

THE REAL JESUS

THE ONE ABOUT HOW
TO ENTER THE KINGDOM


Good Morning Church! Today we are back in our Sermon Series: ***The Real Jesus***

This morning we are going to be in **Mark chapter 10** starting in verse **13** where Jesus is going to teach us about the reality/nature of the ***Kingdom of God***.

The number-one thing Jesus talked about (in His earthly ministry) was the ***Kingdom of God***. It's everywhere in the Gospels and impossible to miss.

And so what we can glean from Jesus' focus on this is that our understanding of the ***Kingdom of God*** is vitally important. Church, if we have decided to follow Jesus then it means that what was important to Jesus needs to be important to us...and the Kingdom is of utmost importance.

Now...we human beings are captured by the concept of Kingdoms...Kings & Queens aren't we?



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As evidence of this, the BBC estimated that 5.1 billion people World-Wide watched at least 3 minutes of Queen Elizabeth's funeral.

If that figure is correct (*and there are many who think the BBC's # is nonsense*) but that's 65% of the world population tuned in to watch the funeral of the English Monarch.

Embedded into our culture we have Disney Princesses and the Magic Kingdom. We read fantasy novels that will take you to the Kingdom of Narnia or Gondor and we make epic movies to depict these expansive Kingdoms. And not just here, cultures across the globe throughout time have done much the same, aiming to fill their longing for a "just King" to rule and reign.

And you see this emphasis on a Kingdom isn't just about the need for a good story. In reality this longing for a Kingdom rests in the very fabric of our soul.

The kingdom of God is the rule of an eternal, sovereign God over all the universe.



God has written this longing for the Kingdom on our hearts. And the Bible strongly communicates the blessings/benefit of the Kingdom, therefore we need to make sure we know what this Kingdom is....what's at stake, what this means for us.

And a good place to start is to have a solid working definition.

Definition: The kingdom of God is the rule of an eternal, sovereign God over all the Universe

Why do we long for this? Let's look at its features.

God's rule = Justice

Eternal = Never ending

Sovereign = God is in control

Universe = Everywhere

Alternate definition: God's never ending justice, in control everywhere.



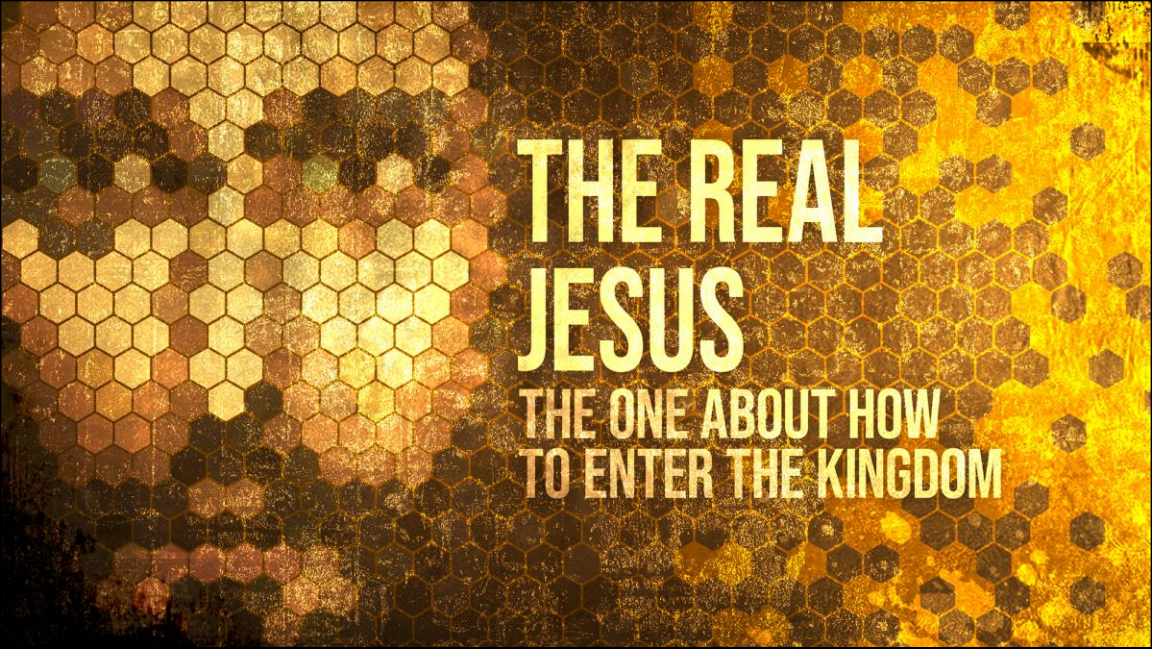
And so, you see friends we long for this because we know that we are living in a world that isn't sustainable.

Our hearts know that this is not the way its supposed to be. That there has to be more than this.

We live in a world with a lack of Justice.

We live in a world where we long for eternal relationships, but instead we experience the pain of loss/death.

We live in a world where, money, sex and greed are held sovereign in the hearts of many, not a Holy God.



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And then 2000 years ago Jesus of Nazareth (The Son of God) came to Judea with a message about the Kingdom of God. He's preaching the urgent message, ***“repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.”***

Jesus is challenging His listeners to get ready. Because something good is coming and you don't want to miss it.

