

2 weeks ago Rico Tice walked us through Mark 10:13-27 -

Which is where Jesus teaches us that if we want to come to God - we can't come on the basis of our own good works - like the righteous, rich young ruler - rather we need to come like children.

Not pure and innocent - seriously - is that how we'd describe children?

But helpless - with nothing to offer.

Dependant.

And today as we pick up in Mark 10 again we're going to the 2nd half of that passage again - through today's passage - and into the first section of next week's passage.

The reason I'm doing this is because The book of Mark comes to us as a whole - meant to be read and understood together - and today's passage leans heavily on the verses before and after it.

So with that in mind - please keep your bibles open to Mark Chapter 10 and I'll begin by reading from verse 17.

*Mark 10:17 And as he was going out on the road, a man ran up, and kneeling before him, asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 But Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one — God. 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 the man said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." 21 But Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing — go, sell whatever you have and give the money to the poor; then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." 22 Disheartened by the saying, the man went away grieving; for he had many possessions.*

So we have this confronting account of Jesus meeting a good man.

A wealthy - young, righteous man, who's not too full of himself to fall on his knees in the street. A man who's kept the law. A man who wants to please God. A good man.

But when this man asks Jesus what he needs to do to get to heaven - we all get a shock.

Because Jesus wants much less - and much more.

Jesus doesn't want good works or righteousness.

He doesn't demand that people clean up their act and come to Him with their arms full of all the reasons why God should let them in.

In fact - if we want to come to God - we need to come like a child.

With our hands empty. Nothing to offer. Completely dependant.

That's the less - And then there's the more.

Jesus says empty your hands of everything else - and follow me.

Which means **not** following anything else.

Not following our own hopes and dreams - our career - not following money.

Turning away from everything else and following Jesus.

That's the more. In short - Jesus wan't our hearts. None of that other stuff - but much more.

Easier said than done hey?

Much easier said than done -

*Verse 23 And looking around, Jesus said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God."  
24 The disciples were shocked at his words. But Jesus, responding again, said to them, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!  
25 It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."  
26 They were even more astonished, saying to themselves, "Then who is able to be saved?"  
27 Looking at them, Jesus said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*

And so I guess it's no surprise that Peter responds so strongly!

*Mark 10:28 Peter started to speak to him, "Well, we have left everything and have followed you."*

See Peter's response here is clearly not simply Peter calmly giving Jesus a random piece of information.

These things that Jesus has just said have sparked some serious questions in Peter - and to be honest they spark some questions for me.

the 2 we'll look at today are

1. Is there any hope of being saved?
2. All this sacrifice - is it worth it?

First - Is there any hope?

The disciples asked this in v26 *"Then who is able to be saved?"*

And my guess is that Peter didn't listen properly to Jesus' answer before He launched into His objection.

*"Then who is able to be saved?" 27 Looking at them, Jesus said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."*

The answer is - No - and yes.

Is there any hope of being saved? Well No. Not if we try and do it ourselves.

See no one can ever be good enough for God.  
No one can be truly good all the time.

Not only the right actions - but the right motives too. And a heart that truly wants to honour God more than anything else.

So no. For man it's impossible. But not for God.

This is the very core of the Christian faith.

God does **not** require us to be 'good enough' for Him.

In fact He knows we can't.

And because He's just. Because He always gives people exactly what we deserve He **can't** just let it slide.

So instead - He takes the punishment **we deserve** Himself.

That's what we see Jesus doing on the cross.

God giving Jesus exactly what we deserve - so that we can receive exactly what He deserves.

How is it possible to be saved?

Trust Jesus. Follow Him - find your new **identity** in Jesus and you'll receive exactly what He deserves.

We don't have to be 'good enough' or 'earn it' - we just have to drop whatever else it is that we're treasuring - whatever else it is we're following and treasure and follow Jesus instead.

And how do we know if Jesus has our heart? How do we tell if we're following Him? How do we know if He's our treasure not something else?

Well the tool Jesus often uses to diagnose us - an He does in this case is to look at our wallet. Our money.

See if Jesus has our wallet devoted to him - chances are He has our heart too.

Throughout the NT Generosity and a disregard for the things that before were valuable to us - like money - are the consistent pattern of what the life of a follower of Jesus looks like.

Jesus challenges this rich man to give up His cash - and He makes the same call to many others in the Gospels too.

Zacchaeus. When he gave Jesus His heart - when he started following Him - his treasure changed.

Not only did he pay back everyone he'd cheated 4times as much - but he then gave **half** of everything he had left over to the poor!

We can see that Zacchaeus's heart had changed.

