

# Matthew 19:13-30

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Right, Matthew 19. What we've had in chapter 18 is a continual challenge to the heart. If you remember, what we had, we started in chapter 18 with the Lord putting a child before them and said, your hearts need to be like this child. In other words, utterly dependent and humble and with no great illusions as to what it can achieve.

It then went on to talk about the need to have a heart to restore those who are trapped in sin rather than just tell them off. But to restore them was a restorative work that we're supposed to do with each other.

We need to have a heart to forgive again and again and again. It's all about the heart condition. Am I prepared to forgive my brother, regardless of how often it needs to be done? We also saw the heart that Jesus expressed in the parable of the lost sheep where he would not stop looking for them.

He would keep pursuing them and keep looking for them, even while the rest, even if he had to leave 199 on the hillside, he would keep trying to find the lost one and then would rejoice when the lost one was returned.

But once again, to stop being lost involves a change of heart. And so in today's passage, we have a little bit of a repetition of the child theme.

[ 1 : 3 0 ] Now, the two bits that we're going to look at in my Bible, they're split up. And the first part says Jesus blesses little children.

I don't know if yours has a similar subtitle. So that's verse 13 of chapter 19. And then a bit further on, we have a passage about the rich young ruler, or some will say the rich young man.

And often these are taught as two completely separate elements. And I'm deliberately not teaching them the separate elements this morning because I think they are absolutely linked.

That one follows naturally from the other. So let's just read from verse 13 to the end of the chapter. Then some children were brought to him so that he might lay his hands on them and pray.

And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, let the children alone and do not hinder them from coming to me for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. After laying his hands on them, he departed from there.

[ 2 : 3 6 ] And someone came up to him and said, teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life? And he said to him, why are you asking me about what is good?

There is only one who is good. But if you wish to enter into life and keep the commandments. Then he said to him, which ones? And Jesus said, you shall not commit murder.

You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother. And you should love your neighbor as yourself. The young man said to him, all these things I have kept.

What am I still lacking? Jesus said to him, if you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come and follow me.

But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus said to his disciples, truly, I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

[ 3 : 37 ] Again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, then who can be saved?

And looking at them, he just said to them, with people, it is impossible. But with God, all things are possible. And incidentally, we're going to find next week that a similar theme of heart challenge continues on into chapter 20.

So he starts with the parents who bring along these little children. Get rebuked. And they get rebuked, you know, kind of don't bother the teacher.

He's busy. And Jesus virtually rebukes them back straight away and says, no, no, no. Let the little children come to me. He completely upended the disciples' rebuke.

And I suppose there's an implication here because they wanted him to lay hands on them and wanted him to pray for them, that some of these children might have been unwell and needed healing. That's kind of my influence to the passage.

[ 4 : 49 ] It may or may not be true. But in any event, he wanted the little children. And then he reiterates the thought that he spoke in the previous chapter in verse 3.

The kingdom of God belongs to such as these. So if you want to get into the kingdom, you've got to be like one of these. But he says also, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter into it at all.

So the pathway in to the kingdom of God is to become childlike. Hang on a minute. I spent my whole life trying to work out of being childlike and to become a grown-up.

Hmm. If only. But when you think about that exhortation, it's all of us who've got children, what do children do mostly, especially when they're little, before they start becoming all grown-up and wanting to be like dad and all the rest of it?

What do they offer you? How do they, apart from just being there, they're all kids, so they enrich your life by just being there. But what do they do that enriches your life?

[ 6 : 03 ] Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? And you get nappies to deal with and, you know, all sorts of things that you probably could get by without in life.

But the child is utterly dependent on you for love. And what does it do to earn that love? Absolutely nothing. When I have a son or a daughter, I've got one of each, praise God.

When I have a son or a daughter, quite often through their childhood, they did things that upset me. But I didn't de-daughter her or de-son him.

