 10:1 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.

Mark 10:2 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, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Mark 10:10 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, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Mark 10:13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 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.

Mark 10:17 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.

Mark 10:23 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." 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."

Transcript

The World versus Jesus

One of the highlights of my life is being ordained and inducted as a minister of the Presbyterian church. Making vows before you, before God that I would seek to serve God. But one of the things that I found really weird was the fact that I am now

called a Reverend. Sometimes, you know, when you're filling in forms, and you know you get the option of putting your title in. I haven't really been game to put "Rev." People see you a little differently. Like the conversation dies when you tell people that you are a reverend. I'm glad that the conversation that we have here hasn't died because I am now a reverend.

But my new identity as a reverend was something that took me time to get used to. And it's kind of the same with being a Christian. When you become a Christian, when you decide to follow Jesus, you are now called a follower of Jesus, a Christian. But learning to be a Christian takes time, doesn't it? Sometimes, we fall into old habits, old routines that made up our past. But we continue to learn. And today, I want to talk about what it looks like to live for Jesus. We touched on it a little last week when we talked about the importance of serving as a Christian. But in this passage, we're diving deeper into that. So today, we're going to look at, How do we live for Jesus? And then we're going to look at why we can live for Jesus.

How to Live for Jesus

So let's have a look at that first point. How to live for Jesus. I'm going to spend most of our time here. What does following Jesus look like? We're going to be practical. We're going to think about ways we're going to live for Jesus and you'll see in your order of services that there are three things that I want to focus on today. Three ways that we can live for Jesus.

Be Holy

The first way that we can live for Jesus is to be holy. Be holy. Have a look with me at the passage,

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.

And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." Mark 10:1-4 (ESV)

As we've seen in the Gospel of Mark, the Pharisees continually oppose Jesus. And it's the same here when they ask Jesus about divorce. The Pharisees are being cun-

ning because they're asking Jesus about divorce in the vicinity where Herod the Tetrarch rules. Herod who married his brother's wife, Herodias. They're trying to entrap Jesus. Maybe they think that Herod would lock Jesus up, like he did with John the Baptist. But what do we see here? He is absolutely clear, have a look.

And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' '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. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." Mark 10:5-9 (ESV)

Jesus is clear. He says to them that it was not God's original plan that man and woman would divorce one another. Jesus is unflinching, uncompromising in his values. He doesn't bend under the opinion and approval of others. He has integrity. And he declares that if a man and woman marry, they are married till death do them part. It's a message for us here who are married, marriage is sacred in God's eyes. Marriage is intended for life.

But a greater point that we need to see from this passage is the importance of being holy. To be holy just as our God is holy. Because Jesus is saying that we are not to compromise our values for the world but we are to be holy. Maybe you're wondering what it means to be holy? Well, it means that we, as humankind, are to reflect God's character here on earth. As God's representatives, as his ambassadors here on earth, we are to reflect his perfection. He values marriage, we are to value marriage. See how serious Jesus takes marriage! When his disciples take him aside, he continues and says that anyone who divorces and remarries causes his first wife to commit adultery.

But the point is that if you are a Christian, we are to reflect God's character to the people around us. To be salt and light. My brother and his wife have two children. And it's really quite interesting how my brother's son looks like my brother when my brother was growing up. And my brother's daughter, looks like my brother's wife. My dad was a little disappointed that I chose to do law at university. He thought that I would have followed in his footsteps and done an engineering degree. And looking back, I wish I had done engineering. I was terrible at law! I had no idea what I was doing with my law degree. Children, often reflect their parents.

And in that way, we as Christians are to reflect our Heavenly Father. We are to be holy just as our Heavenly Father is holy. Let me ask, when people look at you, do

they see our Heavenly Father? The rich young man here in this passage is seeking to be holy just as the LORD is holy.

When people look at you, do they see someone who murders others whether physically or in your hearts? Or do they see someone who seek to build others up just as the LORD builds up.

When people look at you, do they see someone who commits adultery whether physically, or in lustful looks? Or do they see someone who seek to honour others and their bodies, just as the LORD honours us.

When people look at you, do they see someone who steals, steal in their taxes, pirating illegal music and videos, or do they see someone who is generous, just as the LORD is generous.

Holiness is not something I hear about in modern songs. It's why I love the hymns of old. There is such rich theology, deep meaning in the hymns of yesteryear. The writers understood that we worship a holy God!

Holy holy holy

Lord God Almighty

Early in the morning

Our song shall rise to Thee Holy holy holy

Merciful and mighty

God in three persons Blessed Trinity

Holiness doesn't matter to the world. But it matters to God, and if it matters to God then if you're a Christian then it matters to you. Be Holy.

Be Humble

The second way that we can live for Jesus is to learn to be humble. To learn humility. Have a look at the passage,

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. 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.