And for us this morning we do not want to miss out on what Jesus has for us today.

So before we dive into the word this morning I am going to say a word of prayer that God will come and minister to our hearts. That we will be receptive to hear His word for us today.

Pray:

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”** ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

And so this morning we are going to learn 3 things about the nature of the Kingdom of God from Jesus' interactions here in Mark chapter 10.

Read: 

Jesus says that the Kingdom of God belongs to “*such as these,*” children. But why does He say this?

To understand what it means to receive the kingdom of God as a child, we must first understand how people viewed children in Jesus' time.



In the world Jesus lived in children had no power, no status, and no rights, and they were regarded as insignificant and disposable. Unwanted infants and children often would be left on their own in the wilderness to die.

Adults generally needed and wanted children to perpetuate family lines and to support them in old age, but children legally were considered property.

Given this context you can easily see why Jesus was drawn to the children of His day. They were at the bottom, often a tool for someone else's purposes.

And so in part, I think what Jesus is getting at here is the **humility** He witnessed in these children's eyes, the longing that leapt from their desperate lives.



You see desperation drives us toward **Humility**. And humility is a key ingredient in us being able to receive the Kingdom of God.

Without humility we will make ourselves the Monarch/King/Queen/

Without humility we will make ourselves the judge, and make justice as we see fit.

Without humility we will deem ourselves the Sovereign, the one in control.

And to underline how **humility** is a key ingredient in our ability to receive the kingdom...let's get even deeper in the mindset of Jesus. In Philippians chapter 2 Paul shares with us the "mindset" Jesus had that allowed Him to overcome this world.

Philippians 2:5-8

5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, **he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Read: 

Jesus had every reason to be proud, but he emptied Himself of that pride to become a servant.

Friends, if we see ourselves as Jesus did. **Humbled** before a Holy God... we will be better suited to truly see the Kingdom.

Kingdom Truth #1

Only the humble can see the Kingdom of God.



And that brings us to our first truth for this morning.

Only the humble can see the Kingdom of God.

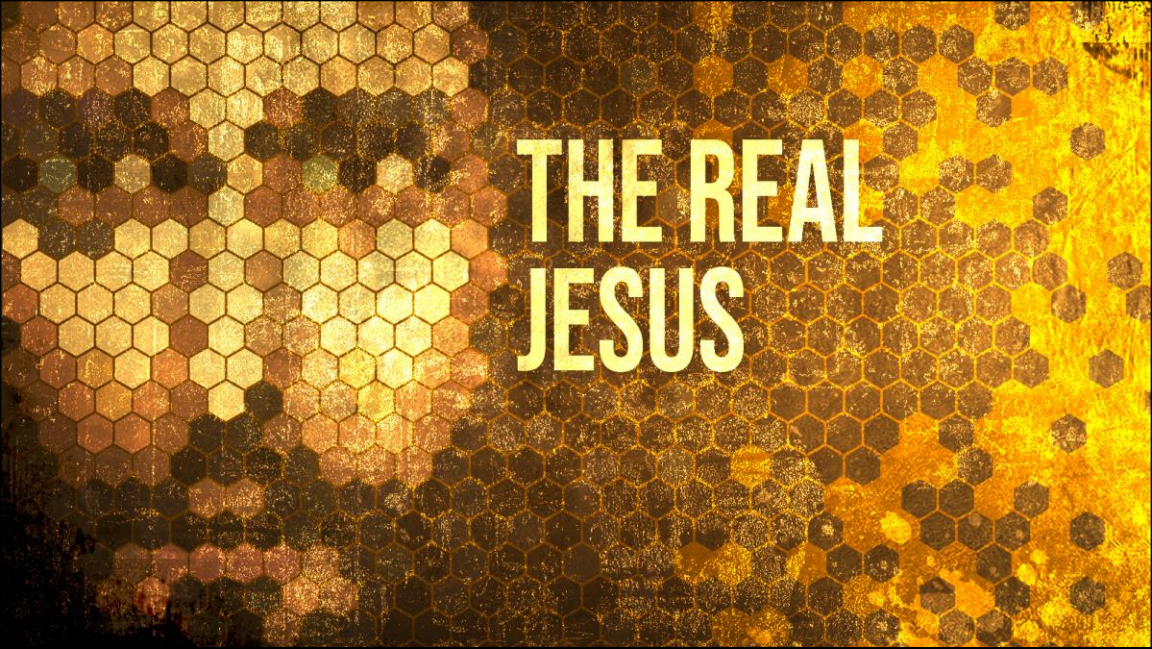
And by “see” I mean have a clear view of the Kingdom. The children that the disciples were eager to turn away in our passage were probably some of the only ones who consistently saw Jesus. Why?

Because younger people haven’t had the time to develop the callouses of pride that blind us from seeing the Kingdom.

You see often when Jesus invites us to follow Him our mind is flooded with reasons why we cannot follow. And in those moments it is as if we are blinded from what truly matters.

However, humble children are way more receptive.

As an example of this...

