

The Gospel According to Mark - A Life Lesson Illustrated

May 19th, 2019

A Life Lesson Illustrated

Mark 10:13-27

"You've never failed me yet!" And you know what, He won't! In this life we face difficulties, trials, temptations, sorrows, and that is a part of this world we live in, but Jesus has never failed to be there for anyone who will take hold of His hand and let Him lead them through the tough times! The question is will we take hold of His hand? Will we swallow our foolish pride and take on the nature of a little child and grip the hand of the only One who can guide us safely through this old world and get us someday to our eternal home? Let's pray and ask God to help us be willing to take hold of the Father's hand and be lead by and secured by that Almighty hand of God! Pray!

Our text today is found in Mark's Gospel, chapter 10 verses 13-27. We will begin by reading verses 13-16...

Mark 10:13 People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

Mark 10:14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Mark 10:15 I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Mark 10:16 And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

In this passage Jesus gives a powerful life lesson.

The Life Lesson - We must receive the kingdom of God like a little child!

Now that's a hard lesson, because while on the one hand we adults love our children and grandchildren, on the other hand, we sometimes look down on children as if they don't really know much and dismiss them because they haven't experienced life and they haven't had time to learn the lessons we've learned! While there's some truth to that, we must be careful not to forget there are some lessons a little child could teach us! Those lessons are more important to learn than you ever imagined. We all need to mature, and grow, and we can't stay childish, but we just must maintain some child-like characteristics as we age. What are some of those qualities we must maintain? How about...

Childlike wonder! Childlike curiosity! Childlike desire to learn and to know! Childlike faith! Childlike trust! Childlike hope! Childlike freedom from worry! (Anybody in here wish they had that?) And while a child may not always be truthful, much of the time they seem to have an innocent childlike honesty about things.

Most children don't set around worrying how the electric bill is going to get paid, or that they can't fix the broken down family car. They simply trust their parents to handle business! And you might notice how they bounce back from some of the most difficult things in life, things that sometimes cripple us adults. Unless a child is in an abusive or neglectful situation with their parents, they will typically have great faith in their earthly parents! You know how we sometimes think our parents can do anything, fix anything, and know everything! Once when my children were little, one of my daughters had a nightmare! It was around 2:00am. After I assured her everything was going to be okay, she went back to sleep and I was ready to do the same, when The Holy Spirit spoke to my heart to right down what just happened. I obeyed. Here's the words to the song that came from that experience.

My Little Jessica

Heard you cry out in the dark so I ran to your side

With comfort and compassion

I wiped those tears from your eyes

then I held you in my arms

and pulled you close to my chest

With strength and assurance I whispered words to give you rest

My little Jessica you've such trust in me, yes you do now, to chase away the shadow bandits that dance in your dreams, it's not as bad as it seems!

I tossed you high up in the sky and made you feel 10 feet tall, with arms that would never fail you you knew

I would never let you fall!

My little Jessica you've such trust in me, yes you do now, to chase away the shadow bandits that dance in your dreams, it's not as bad as it seems no no

Some day you'll waken to find my power was only in your mind, you'll see that I too have fears and have shed my share of tears, oh I've cried my share of tears

Now when that time comes just do what you've always done only look to a different father, put your trust in the heavenly one

My little Jessica you've such trust in me, yes you do now, to chase away the shadow bandits that dance in your dreams, it's not as bad as it seems

Go back to sleep now, nothings gonna hurt you, this night will soon be through.

Maybe, just maybe we need to take notes when it comes to the faith of a little child. When we cry out in the dark, our Heavenly Father wants to scoop us up in His strong and loving arms, but so many times we refuse! In our foolish adult pride, we like to think we've got this! Don't need anybody's help! We adults can be so hard headed and hard hearted! It's so hard for us to trust. It's so hard for us to believe. It's so hard for us to not worry. It's hard for us to have that child-like optimism and belief that things are going to be okay, because we've experienced some of the hard things in life. Back in 1994 I wrote a song called Faith of a Little Child. Here's some of the lyrics...

"Sometimes my faith is weak and I must confess, not nearly what I've claimed. It's not that I'm lying when I speak, but fear, I'm afraid is not so easily tamed! I need the faith of a little child when dreams are shattered and innocence fades away! I need the faith of a little child to give me strength to live another day, God give me the faith of a little child! Can grown ups have child like faith? After all they seen and felt? Wondering if cruel and unfair is their fate, learning to live with the hand their dealt! I need the faith of a little child. When dreams are shattered and innocence fades away! I need the faith of a little child to give me strength to live another day, God give me the faith of a little child! It made no sense and I couldn't figure it out. But looking back it's all so clear, it was Your hand working, there's no doubt. Now I know You're always near. I've got the faith of a little child!"