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 hands on them. Mark 10:13-16 (ESV)

I love this passage. It's something that's on my heart every week as we pray for the children as they go to Sunday school. It's something you may be familiar with, because it's often read at the baptism of children as well in our church. But one thing I want to focus on is what Jesus says, there in the middle in verse 15. "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." One of the things that Jesus wants his followers to learn is to enter the kingdom of God like children. We have a lot to learn from each other, we can learn this from children. To learn humility.

How can we learn from children?

Well, children are the lowest. We are to live like that. Seeking others before ourselves. I love a good church camp. This church has had church camps in the past. There was one that was held at the university that I went to, UNSW. It was called MYC. Mid Year Conference. It also had another name. MYC - aka, Meet Your Companion. I never met my companion there. But I really loved MYC and the growth that I had on camp. But one of the things that really bugged me was the fact that the men, or rather, I should say, the boys, would all peacock. You know what I mean? Male peacocks are the pretty gender of the species, and male peacocks would all show off. They would all show off (including me). They would show off about how many push ups they could all do, or something really silly. It was terrible, there was no humility whatsoever. During meals, they would all seek to be first because they wanted to eat first. There was no sense of service, no humility. We can really learn from children who were seen as the lowest back in Jesus' time. We can seek to put others interests before our own as Paul says in Philippians. C.S. Lewis says that the humble person isn't the person who thinks less of themselves, but rather the person who thinks of themselves less. Be like children, seek other people's interests.

How else can we learn from children? Well, children are dependent on everyone else. Children are completely dependent on their parents. Especially when they're babies. Dependent on their parents to bathe them, to feed them, to change them. It's a terrible thing when we hear about child neglect, because we know that children are dependent. We are to learn utter dependence on God. Learning humility means truly comprehending who we are before God. John Calvin talks about the

fact that we truly know God when we truly know ourselves. And when we truly know ourselves, we truly know God. When we know how majestic God is, then we realise that we are truly small. Growing up, my family would often go to Canberra to visit a close family member. I love Canberra. Quest-a-con is a place I go to often whenever I go down. I ask other people about whether they go there too whenever they mention to me that they go to Canberra. I love science. One time, I got a magnifying glass. And I started to burn things using the sun's rays. I would burn things like paper. But you see those scenes on television when a boy burns not just paper but ants. It's very unfair. But can you imagine how big a boy would be if you were that ant? There would be the fear of the boy in those ants I suspect. How much more for God who is infinite, and us who are finite?

That's what the disciples start to grasp, don't they? When Jesus tells the rich man to give away his possessions. And the disciples say amongst themselves, if rich people, who seem to be blessed by God, is impossible for them to enter the kingdom of Heaven, then who then can be saved? That's what humility looks like. Realising that if we are really honest with ourselves, and our sin, our imperfections, our failings, then we do not measure up to God's standards. Humility is realising that in our own strength, in man's strength, it is impossible.

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! 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." And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Mark 10:24-27 (ESV)

With man it is impossible, but not with God. That is the essence of humility right there. When we realise that it is impossible for us. But it is not impossible for God. That all things are possible with God.

Are you humble? Here's a test. Do you pray? I mean, really pray. I'm not talking about grace that you speak as routine. I'm talking about gut wrenching prayer where you cry out loud to God because you know that you can't do life in your own strength.

Give Him Your Heart

Be Holy.

Be Humble.

Finally, give him your heart.

Let's have a look,

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, 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. But many who are first will be last, and the last first." Mark 10:29-31 (ESV)

What Jesus is concerned about is our hearts. He wants our hearts. He wants our complete allegiance. Jesus' call to us, his disciples, is that if we are to follow him, we need to be willing to give up everything. To leave houses, children, parents, money, possessions for him.

"Does that mean I can't keep anything? I can't enjoy anything?" That's what I hear you ask me. But that's not the case. The disciples they owned houses, they had families, they had money. Peter had a boat. Jesus is more concerned about our hearts. He wants your complete allegiance. He asks, "Are you willing to follow me into death? Are you willing to die for me?" That's the question. Are you willing to die for Jesus? You may not have to die for your faith, like others around the world, but he does ask for your complete allegiance. He asks that you put him first in your life. He asks that you treasure him above everything else in life.

Give him your heart.

Why We Can Live for Jesus

"But Justin, I'm afraid. Being a Christian seems hard. It feels like I will miss out if I follow Jesus. It feels costly. It feels like I'm going to lose a lot. Being holy, living humbly, giving him my heart." Do you feel like that? It brings me to my final point and we'll finish up here. Why can we live for Jesus?

There's an answer that I love that Jesus gives. I think it's best that I point you to it.

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, 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. Mark 10:29-30 (ESV)

Jesus never says we can't live for a reward. And here Jesus himself gives us a promise. There is a reward if we're willing to live for him. We are promised that we will receive a hundredfold now, we will receive life and life to the full, and most importantly, eternal life.

What's the greatest thing you fear losing in this life? Jesus will make up for it more than you can imagine. It's his promise to you. What an amazing promise.

Live for Jesus. Be holy. Be humble. Give him your heart. Hundred fold. Eternal life.