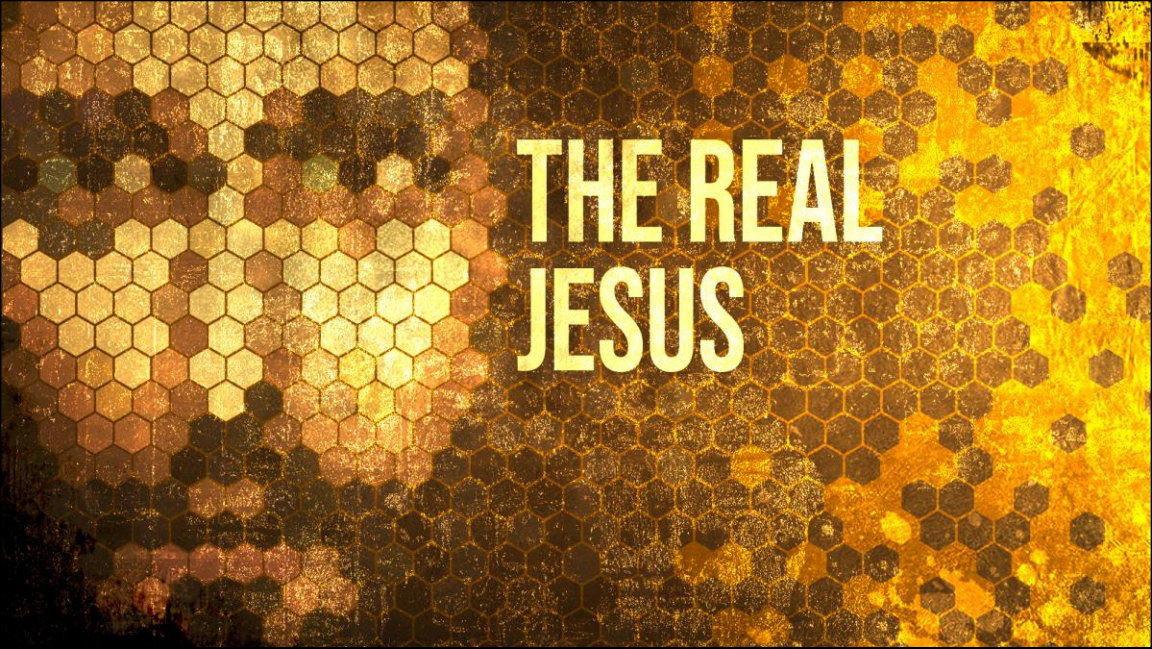


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Illus:

Young children in **every culture** have a concept of God. Psychologist Paul Bloom at Yale University reports that “when children are directly asked about the origin of animals and people, they tend to prefer explanations that involve an intentional creator, even if the adults who raised them do not.” In other words, children tend to hold a concept of God even if their parents are atheists.

Another Psychologist named Justin Barrett at Oxford University reports similar findings. He notes that Scientific evidence has shown that “built into the natural development of children’s minds [is] a predisposition to see the natural world as designed and purposeful and that some kind of intelligent being is behind that purpose.” Even if a group of children were put “on an island and they raised themselves,” Barrett adds, “I think they would believe in God.” “It appears that we have to be educated out of the knowledge of God by secular schools and media.”



THE REAL JESUS

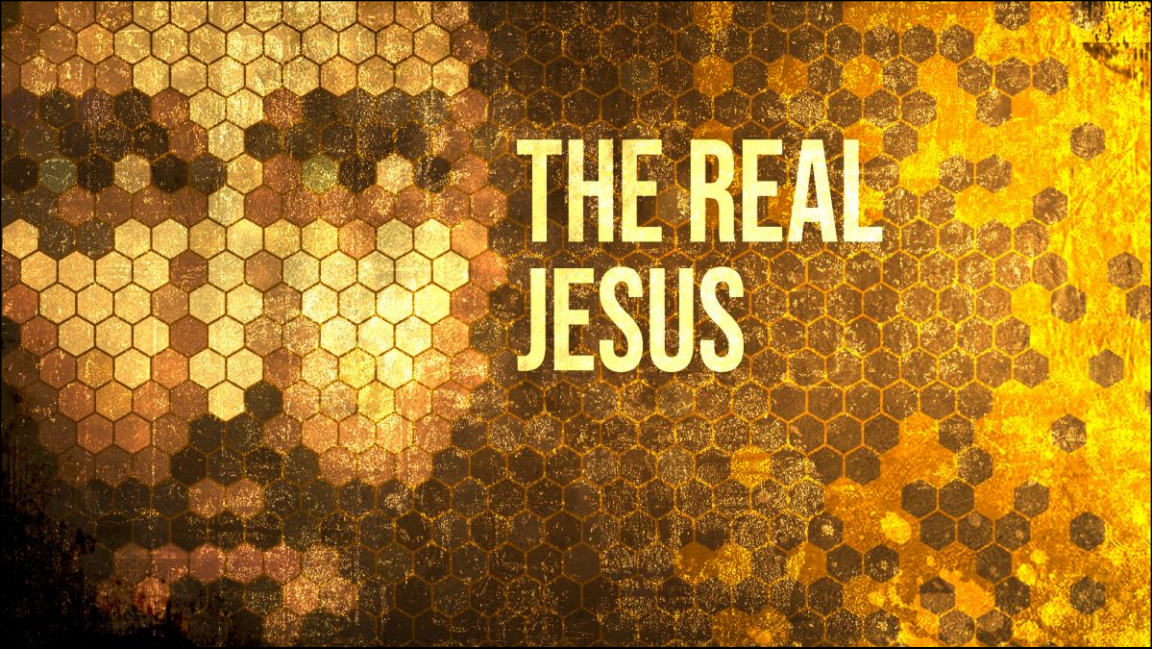
And you see friends what this tells us is that children are way more matter of fact and honest about reality.

