

Jesus Teaches About Attitudes

Lesson Scope: *Mark 10*

Lesson Focus

After spending time teaching His disciples in a house in Capernaum, Jesus traveled across Jordan. Here the people flocked to hear Him teach many more lessons of practical, godly living. He taught them God's view of divorce. He used object lessons including little children, camels, and the eye of a needle. Even the example of wealthy men provided an opportunity for Jesus to point out the deceitfulness of riches.

But the greatest example of all was the Lord Himself. In the midst of His honor-seeking disciples and the young ruler who loved his riches, Jesus proclaimed that the path to greatness lies in lowly service. Christ had left all the glories of heaven to do His Father's will. As a lowly servant, He labored among men. By the death of the cross, He truly "sold all" to provide eternal life. What a wonderful example of the lowly attitude that leads to life!

In a day when the religious leaders were emphasizing externals, Jesus taught how essential it is to have a humble heart. He showed clearly that the fruit of a man's life corresponds to his inner condition.

The scope of this lesson contains three distinct sections. First of all, Jesus taught humility, using the little child as an example. Then the focus turns to the one who came running to Jesus, seeking eternal life. Finally, Jesus taught about service, following the carnal request of the sons of Zebedee for prominent positions in His coming kingdom. All of these sections tie together neatly the ideas of self-denial, taking up the cross, and becoming a servant of the Master. They build on the previous lesson, where Jesus taught about the cross.

You might begin the lesson with some consideration of attitudes, what they are, and how they affect the choices and actions of life. Truly we cannot hide the attitudes of our heart, because they manifest themselves in our actions. God is concerned about our attitudes because they affect our service in His kingdom. Attitudes of pride, self-will, and faithlessness will destroy our effectiveness. Covetousness and trust in earthly treasure turn our minds from true discipleship to a life of serving self. We definitely need the power of the Gospel to sanctify our attitudes and prepare us to be ser-

vant of all.

A person's attitudes affect his actions and his relationship with God. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Lesson Aim: To identify attitudes that are essential for entering the kingdom of God.

Theme Verse: *Mark 10:15*. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

Lesson Text

"As a Little Child"

Mark 10:13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. ¹⁴. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

"What Shall I Do?"

Mark 10:17. And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ¹⁸. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. ¹⁹. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. ²⁰. And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. ²¹. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou halt, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. ²². And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. ²³. And Jesus looked around about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁴. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto their Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁵. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁶. And they were astonished on of measure, saying among themselves Who then can be saved? ²⁷. And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all

things are possible.

²⁸. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. ²⁹. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, ³⁰. But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. ³¹. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

"Servant of All"

Mark 10:42. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. ⁴³. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: ⁴⁴. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. ⁴⁵. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Questions for Study

"As a Little Child"

1. Why did Jesus want the little children to come to Him?
2. What attitudes of little children should characterize citizens of the kingdom of God?

"What Shall I Do?"

3. What did the man mentioned in verse 17 wish to receive from Jesus?
4. Why did he go away grieved at Jesus' words?
5. How might we allow riches to keep us out of the kingdom of God?
6. In what ways must we be willing to leave all for the kingdom of God?

"Servant of All"

7. What is the path to true greatness, and how did Jesus exemplify that way?
8. What does being "servant of all" involve for us today? Lesson 9 May

Analyzing the Passage

The young children (Mark 10:13) and a little child (Mark 10:15) indicate innocent children who are old enough to place a simple faith and trust in God and their parents. Jesus told the disciples to suffer (allow) the little children to come to Him (Mark 10:14). He used the little children to teach lessons of humility and trust.

We often refer to the man who came to Jesus requesting the way to eternal life as the rich young ruler. Unlike the other Gospel writers, Mark alone includes details such as the fact that the man came running (Mark 10:17), that "Jesus beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21), and that He required the cross as the answer to his quest for eternal life.