He was still my son. It wasn't a, there was nothing that he had to do to qualify. He just had to be my son. And what Jesus was saying is, if you want to get into the kingdom of God, you've got to be childlike.

In other words, you've just got to be a son or a daughter. There isn't anything you can do to earn your place. There's nothing you can produce that will please God in any way.

[ 7 : 07 ] In fact, in the Bible, one of the things God says at one point through the prophet Isaiah, I believe, is that our gifts to him are as filthy rags, or our works to him are as filthy rags.

They're meaningless to him. What's meaningful to him is that we are his sons and daughters. And anybody who thinks they can work their way, earn their way into heaven is onto a loser from the start.

Now, there's a parallel passage in Mark chapter 10 from verses 13 to 27. And Mark produces some useful nuances that Matthew leaves out.

And one is found here in that Mark says, when Jesus told them to allow the children to come to him, he was indignant.

And Matthew says, Matthew says, he just says, no, no, let the children come to me. But Mark records it as he was indignant, which is why I infer that this was a rebuke to the disciples.

[ 8 : 13 ] It was kind of like, don't you dare keep those kids away from me. It was that level of indignation that was coming from him. So he shows his love for the children once again, and he ministers them.

And whilst he's ministering to these children, he's saying to the crowds, you should come to me in the same way as these kids. Now, the crowd that was surrounding him, there were those who were in desperate need, who were reaching out towards him and trying to get healed.

There were those who were just curious. There were the Pharisees and the Sadducees who were desperately trying to trap him to give them an excuse to kill him. And he brushed the whole lot to one side and said, come like these kids.

And when my children approached me when they were small, it was very much daddy reaching up.

Daddy, pick me up. Carry daddy. That kind of innocent and utterly dependent approach. Whereas all the time, most of this crowd were trying to prove that he wasn't who he claimed to be and all their energies were exercised at trying to put him down rather than reach out to him in his innocence and humility.

[ 9 : 30 ] Children come with no ambitions. They haven't actually got to prove anything. And what he's saying to the gathered crowd is you need to do the same. The other thing that is critical for us to understand is the entire ministry that took place was from Jesus to the children.

Not from the children to Jesus. Our dependency on Christ means that everything that takes place is from him to us. He saves us.

He builds us up. He enables us. He fills us with his spirit. He's the one who uplifts us. And some of you may have heard this term before, but people, scholars speak of God's aseity.

God's aseity means his self-sufficiency. He needs nothing from us. Godhead is entirely self-sufficient. And he loves us out of that self-sufficiency and he draws us into that.

But we can't provide him with anything that he actually needs. It's a one-way traffic. He has much to impart to us.

[ 10 : 45 ] And so this crowd is being exhorted to be as dependent as those children to reach into Jesus for what Jesus had for them. And so we get to verse 17.

Yeah, we get to verse 16, rather. So clearly he's moved on from there. It says at the end of verse 15, he departed from there. And then in verse 16, and someone came to him and said, teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?

What good thing? Tell me what to do, Lord. In the book of Acts, you get people saying, what do I need to do to be saved?

This is really what this young man is asking. And some of your Bibles will say they call him the rich young ruler. Some say the rich young man. The Hebrew word is actually a neutral word, which simply means person.

So it doesn't refer particularly to men or women. It just refers to people. What do I need to do with all that? How can I make sure I get eternal life? What good thing can I do?

[ 11 : 57 ] And Jesus' response carries on the theme of being childlike, really. Because he says, why are you asking me about what is good? There is only one who is good.

But if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments. Now, to every Jew, they had the law. Jesus had quoted and is about to quote some of the commandments.

But he only picks a few out of the 10. And actually, there weren't only 10 commandments in the Jewish law. There were 613 of them. And the only one who was ever born who kept the law perfectly was Jesus.

Because to keep the law perfectly, you've got to be totally sin free. And here he says, why do you ask me about what is good? In Mark's account, he says, why do you call me good?