Their minds haven't yet learned how to trick themselves out of believing the obvious thing as adeptly as adult brains have.

Illus:

I remember when our kids started to get an allowance and began to save birthday money. I remember us teaching them about tithing and saving. Each year around Christmas time we have the kids give to certain charitable organizations.

And I remember years ago our kids seeing a need through World Vision or Compassion International and easily being like "I WANT TO GIVE IT ALL" easily. They weren't thinking about buying a toy or saving it. And I was the one who was like, ummm, you sure you don't want to save some of that.



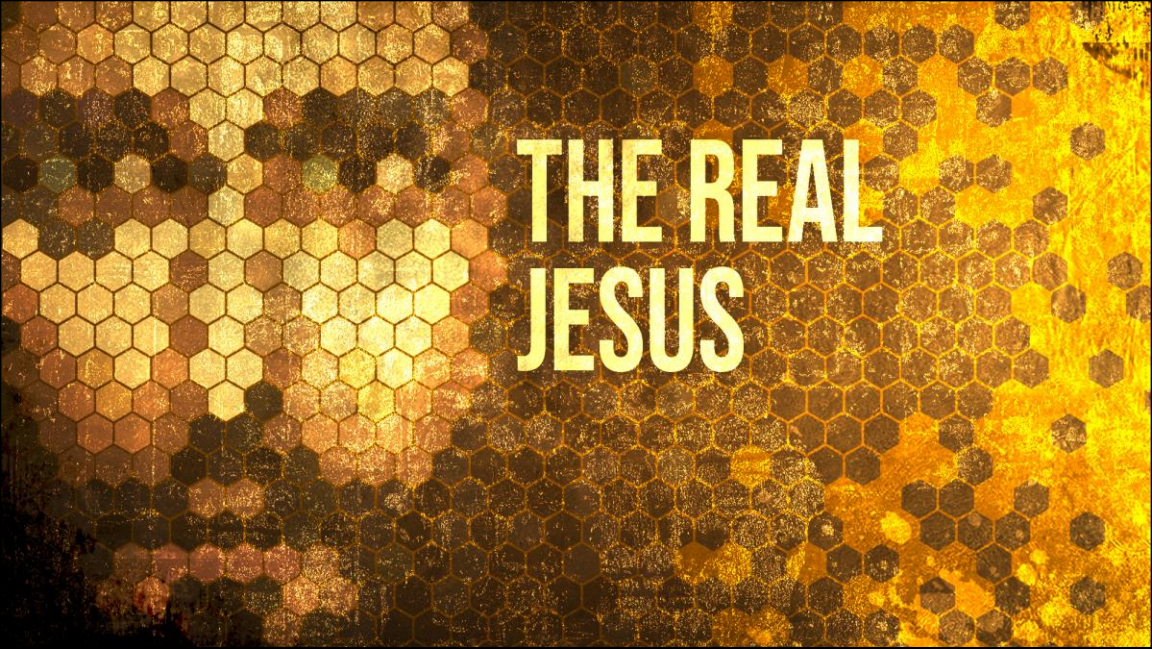
THE REAL JESUS

And the reason why I illustrate this is to point out that the black and white nature of how children can view things... the right and wrong impulses that children can sometimes more easily find is often only spoken of as a negative/weakness.

But I suspect that Jesus here is highlighting children's ability to see Him and believe more easily as an *absolute strength*.

Church there are promises and priorities in all of our lives that we struggle to believe and hold onto. This world has jaded many of us, it has taken THE REAL JESUS and made Him small in some of our eyes.

I think a part of the reason why Jesus loved children so much was because **they believed the unbelievable easier**. Adults are much harder to convince, we have built up walls and layers that need to be broken through in order for us to see Him, THE REAL JESUS, to see the Kingdom.



THE REAL JESUS

And as we move on in our text we are going to see Christ's encounter with someone on the exact opposite spectrum.

Jesus just got done addressing powerless humble children who own nothing, and now He will engage with a powerful man with a lot to lose.

Mark 10:17-23

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

Read:

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

Continue Reading:

So, what we see here is that this “**rich young man**” comes to Jesus because he believes that Jesus has the authority to answer the biggest questions there are.

And there is no bigger question than, “***What must I do to inherit eternal life?***” ***How do I ENTER THE KINGDOM you’ve been talking about?***

The text tells us he comes to Jesus RUNNING (signifying the urgency he’s feeling), he KNEELS DOWN BEFORE HIM (signifying the reverence he feels towards Jesus) and ADDRESSES him as “Good Teacher” (which signifies he believes Christ’s words are true)....and asks him one of the most important questions a person can ask.

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

Jesus uses this opportunity to expose some of this RICH YOUNG MAN’S FALSE ASSUMPTIONS about Him.