Jesus used the example of the rich man to teach this lesson—how difficult it is for those who trust in their riches to enter the kingdom of God! Whatever the came] and the eye of a needle (Mark 10:25) might be, the clear truth remains that no rich man can enter the kingdom unless he is willing to sacrifice all his riches. Jesus' disciples despaired of the possibility for anyone to be saved. But Jesus declared the wonderful truth of Gospel synergism; when we will do the humanly unthinkable, God will do the humanly impossible! (Mark 10:27).

Following the discussion on riches, Jesus led the way up to Jerusalem (Mark 10:32). While traveling, James and John approached Jesus, requesting prominent positions for themselves in Jesus' coming kingdom. This request brought displeasure from the other ten disciples, who immediately felt left out. Jesus took the occasion to show them the way to true greatness. Those who would be great in Christ's coming kingdom must not crave lofty positions but must practice lowly service. Christ exemplified that way when He left the glories of heaven, came to this earth as a servant of His Father, and gave His life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

Principles and Applications

"As a Little Child"

1. Those who enter the kingdom of God practice childlike faith and trust (Mark 10:14-15). Little children depend totally on their parents for sustenance and direction. The trust and faith they have in their parents to care for them is very similar to the trust we must place in our heavenly Father. Can we take God at His word? Can He prepare a table in the wilderness?

Will He meet our daily needs if we seek first His kingdom? Will He forgive me if I come in true repentance? By faith, the child of God answers with a resounding "yes!"

"What Shall I Do?"

2. A full surrender of the will marks the citizen of Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:17-22). The young ruler, who came to Jesus with a request for eternal life, felt that he had obeyed the Law consistently from his boyhood. Nevertheless, he lacked full surrender. He trusted his personal goodness and his

riches to see him through. Jesus' direction to sell all, take up the cross, and follow Him teaches us that only a full surrender of our own agenda in exchange for God's perfect way will result in eternal life. We must stop trusting in ourselves and start trusting God completely.

3. To be a part of Christ's kingdom, we must possess eternal values and a heavenly perspective (Mark 10:21). The good things the young man did and the abundant riches he possessed indicate a temporal, earthly perspective. Jesus' words to sell all and to transfer his treasures to heaven show that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. We must lift our eyes to the next world, where neither moth nor rust corrupts and where thieves do not break through and steal. When we live with eternity in view, all the attitudes of our heart and the choices we make will identify us as pilgrims and strangers in this life.

4. Those who enter the kingdom of God willingly take up the cross (Mark 10:21). Our selfish, carnal nature opposes the work of God's kingdom within us, destroying our spiritual interest, vitality, and victory. It sidetracks our focus onto earthly possessions and prestige. Just as Jesus invited this young man into the kingdom by way of the cross, so we must crucify our selfish nature to enter the strait gate leading to eternal life.

5. Citizens of the kingdom of God follow their Master (Mark 10:21). Jesus invited this young ruler to come and follow Him. Jesus invited him to be His disciple and to learn from Him the important lessons of life. To follow the Master is to copy His character, mirror His likeness, and allow Him to be the King of our life.

6. Trust in earthly riches bars us from Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:23-25). When we trust our earthly riches, they become our idol, and God will not help us—a sure recipe for failure. Trust in riches indicates misplaced priorities and the wrong safe deposit for our treasure. The choices of our life will demonstrate earthly goals for success rather than a heavenly vision that transfers wealth to an account in glory.

7. When we give up ourselves totally to God, He makes it possible to enter into His kingdom (Mark 10:26-27). Although we must choose to enter God's kingdom, we cannot do so without God's help. We must stop trying to save ourselves by our own strength and allow God to take complete control. When we give up all earthly trust, He will fill our life with power to follow His way. No other provision besides the Gospel can accomplish this.