Because in Mark's account, he says, good teacher, what must I do? So, this kind of mixture of good teacher and what good thing shall I do?

[ 13 : 00 ] And what Jesus answers in response is, well, why are you calling me good teacher? And what do you think is a good thing? When we both know from the scriptures that only God is good. There are no good things and there are no good teachers outside God.

And that kind of must have set his thinking going. Because this, it's clear as we read on that this young man was a very wealthy young man and was depending upon his riches and had invested his heart in his riches.

Why do you call me good? Only God is good. So, we tend to think of good as having shades, don't we? It's like, oh, that's not bad. Or, oh, that's pretty good, really.

Wow, that's amazing. That's really good. And we have these shades of good. But actually, in the Bible, good is a superlative.

It's either good, in which case it is just good. And everything about it is good. It's completely good. Good infests everything about it. So, it's a superlative statement.

[ 14 : 09 ] Or it's not good, in which case, don't bother with it. Now, that's the standard to which we can't really attain, isn't it? We live this life that is naff, okay, good, really good, amazing.

But we live this life with these different experiences to which we respond. But when you come to the biblical expression of goodness, goodness is perfection.

It's a superlative. And so, if good is superlative, then this young man is asking an impossible question.

What good thing do you want me to do so that I'll get eternal life? Jesus takes him to the only standard that we can apply. And the only standard given in Scripture is keep the law perfectly.

He says, what good thing can I do? And there isn't anything that's that good. So, what Jesus is saying is, what you have to do is keep the whole law perfectly.

[ 15 : 18 ] Be utterly sinless. And you can tell from the man's response, he's a little bit deluded because he says, I've done that since I was little. Well, whenever he started to try to fulfill the law, it was already too late.

Because James chapter 2, I think it is, says, if you fail to keep even so much as one part of the law, you fail to keep the whole law.

So, it was already too late. But this young man didn't seem to appreciate this. Now, Jesus is quoting, when he quotes these Scriptures, he's quoting from Exodus 20.

He's quoting from Deuteronomy 5. And he's also quoting from Leviticus 19, verse 18. And he's referring to the Ten Commandments. But the Ten Commandments were only pointers to the whole of the 613 of the whole law.

And so, as we read it, he says, the young man in verse 18 says, which ones, which commandments do I need to keep? I almost picture him going, I've kept them all since I was little.

[ 16 : 25 ] So, which ones? Go on. Test me. I might not have been like that at all, but it's the way I imagined it. You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness.

Honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself. And the young man said, all these I've kept. What am I still lacking? And in Mark's account, he says, all these I've kept since I was young.

So, this is a young man who was obviously a precocious teenager who wanted to get somewhere in life and was determined to keep the law. And what Jesus goes to is the same place he goes with all of us, which asks the question of us, where is your heart?

He says, well, in that case, notice Jesus doesn't have an argument with him. He doesn't say, ah, yeah, but when you were seven, you went into that sweet shop and nicked a Mars bar. He doesn't say any of those things.

He says, well, in that case, give all your money away. And we read that he couldn't give all his money away because he had a lot. Now, you'd think having a lot would give you more to give away, wouldn't you?

[ 17 : 30 ] But the problem is his heart was invested in the money. The money was where his heart was. If we imagine, just imagine that there is a, we're trying to climb a mountain.

And there's this chain with very long links going up this mountain. And there were 613 links on this chain. And we're pulling ourselves up the mountain by this chain with 613 links in it.

And every single link has to be in place to get to the top of the mountain. If one link is broken, you go falling down. In fact, apart from the first link, if any of the links further up are broken, you can't even get your feet off the ground, can you?

You need every single link to be in place. And this is a picture of entry into the kingdom of heaven by our own strength. It is every single link of the chain has to be complied with.

Every single link of the chain, if you think of them as elements of the law, everyone has to be obeyed for all the links to be intact for you to get yourself in heaven.