The false assumption that Jesus was just an “EXTRA GOOD TEACHER,” Jesus challenges the man’s thinking by essentially saying, **If you see true goodness in me it is God**. Jesus makes it clear that He is not just a good human teacher.

Jesus then uses the law to produce the knowledge/understanding of sin. The Rich Young Man was still under the assumption that he could inherit the kingdom/eternal life based on the principle of “doing.”

And so Jesus recites 5 five commandments which primarily deal with our relations to our fellow man.

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”²² At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

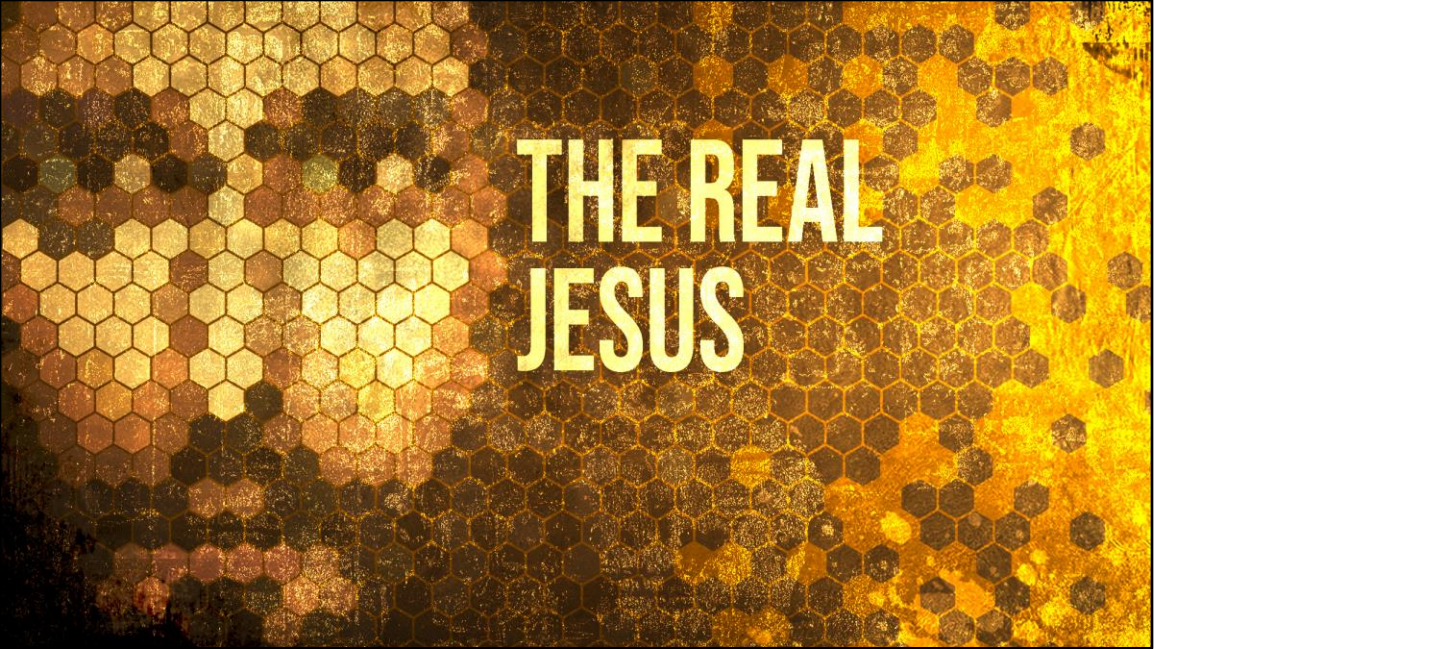
Again these 5 commands are.....

“Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.”

These 5 commands say in effect, **“You should love your neighbor as yourself.”**

And so in verse 20 the **RICH YOUNG MAN** tells Jesus that he has kept these 5 laws ever since the time of his youth.

And we see here in the text that upon hearing this Jesus looked at him, and loved him.



