

Matthew 19:13–15(ESV)

Let the Children Come to Me

¹³ Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “**Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.**” ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away.

1) There’s really only one question to ask here to get us started?

What does Jesus mean when he says, “for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven?”

a) Bruce Barton comments on this:

“Jesus wanted little children to come because he loves them and because they have the kind of attitude needed to approach God. He didn’t mean that heaven is only for children but that people need childlike attitudes of trust in God. The receptiveness of little children was a great contrast to the stubbornness of the **religious leaders who let their education and sophistication stand in the way of the simple faith needed to believe in Jesus.**”⁴³

b) It is like the disciples had forgotten what Jesus told them back in verse 4-6 of the last chapter.

Matthew 18:4–6(ESV)

⁴ **Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** ⁵ **“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.**

c) We must exhibit that same childlike attitude as we move through our lives.

i) Being able to accept what God tells us with trust, obedience, and love.

1) Next, one of my favorite passages – the rich young man ...

Matthew 19:16–22(ESV)

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶ And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And he said to him, “**Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.**” ¹⁸ He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “**You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**” ²⁰ The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him,

⁴³ Bruce B. Barton, [Matthew](#), Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 375–376.

“If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Given the question “What good deed must I do,” what do you think the young man expected for an answer?

- a) First, he asks “what good deed (singular) must I do.”
 - i) This indicates that he may be thinking there is just one thing a person must do to gain eternal life.
 - ii) When Jesus responds with keep the commandments he still wants to narrow it down to something smaller. “which ones.”
- 2) I said it was one of my favorites – the reason is it always makes me take stock of what is and is not important.
- 3) I almost started off this section with a question that would really be meddling but decided against it.
- 4) Jesus finally gives him an answer that he could deal with – one concrete thing he can do.
 - a) Jesus said: **“sell what you possess and give to the poor.”**
 - b) So, the question was going to be:

What would we do if Jesus said that to us?

- c) I know there is a big difference between us and this rich young man so I won’t ask that question.

However, do you agree ... is he really “way” different than us?

- 5) The truth is we would all like to think we are totally different from that guy but I also think that there are probably some things that we would struggle to give up.
 - a) We most likely would finally give up whatever it is and we would not walk away sad but it might not be very easy!
- 6) I found it interesting that the man asks “Which ones” – this is almost like he is looking for a list but he likely already knew the commandments – all of them.
 - a) Jesus gives him a list and he obviously sees it as lacking in some way because he asks next, “What else do I lack” – indicates that he knew within himself he came up short even though he has kept all the commandments Jesus listed.
 - i) Could be that he did not think these few commands were enough.
 - b) In either case, I am sure he was expecting another more detailed list of commandments but, instead, Jesus lays the hard fact on him – “Sell, give to the poor, and come follow me.”

What connection can you see between what Jesus tells him and what the commands Jesus listed were?

- 7) One other point to consider here is that even though Matthew tells us that he had “great possessions” there was still another issue to overcome – the follow me statement.
 - a) Even if we gave up all our possessions, would we still have a problem “following” depending on where Jesus was going?

- 8) Sometimes I think “sure, no problem” when the fact is if we were really put to the test, things might be some different – we might not be so “caviler” or sure of our answer.
- 9) Again, just food for thought...

1) Jesus now finishes out the teaching provided by the rich young man to his disciples ...

Matthew 19:23–30(ESV)

²³ And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, 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.”

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, “See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

- 2) Jesus begins with a statement about the difficulty of a man with riches entering heaven which probably shocks the disciples even more than they were.
 - a) This is a perspective thing.
 - b) In much of first-century Jewish thought, wealth was often viewed as a sign of God’s blessing or favor, though this belief was neither universal nor unchallenged.
 - c) So, the idea that it would be difficult for one who was rich to enter heaven was very hard for them to accept.
- 3) The disciples then asked the question “Who then can be saved?”
 - a) This was likely a question born out of almost exasperation at what Jesus had said.
 - b) In essence they were asking;
“If the rich – those who from the disciples’ point of view seemed to be first in line for salvation – cannot be saved, then who can be saved?”
- 4) Jesus’ answer must have been equally puzzling and obviously did not really answer the question in their minds.
 - a) In their minds, they go to where they are – they had absolutely given up everything to follow Jesus so, were they ok?
 - b) Jesus then explains clearly that they need not worry or be concerned about that.
 - c) Their reward is secure because of what they have done and that reward will be far greater than that of any rich man that God has blessed here in this life.
 - d) When we look at the next passage, we will see Jesus explaining exactly how “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

- e) God is sovereign (he is the master of the vineyard) and can and will give salvation to all who deserve it regardless of their perceived wealth among men.