[ 18 : 43 ] And when you do get yourself in heaven, you are then entitled to say, budge up, Jesus, there are now two of us, perfect humans. And of course, we all know where that's going to lead.

It's going to lead to failure. And this man was looking for a way to earn his place in heaven by his works or through his wealth. What good thing shall I do? Well, I tell you what, you've got all this wealth.

Why don't you give it away? Now, there's a problem with that. There's actually, I've got a lot invested in this wealth. So the one thing Jesus told him he could do to get eternal life, he didn't want to do.

Now, because we're born into sin, this young man had already failed before we even started life, really. He was born into sin. And therefore, when he said to Jesus, I've done all this since I was little.

I remember a young man when I was in a church in Froome who came to my house one day to talk about salvation. And he said, he said, I don't really get this.

[ 19 : 45 ] He said, because I hear all these testimonies of people who've done these dreadful things and God's forgiven them and they've become Christians. He said, I think I've been all right. I've been nice.

I haven't been nasty. I've not been a bully. I don't cuss and swear. I'm just generally nice. And I don't understand what it is I have to do to get saved.

And I remember saying to him, so you're perfect then. Well, no, I'm not perfect. Well, he is perfect.

So you can't get into his house until you are perfect unless he lets you in, unless he saves you. But there's no pathway in for someone who's not perfect.

So instead of arguing the toss, he shows him where he isn't perfect. By saying, give away all your money, he reveals to the man the state of his own heart.

[ 20 : 48 ] And I can't speak for you, but when I got saved, that's exactly what the Lord did to me. He made me see me for who I really, really was. And I hated what I saw. And I could not understand how the Lord could love anybody who was like that.

And yet I knew that he did love me, despite me being like that. So that leads to a question, though. Why did Jesus give us the law if following it could never lead to salvation?

Because effectively, that's what we found. This young ruler, I mean, you could argue he didn't actually fulfill the whole law because Jesus found a loophole straight away in his character.

But why bother with the law if following it doesn't work? Well, that statement, of course, isn't true. Following it would work if you could follow it perfectly.

But turn to Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3, verse 9, we'll start, because if I start at 10, we're in the middle of a sentence. And at the time, he's speaking to the Jews.

[ 21 : 58 ] And he says, Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God, because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight, or through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

So that last verse says, through the law comes the knowledge of sin. Without a law, the law acts as a yardstick for us.

And without the law being there, we wouldn't know when we had sinned. Until you break a law, or let me put it a different way, if the law is not present, you don't know what you need to do.

If I don't see a 30 mile an hour speed limit, I don't know what the speed limit is, so I just drive. But if I see that 30 mile an hour speed limit, I know how fast I'm allowed to go. And I have no excuse for exceeding it.

That's a pretty poor parallel, but it serves, I think. But in striving to keep the law perfectly, we realize the impossibility of doing so. I can't speak for you, but there are times when I look at my own sin and I say, Oh Lord, I just want rid of this.

[ 24 : 02 ] But much as I would love to be perfect, I'm not. And until he makes me perfect, I'm not going to be. Doesn't mean I should stop trying, by the way.

But I must understand that the final change that takes place on me, that turns this corruption into incorruption, is something God does when I get to heaven.

I can't earn my way there. So if we have to earn it or feel we can earn it, we're lost. Turn to Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 8.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And that not of yourselves, it's the gift of God. Not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

But we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in that. So the whole thing has to be grace.

[ 25 : 09 ] And I'm sure that there are many people who preach that you can get saved through works. You could take the whole of the Roman Catholic Church as one example. But there are many examples where they teach either you need to work for your salvation.

You've got to carry on trying to be good, otherwise you lose your salvation. Or you get some that work on the fact that it's a bit of both. Well, I've got saved, but I need to change this and I need to change that, otherwise I might lose my salvation.

There's another line of thinking. But actually the whole thing is a gift from God. Read it again. Right? For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.