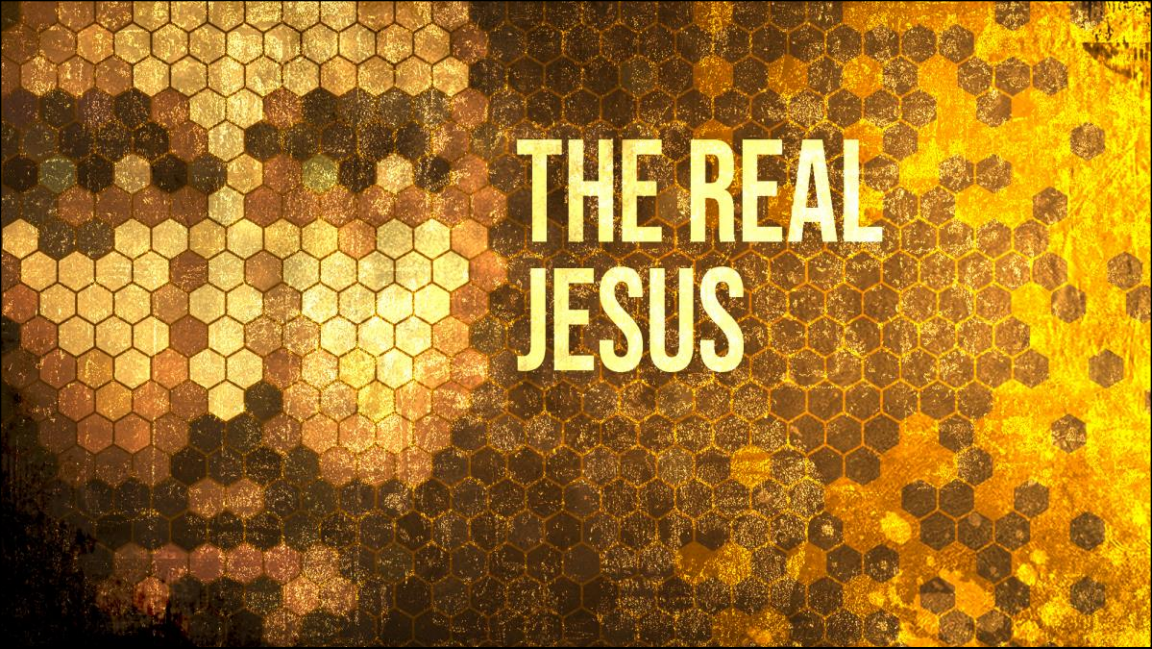
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I suspect that the look of love Jesus gave this rich young man (at this time) was the same look that a parent gives their child when they create a work of art..... and they have tried their very best.....but you don't know what it is that they have drawn.

Illus.

My daughter Ella loved to draw when she was younger, on Saturday mornings we would often find her to be the first one out of bed, at the kitchen table, drawing something. And she was quite good, but before she was good she would draw things and have you **guess** what it was.

And I'd look at the picture and say, "Is that a Seal?" And she'd say, "No! That's you daddy!" Or she'd draw a castle and I'd think it was a cookie.

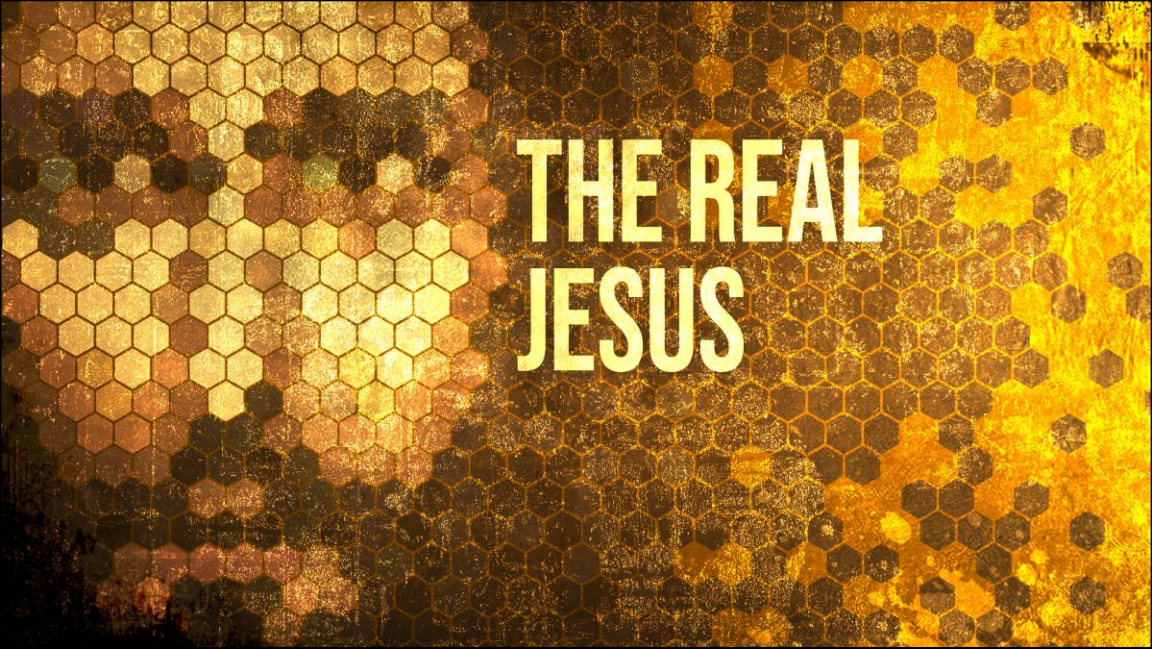


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But I saw how hard she tried, and it drew me in. I would look at her effort and love her for it, even though I clearly do not look like a seal.

And similarly I believe that to some extent that is what's going on in this passage.

Jesus has seen this man run after him, kneel before him, refer to him as “Good Teacher,” ask one of the best questions a person could ask.....and JESUS IS DRAWN IN BY THIS MAN, HE IS COMPELLED BY LOVE FOR THIS MAN BECAUSE HE IS TRYING HIS BEST.....BUT unfortunately this man believes that his **WORKS** WILL JUSTIFY HIM.