So, to ask the obvious question, what are some reasons why it is difficult for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven?

- a) Consumed by maintaining the wealth.
- b) The wealth is looked at as what they earned not a gift from God.
- c) Not sharing the wealth with others as their heart tells them – being selfish.
- d) Making the acquisition of more wealth more important than serving God.
- e) ...

Matthew 20:1–16(ESV)

Laborers in the Vineyard

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ ⁵ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. ⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ ⁸ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ ⁹ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

What do you consider will be our rewards when you get to heaven?

- 5) Bottomline – it is God’s prerogative as to what rewards we receive in the end.
- 6) Now, that is really an over-simplification – in truth, this parable further explains what we just studied ending with verse 19:30.
- 7) There are additional aspects to this:
 - a) First - Jesus further clarifies the membership rules of the kingdom of heaven.
 - i) Entrance is by God’s grace alone.
 - ii) This parable speaks especially to those who feel superior because of heritage or favored position.

- (1) This is the problem Paul deals with in many of his letters where we find the Jewish Christians feeling superior to the Gentile Christians because of their chosen status.
- b) Second – it points out that we as God’s laborers have agreed to accept his grace, mercy, and forgiveness and, his judgement.
 - i) Our salvation is by God’s grace and the blood of Christ.
 - ii) In a manner of speaking, that grace and salvation is the wage we agreed upon and we have no right to complain at the time of our rewards about what we receive.
 - (1) I personally am sure that no matter what the rewards are they will be beyond my greatest expectation.
 - iii) God is the master and sole determiner of our rewards – not the hardships we endured, our length of time as Christians, or any other factor we might want to consider.
 - iv) He makes this clear to Moses as Paul quotes in ...

Romans 9:15 (NASB 2020)

¹⁵ For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I have mercy, and I will show compassion to whomever I show compassion.”

- 1) The last passion prediction and an exasperating question ...

Matthew 20:17–19(ESV)

Jesus Foretells His Death a Third Time

¹⁷ And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, ¹⁸ “**See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.**”

- 2) In the Gospel of Matthew, there are three distinct predictions made to the disciples regarding Jesus’ treatment and end of his earthly life.
 - a) The other two are in 16:21 and 17:22-23.
 - b) In 16:21. the first time, Peter (Satan) rebukes him.
 - i) Jesus explains immediately that one must lose their lives for his sake in order to gain eternal life.
 - c) In 17:22-23, Jesus tells them again and this time Scripture says, “they were greatly distressed.”
 - d) Now, here in this final time, Matthew does not indicate an immediate group response.
 - i) However, as we will see it does cause something else which is also very disturbing to Jesus and requires the situation to be addressed.

Matthew 20:20–28(ESV)

A Mother’s Request

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, “**What do you want?**” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your

right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” ²² Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” ²³ He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” ²⁴ And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- 3) To begin, we need to address the “then” or “at this time” phrase at the start of this passage.
 - a) The indication is that this takes place in very close proximity time wise to the statement Jesus just made.
- 4) Second, there is a factor at play in Salome’s request that is not made obvious by the passage.
 - a) There is a strong inference in reading Matthew and Mark’s Gospel accounts that Salome was the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus.
 - b) That being said, this would make James and John cousins, so, there may be a family tie here.
- 5) Finally, the request is made in the hearing of the rest of the disciples.
- 6) All of this combines to produce a bad situation.
 - a) Jesus is upset and exasperated at the disciples.
 - b) The disciples are upset at James and John.
- 7) After Salome makes the request, Jesus immediately turns to James and John with an emphatic statement and a question:

“You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?”

- 8) Their ill-advised answer showed that they did not understand the answer they were giving.
 - a) Their answer was about the immediate and Jesus’ response is about times later down the road.
 - b) The thing they thought they were saying was they would suffer with Jesus.
 - c) Jesus is indicating that they will both face the same fate but alone.
 - d) He concludes by telling them clearly that they are asking for something that has already been determined by God.
 - i) This harks back to what we were just discussing about expected and accepted rewards.
 - (1) God is the determiner of these kinds of rewards – not our relationships, hard work, time in service, hardships, or any other factor.
- 9) The exasperating or frustrating part for Jesus must have been that these guys still do not understand the attitude that they should have – that of a servant.

- a) Not to mention the fact they were just told that they would be judging the tribes sitting on 12 thrones.
- 10) You can almost hear the exasperation as he explains again how they must learn to serve.