"Servant of All"

8. Christ requires humble service in His kingdom (Mark 10:42-45). If we

would rise to true greatness, we must choose the humble pathway of service. Human nature normally responds as the sons of Zebedee did, reaching for earthly position and power. But the one who surrenders all His talents and abilities for Christ's eternal kingdom will serve without earthly reward. Christ, who sees in secret, will reward us openly, and then, truly, the last shall be first!

Important Teachings

1. Those who enter the kingdom of God practice childlike faith and trust (Mark 10:14-15).
2. A full surrender of the will marks the citizen of Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:17-22).
3. To be a part of Christ' kingdom, we must possess eternal values and a heavenly perspective (Mark 10:21).
4. Those who enter the kingdom of God willingly take up the cross (Mark 10:21).
5. Citizens of the kingdom of God follow their Master (Mark 10:21).
6. Trust in earthly riches bars us from Christ's kingdom (Mark 10:23-25).
7. When we give up ourselves totally to God, He makes it possible to enter into His kingdom (Mark 10:26-27).
8. Christ requires humble service in His kingdom (Mark 10:42-45).

Answers to Questions

1. Why did Jesus want the little children to come to Him?

Jesus loves little children and cares for them tenderly. He wanted to bless them as their parents wished. Jesus wanted to teach His disciples and the surrounding crowd a lesson in childlike faith and trust.

2. What attitudes of little children should characterize citizens of the kingdom of God?

Little children characterize citizens of God's kingdom with their faith, trust, and innocence. Little children are quick to dismiss a grudge and offer forgiveness. They love to please their parents and others in authority over them.

3. What did the man mentioned in verse 17 wish to receive from Jesus?

He wanted to fulfill a lack that he felt in his life. He sought eternal life. He seems to have wanted a simple task to perform that would gain him eternal life.

4. Why did he go away grieved at Jesus' words?

The one thing he lacked was willingness to part with his earthly riches. He

considered the price of self-denial too high. He lacked the commitment to become a cross-bearing disciple of the Master.

5. How might we allow riches to keep us out of the kingdom of God?

We will miss the kingdom of God by trusting our riches to deliver us in the day of trouble, by using earthly insurances rather than committing ourselves to God's tender providence, by having our priorities and goals on earthly financial success at the expense of kingdom interest, or by coveting another's wealth and prestige.

6. In what ways must we be willing to leave all for the kingdom of God?

Neither anything we own nor anyone we love dare come between us and a total commitment to God. We must be willing to invest time, talents, and earthly resources in the heavenly cause. We must serve humbly without seeking recognition. We must in honor prefer one another and not think too highly of ourselves.

7. What is the path to true greatness, and how did Jesus exemplify that way?

The path to true greatness lies in giving up ourselves totally to God's will for us. Christ exemplified that way by leaving the glories of heaven, coming to earth as a lowly servant, and giving His life a ransom for many.

8. What does being "servant of all" involve for us today?

First of all, we must be disciples of Jesus. We must be willing to resist the appeal of earthly glory. We should look for ways to help others and assist in meeting their needs. We must love our brethren and seek to live peaceably with them. We must be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Summarizing the Lesson

Fully surrendered, Lord, divine,
I will be true to Thee;
All that I am or have is Thine,
I will be true to thee.

Tho' it may cost me friends and home,
I will be true to Thee;
Cause me in lands afar to roam,
I will be true to Thee.

Now to the world I bid farewell,
I will be true to Thee;
Broken forever its deep spell,
I will be true to Thee.

I will go with Thee all the way,
I will be true to Thee;
All of thy bidding will obey,
I will be true to Thee.

—Leila N. Morris

Research Guide

1. Make a study of Scriptures in which Jesus refers to children (Matthew 10:42; 18:1-6, 10; Mark 9:36, 37, 42; Luke 9:46-48; 17:1, 2; 18:15-17).
2. Read and study the companion Scriptures to the story of the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-24).
3. Study the other occasions when the disciples sought prominent positions in Christ's kingdom (Matthew 18, 20; Mark 9; Luke 9, 22).