

Cheltenham
Ps Rob Buckingham
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THE JOURNEY

Message Notes

Text: Mark 10:17-31
(See also Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 18:18-30)

This story teaches about "The Journey" of faith. Jesus takes this man, His disciples and us on a journey of faith – not just an event.

17 *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, honour your father and mother.'*"

There are vertical and horizontal commandments:

1. You shall have no other gods before me
2. You shall not make for yourself an image
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy

5. Honour your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour

Matthew adds "*and love your neighbour as yourself*" which is the summary of the horizontal commandments. These commandments have to do with human relationships and are the commands of God that can be tested rather than the sins of the heart like "*You shall not covet...anything that belongs to neighbour*"

Mark adds, "*Do not defraud*" which is not found in the 10 commandments. It refers to the intentional holding back of wages for labour (not paying workers in full or maybe underpaying workers in ways that kept the workers poor). The rich young man was a wealthy landowner, likely to employ many people and so is possibly guilty of this sin...

20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."
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."

Q. At this stage on your journey with Jesus what demand would He put on you to move you forward in following Him?

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" **24** The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard 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 someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." **26** The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"
27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Babylonian Jews spoke of an elephant going through a needle's eye. Camels were the largest animals in Palestine. The eye of the needle was not a gate in the Jerusalem city wall as is popularly taught, as this wasn't built until the Middle Ages. Jesus was talking about the impossibility of trying to fit a very large animal through the eye of a literal needle!

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 **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."

When you read about rounded numbers in the Bible they are usually not to be taken literally...

Psalm 50:10, "for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills"

A hundredfold return means a significant amount that those who had left family, fields or homes would receive back in this life...

"Their reward would be found in believers sharing possessions as a family in this world and receiving the life of the kingdom in the world to come" ~ Craig Keener, The Bible Background Commentary (Cf. Mark 6:10; Mt 10:42; Acts 2:44-45)

There is a strong argument from culture and history that Barnabas was the Rich Young man. Barnabas was Mark's uncle, *"Jesus looked at him and loved him."*

Acts 4:36-37, *"Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet."* Barnabas went on to be one of the key leaders on the first century church!

Discussion Questions

1. Share with one another about your faith in Jesus. How did it begin – was it an event or more of a process? How has your journey continued?
2. Discuss how 5 to 10 of the Ten Commandments are summarised in the statement Matthew adds in his gospel, "*and love your neighbour as yourself.*" (Refer to Romans 13:9-10 and Galatians 5:14 in your discussion)
3. At this stage on your journey with Jesus what demand would He put on you to move you forward in following Him?
4. Discuss Jesus statement, "*With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.*"
5. Read Ps Rob's blog, "Should the Bible be taken literally?" Discuss how this helps you better understand and relate to the various writings in Scripture.
6. As you have sacrificed things because of your journey with Jesus, share ways you have received "*a hundred times as much in this present age.*"