THE REAL JESUS

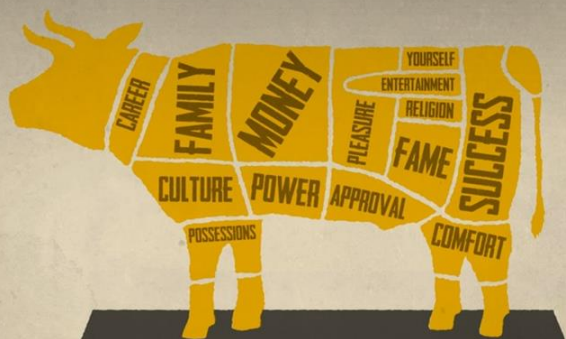
This Young Ruler is caught in the false trap of identifying WHAT **HE** CAN DO.....as CREDENTIALS FOR ACCEPTANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

And here our text exposes this as False Thinking.....

I believe that when the text says that Jesus looked at him and loved him (*what is being conveyed here is*) that Jesus saw that for all his earnest seeking and works done in the flesh....that this RICH YOUN MAN HAD MISSED THE POINT.

And so to highlight this mis-calculation Jesus says to him that he still lacks one thing....he tells him to sell everything he has....and to give it to the poor and then to follow HIM.

And in this we see that the cost of following Jesus is the laying down of our IDOLS.



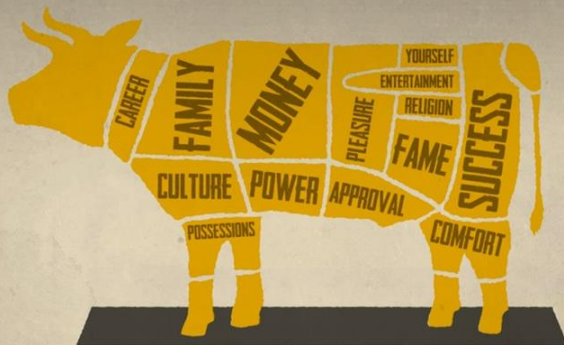
idols

Jesus knew that this RICH YOUNG RULER'S IDOLS were his POSSESSIONS.....and so in asking him to sell everything and to come follow HIM...Jesus was testing whether the Young Ruler really wanted the Kingdom He was offering.

But instead of selling and following... (we read)...he instead walks away from this exchange disheartened because although he thought he wanted to follow Jesus..... HE REALLY DIDN'T.

He valued the created things of this world more than the creator.

Often when we approach this text/story.....we think that Jesus is singling out money)...and while money/possessions are in view here...what Jesus is really addressing here (*what impedes our spiritual growth more than anything else*) are our IDOLS OF THE HEART.



idols


Our IDOLS can take many forms...Success, Comfort, Fame, Approval, Power...even inherently positive things like our Family can become a IDOL of the Heart...an IDOL of the Heart is anything you are desiring, loving, or serving more than God.

We look at the Rich Young Ruler...and we think he's a fool for failing to recieve the Kingdom of God...but NOT SO FAST.

This Young Ruler typifies many fledgling Christian lives in which we are far more concerned with feeding our IDOLS, than we are pursuing His Kingdom priorities in our lives and becoming more like Jesus.

Kingdom Truth #2

**We need to lay down
our idols to truly
follow Jesus.**



And that brings us to our second Kingdom Truth for this morning.

We need to lay down our idols to truly follow Jesus.


This RICH YOUNG RULER came to Jesus looking for the right list of rules to follow...he wanted to follow Jesus.

And Jesus cut right through to the heart.....he identified the one thing he was not willing to give up...the thing that truly challenged his unrivaled allegiance to God...and then asked him to surrender that very thing and to **follow him**... REMEMBER... this is what Jesus said in direct response to the question. ***“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”***

And Jesus’ answer is I want your EVERYTHING!

Kingdom Truth #2

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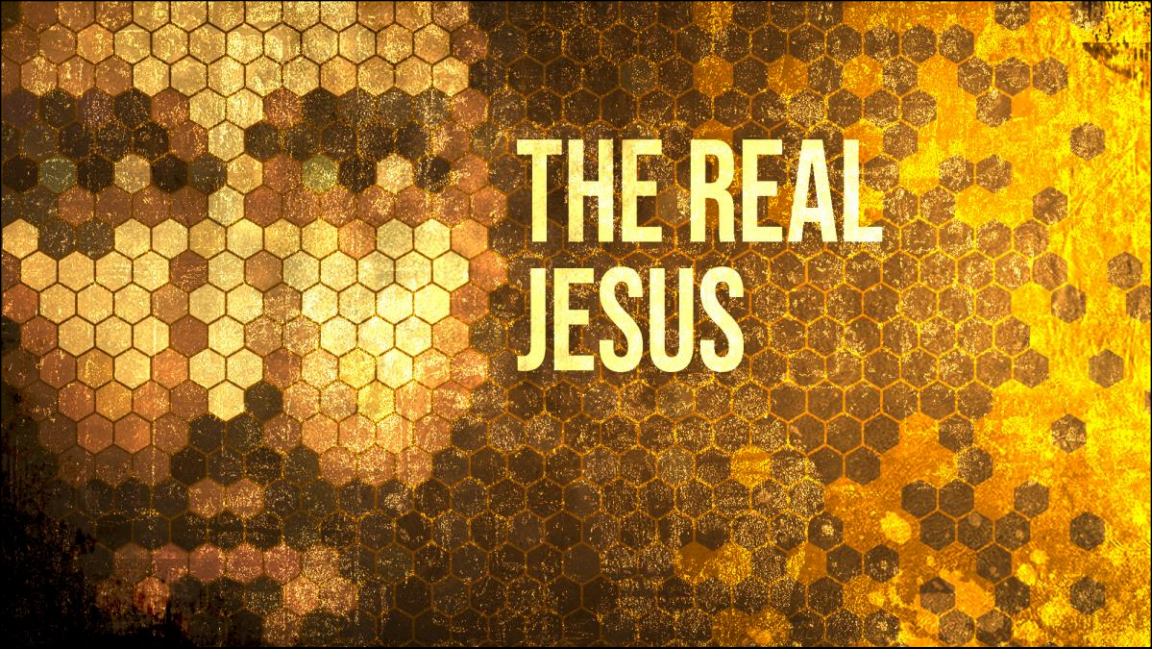


