

What Must I Do to Inherit Eternal Life? (Part 2)

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 18:18-34



Big Idea

We are unable in and of ourselves to break free from the enchantment of money and material wealth. Such things will always seem more important to us than Jesus, His cross, or His kingdom. But what we could never do on our own, God Himself does for us in Jesus. The life, death, and resurrection of Christ is the means by which God drops dynamite into our souls, thereby snapping our heart's attachments to mammon and re-igniting our affections for Himself!

(3) Respecting the Problem (vv. 24-25)

The camel would've been Palestine's largest land animal. The eye of a needle represents really the smallest possible opening. It's not hard to gather what Jesus is saying here. He's saying that it is not only difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, it is impossible.

But why? What is it about wealth that makes entering the kingdom of God so difficult? Well, to come straightaway at the answer, I think such a thing reassures our false sense of self-sufficiency. It numbs us to the reality of our utter dependency. It flatters us as if we were adults—capable, prominent, able to stand on our own—when truly what we need most is to at last admit that we are as little children before God. The answer to this question, I suppose, is itself hinted at in the illustration Jesus uses with the camel and needle. After all, technically speaking, what is the issue there? Is it not this: that the camel is simply too big to fit through? Ah, there is the reason I tell you, all the same, for why the wealthy man finds it too hard to enter the kingdom of God. He himself, as with the camel, is simply too big in his own eyes and estimation. He won't dare stoop to such a place of humility. He is not a desperate man. He is not a beggar of sorts. He wouldn't bring shame on himself by reaching out to another for help. And so the kingdom, for him, remains an impossibility.

(4) Realizing the Solution (vv. 26-34)

Observation #1: It Reverses Common Assumptions—Sometimes God's favor looks like His frown, and sometimes God's frown looks like His favor.

Observation #2: It Requires a Miracle of Sovereign Grace—It's as if God, in sovereign grace, slips dynamite into the hearts of fallen men, thereby breaking the attachments we have to money and stuff. He blows up, as it were, the internal composition of our hearts and begins to rebuild them aright.

Observation #3: It Loosens Our Grip on Earthly Things—He is not here calling us to forsake our familial ties and responsibilities. He is rather talking about the deepest attachments of the heart, our fundamental loyalties. Jesus has to be first place.

Observation #4: It Brings Greater Blessing Then *and* Now—Make no mistake. The Christian life is not loss and then gain, brothers and sisters. It is gain upon gain—however much we lose in this life for His sake. May we never forget it!

Observation #5: It Is All Owing to the Cross of Our Lord—If Jesus is more precious to you than money, God did that, and you owe it to the work of Christ on the cross there at Calvary for you.

Reflection Questions



- Read v. 25 again. How have you understood this verse in the past? How do you make sense of it now?
- Why does money and material wealth hold such sway with us? Why are we so prone to attach our hearts to it? What does it promise us? How does Christ offer something better?
- In v. 30 Jesus says that we will receive many times more from Him, not just in heaven, but even "in this time." Has the Christian life for you been one of "gain upon gain"? What experiences have you had that seem to contradict this? What experiences have you had that seem to confirm it? How do you make sense of this?