Salvation is not a reward. It's not something you've earned and it's not a reward for a job well done. It's a straightforward gift.

Have a gift. Oh, but I must need to do something to earn it. We were doing some gospel stuff in the marketplace in Froome in Somerset years ago.

[ 26 : 18 ] And we were giving away mince pies and tracts. We were just giving them away. And a number of people came up and said, well, I can't just take it. I've got to give you some money. And we said, no, no, it's a free gift.

Just have it and have the tract with it and enjoy it. I need to give you something. So in the end, we put a bowl out for charity and said, if you want to give something, stick it in the charity bowl. But we are a bit like that with God.

When God said, look, here's a gift. Just take it and run with it. Just have it. No strings. There's nothing you can do anyway to please me. There's nothing you can do to make it better.

You need to be utterly dependent on me if you're going to get saved. So there's the gift. Oh, but I need to. No, you don't. In fact, sometimes striving to earn God's favor leads you to go further away from him.

Because striving to earn God's favor leads you in a position where you start asking the question, have I done enough? Hang on, you didn't have to do anything in the first place.

[ 27 : 22 ] Yeah, but have I done enough? Have I ticked enough boxes? And for many of us, this is a legacy of a previous life. Because we were brought up, you know, you've got to change this about your behavior.

You've got to change that about your behavior. And let's face it, we are still in that. Those of us who are entrapped by any kind of sin, and if you're not, I think you're in the wrong place. You should be already up there.

But those of us who are entrapped by any kind of sin, we always seek to get better from it. But does that mean we're saved or not? No. There's only one thing that in John 3, chapter 18, it says.

It can turn there. Read it. Don't listen to me. Listen to the book. In John 3, 16. And of course, you've got the very famous verse. But many people don't go on and read John 3, 18.

In verse 16, you've got, For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. We don't replace it. We don't replace it. We don't replace it with whoever strives hard enough to steer clear of sin.

[ 28 : 36 ] Or we don't replace it with whoever helps old ladies across the road or does a great work raising guide dogs or whatever.

We don't qualify that statement. We simply say, if you believe, and the word believe, Greek word pistis means to put your trust in.

If we put our trust in Jesus, that's all that is required of us. So let's go on and read. Well, we read through to the end of verse 18. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world.

Ah, but what good thing shall I do? I'm not judging that. I didn't send my Son to judge the world. Jesus' job is not to judge whether your good work is good enough.

But that the world might be saved through him. I used to be a canoeing instructor. And I used to set up a rescue set up around a rapid so that when somebody fell in, I'd get them out.

[ 29 : 36 ] And in a sense, and only in a sense, when they came out in that maelstrom, I was their saviour.

I got them out. But I didn't shout into them before I say them and say, so are you going to credit something to my account before I jump in and get you?

It was a rescue mission, and I had to get them before they drowned. And they absolutely depended on them to get them out before they drowned. Well, he sent his Son into the world that the world might be saved through him.

Rescued. It's a rescue mission. And then this verse, which is so profound. He who believes in him, my Son, Jesus, he who believes in him, is not judged.

Don't care what your good work was. Not judged at all. He who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

[ 30 : 42 ] So our default position is judged. Or to use the phraseology from verse 16, perished.

Our default position is perished. If we believe, we're not perished. If we believe, we're not judged. But our default position until that happens is we are already judged.

And this rich young man was saying, effectively, how can I have eternal life? How can I avoid judgment? What good work can I do?

Jesus was saying, well, there isn't one. Because you can't keep the law perfectly. And that's why the law was given to you, to show you that you can't keep it perfectly.

Through the law, as we've just read, comes the knowledge of sin. In other words, striving to keep the law perfectly. We realise how impossible it is. And therefore, we have to then become like children and say, I am lost.

[ 31 : 51 ] I am utterly dependent on my saviour to get me out of this mess. And it's his work and his work alone. If we go back to Ephesians, and back to chapter 2, same chapter, but just going to read a little bit more of it.