Jesus wasn't and isn't looking for us to follow the list.....he clearly wants our hearts.....because once our hearts surrender to him.... we will long to follow him and do his will... NOT OUT OF DUTY BUT OUT OF LOVE.

This RICH YOUNG MAN'S GOD WAS HIS WEALTH. He was devoted to it rather than God, and in doing so he was breaking the ULTIMATE commandment.

That “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

Friends what might God be asking you to lay down so that you might follow Him today? What areas in your life are weighing you down? What idols of the heart have you trapped with the wrong priorities?



THE REAL JESUS

Back in our text. Jesus has just told them in verse 25 that *it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God*. Jesus isn't picking on rich people but rather exposing that the pleasures of this world can easily distract us.

The disciples response to this is *"well then who can be saved,"* You have to understand that it was a common myth during this time period that rich people must have done something good in the eyes of God to be rich. And so their thinking is that if it's hard for a Rich man to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven, what hope do the rest of us have?

Starting in verse 27... Jesus beings to express that hope. We are going to see Jesus highlight the rewards of LIVING FOR THE KINGDOM/LIVING FOR THE TRUE TREASURE.

Mark 10:27-31

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel.

Read:

³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Continue Reading:

And so first of all, Jesus tells us here that we cannot LIVE WELL ON OUR OWN. It is impossible to live surrendered on your own... we need God for this endeavor. WITH MAN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT NOT WITH GOD.

In verse 28 Peter chimes in..... *(because he's starting to get what Jesus is saying)* and he says, “We have left everything and followed you.”

Peter is picking up on the fact that he and the other 11 are Christ's true disciples because when called they dropped their nets and followed. They were by no means perfect, but they followed.

While the RICH YOUNG MAN WAS GIVEN THE SAME OPPORTUNITY. But instead he counted the cost of discipleship and felt the price was too high for him to pay.

30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

In verse 29 Jesus goes on to say to His disciples that whatever you have ***left or lost*** to follow Him, whether it be “***houses, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children or lands.***” That you will be repaid one hundred fold in this time along with persecutions, but in the age to come you will receive eternal life.

He is simply stating that whatever you give up to follow HIM... will be given right back to you... and then some.

If you surrender and follow Jesus you will receive
HOUSES: ***IN THE FORM OF CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY***
You will receive brothers and sisters and mothers and children: ***IN THE FORM OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS WHOSE FELLOWSHIP ENRICHES ALL OF LIFE.***

You will receive lands in the sense that as we follow the GREAT COMMISSION TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS... that we will be ***reuniting all lands with the God of creation.***

30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

In verse 31 Jesus says, ***“But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”***

He says this because he knows that his disciples looked up to the RICH YOUNG MAN, and now he wants them to reorient their order of thinking.

It is common for us to think of bigger as always being better.

It is common for us to think that more is always of more substance.

But Jesus doesn't think this way and he doesn't want his followers thinking this way either.

By all accounts the RICH YOUNG MAN IN THIS STORY had it all. WEALTH, YOUTH, HE WAS OF THE RULING CLASS, with SOME UNDERSTANDING OF HIS SPIRITUAL NEED.

³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

And while the disciples saw him and thought **FIRST**... Jesus saw him and thought **LAST**.

His lack of surrender making him one of the last in line in the eyes of the king. This RICH YOUNG RULER believed that he would have to give up too much to follow Jesus.

And on that day....as he slipped from this life to the next... only then did he realize that he had traded first place here on Earth for last place in eternity.

Kingdom Truth #3

**It would be foolish to trade
first place on Earth for last
place in eternity.**

And that brings us to our final Kingdom Truth for this morning.

It would be foolish to trade first place on Earth for last place in eternity.

My prayer for your life and for mine is that we will not settle for earthly treasure...but that we will forgo the temporary for the eternal.

That as we see opportunities to follow Jesus...that we will take them... that as we identify idols we will lay them down...because we LOVE HIM.

And we want our lives to echo His greatness to the people God has placed on our path.

Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting. All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of the cross. - Thomas à Kempis

I'd like to close with this...

Thomas à Kempis shared this devotional thought. May you be encouraged and challenged by his words as we prepare to take communion.

He writes: “Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting. All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of the cross.” - Thomas à Kempis