And again in the early Church in acts. When people were becoming Christians - when they started following Jesus - some were selling houses and properties for the common good of Christians - to support those who had no way of making a living.

When they started following Jesus the things that used to be their treasures lost their significance because now **Jesus was their treasure.**

And tragically here in Mark 10 - this young ruler - this good man - this rich man - could not put aside his money to treasure Jesus.

We couldn't stop following money to start following Jesus.

But.

The disciples had.

They'd left everything.

Earlier in Mark we see them literally walking away from their businesses.

Leaving fishing nets - boats - and even family abandoned on the shores of Lake Galilee as they followed Jesus.

And now as Peter cries out -

*Well, we have left everything and have followed you."*

Speaking on behalf of all the disciples - he's basically asking

Is the sacrifice worth it?

Is this sort of sacrifice for Jesus worth it?

No I want to pause here for a moment so we can work out where we fit.

And As far as I can tell we're all in one of 3 categories.

1. You may have already left things to follow Jesus. And so now - having made some serious sacrifice for Jesus you might be with Peter - saying - we're given up **everything to follow you** is it worth it?

2. Or you might be considering leaving something to follow Jesus. You might have been wrestling with Jesus call to make Him your treasure - nothing else - and prove it with your money. You might have been wrestling with this for a long while - or a short time - and you too might be asking is it worth it?
3. Or you might be sitting here thinking that tho is ridiculous. The leaving something - or proving that Jesus has your heart with your wallet - is uncalled for or silly.

Wherever you're sitting this morning I believe Jesus answer offers some clarity.

Lets have a look.

*verse 28 Peter started to speak to him, "Well, we have left everything and have followed you." 29 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel 30 who will not receive one hundredfold now in this present time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions — and in the coming age, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."*

So if the question is - Is sacrificing our treasures for Jesus worth it - that answer Jesus gives is....

Yes.

Why? Well - it's quite simple. Economics 101. You'll get a **really** good return.

See the way Jesus speaks about giving up treasures here - isn't the language of loss or of waste.

Its the language of investment.

In verse 29 Jesus is talking about sacrificing treasures 'for My sake or the sake of the Gospel'.

Jesus says here that if we give something up - not just randomly - but **for** His sake or **for** the sake of the Gospel - If we invest something in Jesus or in the proclaiming of His good news - then it's not a loss -

In fact it's the best investment you'll ever make!

But before we go running off to put \$100 in the offertory expecting to pull \$10000 out next week - we'd better have a quick look at the nature of the returns that Jesus is guaranteeing.

*verse 29 I tell you the truth, there is no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the gospel 30 who will not receive one hundredfold now in this present time — houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions — and in the coming age, eternal life.*

Now when I first read this I fully expected that the 100 fold returns would 'mature' ready for heaven.

I was expecting that Jesus would say - you'll receive 100times more **in the next age!**

But that's not what He says - Jesus promises 100fold in this present time.

Explicitly **now.**

So what's the go?

Well we've got a few clues here - and then the rest of the NT fills in the gaps.



First up if we work through the list we see that if we are thinking that Jesus means a physical actually hundredfold return on investment - like for like that presents some problems.

First houses and fields - well that works!

But what about brothers or sisters or mother or father or children?

Its physically impossible to have a hundred fold return on family.

How would that work with mothers?

If we leave on behind for the gospel then she'll be replicated a hundredfold - like for like?

It just doesn't work!

No - what Jesus is guaranteeing here isn't that if you spend 100 on the mission you'll get 10000 strait back in your bank -

It seems that what Jesus is pointing to here is the immense gain we receive when we join Gods family. The Christian community.

The family one is relevant for both those here who have been rejected because of their following of Jesus - and especially for the early jewish Christians - who when they started following Jesus were almost completely excluded from their community.

There have been untold Christians who have been rejected by their family when they made Jesus their treasure.

What a comfort the christian community is.

That as hard as leaving one mother is - there's a hundred mothers ready to take you in. A readymade loving, accepting caring family - larger than you could have ever dreamed.

And for the financial side of things - houses and fields - in other words assets or money -

Well Jesus offers the same assurance - a hundredfold return.

And what Jesus is offering is far more practical than we might first think.

See becoming a Christian can be risky.

Risky because becoming a Christian isn't just changing the way we think - It's signing on with Jesus. Which means signing on with His mission.

And Jesus Mission is huge. The work of spreading the gospel is unbelievably immense - and immeasurably urgent.

And that means that Christians often have to sacrifice their financial security to fund this mission.

Using our 'rainy day' pot to support a missionary.

Sacrificing an investment or investment property to fund a Church plant - or an evangelist - or to help some Christians in crisis.