We're going to read from verse 5. Ephesians 2, verse 5. Even when we were dead in our transgressions. So, what good works do you do when you're dead?

Even when we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive. Together with Christ, by grace, you have been saved. Let me just define grace a moment. When God looks on me, or you, or anyone, who is worthy of hell, and says, I'm not going to send you to hell.

That's mercy. That's not grace. That's mercy. When God looks on that same person and says, not only am I not going to send you to hell, but I am going to be so on you, the richest blessings of salvation.

You will be able to come to my house for eternity. You'll be able to eat at my table. You will share in the riches that I share with my one and only son, Jesus Christ. You can be in fellowship with me for the rest of your life.

[ 33 : 08 ] That is grace. And salvation is given by grace. It's not something that we can earn. Now, when we, sorry, I was reading Ephesians, wasn't I?

We were going from verse five. So by grace, you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

So that in the ages to come, he might show the surpassing riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. Or by grace, you've been saved through faith. And that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God. It sounds wonderful. But it's all a gift. It's all a gift. If we go to Mark chapter 10, what you will find here.

And this is an important. If you read if you read Matthew's account a bit quickly, you might get the impression that Jesus was cross.



[ 34 : 11 ] You know. Who do you think you are trying to offer gifts to God? It wasn't it. In Mark chapter 10, what we read, particularly in verse 24.

And I want, I'm going to read it and then I'm going to get probably Malcolm to read it from the New King, from the Old King James Version. So this says, the disciples were amazed at his words.

And Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. And what does the King James Version say? And the disciples were astonished at his words.

But Jesus answered again, and said unto them, children, have I reached on them that trust in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God.

And read on a little. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of an eagle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

[ 35 : 16 ] Okay. Now, if we go back to verse 22, my version says, but at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. What does the King James Version give us?

And he was sad and saved, and went away grieving, for he had great possessions. Right. Somewhere in there, I was hoping to find that the King James Version talked about, and Jesus loved him.

21, is it? Yeah. 21. And looking at him. Yeah. And looking at him, Jesus loved him. Yeah. So I got my verses modeled.

The point is, this was not done in anger. It wasn't finger wagging. It wasn't a kind of, who do you think you are? This was born out of Jesus' love for this man.

Now, versions that are translated from the textus receptus have this phrase, Jesus loved him.

[ 36 : 17 ] A lot of versions don't have that. But with that verse in, this makes sense, and without it, it becomes confusing. So it's an important thing. Jesus did this out of love.

He wasn't getting on the man's case. He was leading him to a conclusion about his own heart when he said, so if you kept all the commandments, yeah, since I was little.

And Jesus doesn't immediately jump on his neck and say, no, you haven't. He says, well, how about all this money you've got? Why don't you give it away and come and follow me? Oh, wow.

I can't do that. But Jesus said it out of love. And Jesus approaches us out of love. It's one of the problems I sometimes have with street preachers who hang people over hell until the fat drips out.

The fires of hell, the fires of hell, the fires of hell. And the fires of hell are very real. So it's not a wrong thing to say. But I would venture to suggest that Jesus is far more likely to say, please don't go into the fires of hell when you don't need to.

[ 37 : 23 ] It's also a passage of scripture that makes you realize that the young man had free will. Jesus didn't take over his free will and say, you must.

He said, if you want eternal life, this is what you need to do. And so lines of theological thought that say you've lost your free will.

We have no free will. God is sovereign and he takes over your free will. Sorry, but this passage of scripture is an awkward one for you. Because this young man retained his free will. What Jesus was saying is.

I, even I am the Lord and there is no savior besides me. Now, he didn't say that in this passage. He said it in Isaiah 43 in verse 11. I, even I am the Lord and there is no savior besides me.