And we might think that's foolish - like we're leaving ourselves vulnerable.

But Jesus says - can't you see it?

When you sell a house - or a field - some shares - or pull some money out of you mortgage for my sake - and the sake of the Gospel.

You're not leaving yourself vulnerable.

Just like in leaving one small family you join a family larger than we could even imagine.

When we sacrifice material things for the gospel of Jesus we are inheriting the joint investment portfolio of every Christian on the face of the planet!

That's what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 8

Paul is urging the Corinthians to be generous - to generously give financial assistance to Christians who need it.

Here's what He says in verse 13 *For this is not for the ease of others and a burden for you, but a matter of equality; 14 at the present time your abundance should supply what they need, so that then their abundance may supply your need; in this way there will be equality. 15 As it is written, "The one who gathered much did not have a surplus, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."*

The family of God - the Christian community is one big pooled investment policy! All working together for Jesus and His mission.

Sir Sydney Kidman  
The Cattle King

From the found up purchased a chain of cattle stations - from the gulf of Carpentaria - right down to port Augusta.

This effectively drought proofed Him - when there was drought in one part of the country he moved His cattle to a station where there was abundance...

All worked together.

1 big insurance policy.

What Jesus is promising here for Christians is real returns. An immense insurance policy.

Just as a side note - if you are a follower of Jesus then you are not only a recipient of that policy - but a provider.

Where do we sit at the moment? If we're in dire straits God will come through for us through the Christian family - He certainly has for us. But if we're in abundance it's our turn.

And the other amendment here is that Jesus says

+ Persecutions.

Because it's not just set up to be automatic.

We're still in a battle - we've got a massive job to do - and plenty of people and other forces do not want Jesus mission to succeed. So of course there'll be persecutions.

But even with persecutions - Jesus makes a pretty great offer - a genuine hundred fold return on investments for His mission.

But that's not even the main motivation.

The real motivator for giving up our treasures for Jesus is in these next few verses.

*verse 23 Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going on ahead of them. They were filled with awe, but those who followed behind were afraid. And taking the twelve aside again, he began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him: 33 "Listen, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the ruling priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock him, and spit on him, and flog him, and kill him; but after three days he will rise."*

Nicholas Ludwig, Count Zinzendorf, was a German aristocrat, born 1700.

He was all set for a future in government and politics but when he was about 19 During his Grand Tour Basically a euro tour -

Nicolas visited an art museum in Dusseldorf where he saw a Domenico Feti painting titled Ecce Homo, "Behold the Man." It portrayed the crucified Christ with the legend, "This have I done for thee - Now what will thy do for me?"

The young count as profoundly moved, feeling as if Christ himself was speaking those word to his heart. He vowed that day to dedicate his life to service to Christ.

He opened up his estate to a band of homeless Christains - who became the moravian Christian community and sent missionaries all over the world.

Jesus follows these words regarding the sacrificial investment His follows are called to make with another description of what He's headed to Jerusalem to do - for us.

*"This have I done for thee - Now what will thy do for me?"*

This does two thing for me.

First

It makes it crystal clear the choice Im making if I want to follow Jesus. He's headed to the cross. To suffering now and glory later. Sacrificing everything for the mission. I can't follow Jesus and head a different direction. I can't treasure Jesus and keep my old treasures. Either He has my heart or something else does.

And Second

It reveals how selfish and nearsighted I am.

So often I can't see beyond the enormity of the sacrifice Im thinking about making. Money, investments, lifestyle. They seem like such huge sacrifices.

Until I look up - and see the cross.

So - Back to the three possible categories we might find ourselves in.

If you have followed Jesus and given things up for Jesus and His mission.

Family - money - investments.

I trust you feel reassured. It is worth it.

You have a family larger than you could ever dream.

You have an investment portfolio broader and more comprehensive than you could imagine.

And you have Eternal life.

If you are considering leaving something to follow Jesus, and or serve His mission. Family, money, investments.

You're still wrestling with yourself about whether it's worth it or not.

Well I pray that today you feel convicted - convinced.

That what Jesus is offering is so much more valuable than whatever else it is that you're considering sacrificing.

A larger family larger than you could ever dream.

An investment portfolio broader and more comprehensive than you could imagine.

Eternal life.

And if you are sitting here thinking that this is ridiculous. That leaving something - or proving that Jesus has your heart with your wallet - is uncalled for or silly. I hope that you've seen that while you might not want to take up the call - This is what Jesus is calling His followers to do - and He is offering something of infinitely greater value in return.

A larger family larger than you could ever dream.

An investment portfolio broader and more comprehensive than you could imagine.  
Eternal life.