Something that the early disciples in the act. Peter preached it and said, there is no name named under heaven by which men must be saved other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 38 : 30 ] So, in summary, the young man found the challenge very difficult because he had much wealth and was not prepared to trust in anything else. And the comment that this brought from Jesus should nail the whole works salvation matter for us once and for all.

There is no way that we get to heaven because of what we've done. It's a gift. And I meet so many people who say, but I'm not sure that I'm saved.

Well, you've had the gift. What more do you want? But he says, again, I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

You'll hear odd teachings here and there that say that this, the eye of a needle, that the eye of a needle was a gate into the city. And for the camel to get in, he had to shed off all these loads to get through this gate.

Now, it's a pretty story. It has a moral to it. It's not the truth of scripture. The needle described is a stitching or a suturing needle. And this was deliberate embellishment of the story exaggeration to make a point.

[ 39 : 41 ] For a rich man to get into the kingdom of God is like trying to get a camel to go through the eye of grandma's sewing needle. It's not going to happen.

It is utterly impossible, which is exactly the response it provoked from the disciples. You will never get a camel to go through the eye of a needle, however hard you try.

And the use of that analogy left the disciples aghast. I mean, the rich young man had gone off scratching his head thinking, give away all my money.

But the disciples had taken a lesson from this and they were saying, well, how can anyone get saved then? And that's the point. In John 14, verse 6, Jesus says, no man comes to the Father except through me.

So at the end of that chapter, back to Matthew, chapter 19, verse 26. And looking at them, Jesus said to them, with people, it's impossible.

[ 40 : 47 ] But with God, all things are possible. There is no way that you're going to get that camel through that eye of the needle. Other than in Christ. Just let's read on.

I didn't plan to read on, but I did say we try and get to the end of the chapter. I just missed the last few verses. Then Peter said to him, behold, we have left everything and followed you. What will there then be for us?

So he said to this young man, you've got to leave everything and follow me. Ditch all that money, give it away to the poor and follow me. Ditch the lot. And they were astonished and said, well, who can be saved then?

But then they went on to say, in verse 27, we've left everything and followed you. What will there then be for us? And Jesus said, truly I say to you, who have followed me in the regeneration, the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne.

You also shall sit upon 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And anyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for my sake will receive many times as much and will inherit eternal life.

[ 42 : 05 ] But many who are first will be last and the last first. And we've paved the way to the beginning of chapter 20 with that. So many who are first will be last and last first.

All I'll say about that for today, we tend to think of people who are running on ahead and doing great things.

And this is a mighty man of God and he's going for it. And we might look and think he's going to be first. We might look at the Apostle Paul and say, he's probably going to be first.

And we might look at the faithful person who turns up and cleans the toilets every week and is always there and is always helpful and stands on the door and makes people feel loved and welcome. And we might think, well, they're probably not going to be up there among the top guys.

But we must always remember that Jesus said. Many of those who are first will actually be last. And many of those who are last will be put first.

[ 43 : 10 ] And I can imagine we have to try to apply in our thinking kingdom parameters for these things. What in the kingdom of God is Jesus looking for to attribute faithful service to someone?

What will he value? I just want to look at this. These verses I just highlighted. And I just thought it's a helpful bit of highlight. Right.

What good things shall I do? Keep the commandments. If you wish to be complete or perfect. He went away grieving or sorrowful. Then who can be saved?

With people it's impossible, but with God all things are possible. These notes will be online for people to see. But I just, as I looked at that, I thought, I'll highlight those because that just tells the story.

The important thing, let's finish with this. Jude. The book of Jude, just before Revelation. We'll finish with this last reference. And verses 24 and 25.

[ 44 : 21 ] And this will read differently in different versions. But it says this. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling or falling. And to make you stand in the presence of his glory.

Blameless. Some versions will say perfect. Some versions will even say unstained. Unstained. With great joy. To the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen. It's God's work to get us saved. The transforming work is the work of God.

Amen.