There will never be anything that you will face that your Heavenly Father can't help you handle! But here's a very important thing we all have to realize and understand: We have to be willing to become like a little child and be willing to put our trust in God, letting go of our own selfish desires and taking hold of His hand of guidance, protection, and strength. Now what I'm about to tell you may not get a lot of amens, because it may hit a little close to home.

We have a hard time having the faith of a little child and trusting God, yet sometimes we fall for Satan's lies. Why is this? Sometimes we believe what we want to believe! How many times have we as adults tried to find happiness, peace, fulfillment, comfort, security, and meaning in life in things and activities that never truly satisfy? How many times have we repeated behaviors that have hurt us terribly in the past and yet we keep hitting the repeat button! What is about to happen in our text today is a good example of trying to find happiness and purpose in all the wrong places. A perfect illustration of this concept runs up to Jesus! Listen to what happens in verses 17-27...

Mark 10:17 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?"

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone.

Mark 10:19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

Mark 10:20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Mark 10:21 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."

Mark 10:22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Mark 10:23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 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."

Mark 10:26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Wow! What an illustration of needing to learn the life lesson to come to God as a little child! Look at the

principles this illustration teaches us.

Principle - It's Not The Posture Of The Body, But The Attitude Of The Heart

Mark 10:17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him.

This guy fell on his knees. The posture of his body seemed to indicate humility and submission and a child-like faith, but there was something terribly wrong on the inside. It seems like the heart issue keeps coming up in Jesus' teachings! Kneeling is good, but if you've not bowed in your heart, the body's posture doesn't matter. Jay told a story of the little boy being punished who said to his Mommy... "I'm sit'n down on the outside but on the inside I'm still standing up!" The religious leaders had something in common with this wealthy man. Jesus had earlier confronted them with this...

Mark 7:6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

Principle - It's Not What You Do, It's What He Did!

Mark 10:17 . . . "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

There's still so many people today who want to know what they must do to inherit eternal life! It's very in vogue to follow far eastern religions and middle eastern religions that are based on what the adherent, the individual does to earn their way to enlightenment and the highest level of heaven! What they don't realize is how prideful those systems are! The "it's what I do for God that gets me into heaven" attitude reminds me of this illustration from Max Lucado...

"Let's say I invite you to go sailing on my new sailboat. (I don't really have one). We get out in the lake a short way when you notice that I lift the sail only a few inches on the mast. You think it even stranger that I position myself behind the partially raised sail and begin to blow.

"Why don't you raise the sail?" you ask.

"Because I can't blow on the whole thing," I pant.

"Let the wind blow it," you urge.

"Oh, I can't do that. I'm sailing this boat by myself."

Those are the words of a legalist, huffing and puffing to push his vessel to heaven. (Ever wonder why so many religious folk seem out of breath?)

Lucado, M. 1996. In the grip of grace . Word Pub. Dallas, Tex.

Or let's say we go fishing and the boat keeps drifting away from the spot where we want to fish. I take the anchor out of the hatch and set it in the front of the boat and say, "there that should stabilize the boat." And you look at me like I'm crazy and say, "Don't you realize you've got to anchor to something besides yourself if it's to do any good?"

It's just as crazy to think that you can save yourself in a spiritual sense. God's Word states it plainly...

Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

Eph 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

What is Grace?

GRACE – "Undeserved acceptance and love received from another, especially the characteristic attitude of God in providing salvation for sinners."

Holman Bible Dictionary

In other words...

It's not what I do for God, but what God did for me through Jesus on the Cross that enlightens my soul in this world and brings salvation to by soul for eternity!

Now, some would ask this question...

"If salvation is by grace and not works, does it really matter how we live?"

Once again I quote Max Lucado...

“Get it straight: Someone who sees grace as permission to sin has missed grace entirely. Mercy understood is holiness desired. “[Jesus] gave himself for us so he might pay the price to free us from all evil and to make us pure people who belong only to him—people who are always wanting to do good deeds” (Titus 2:14, italics mine). Lucado, M. 1996. In the grip of grace . Word Pub.: Dallas, Tex.

We love Him because He first loved us! We desire to live for Him because He died for us. A person who has experienced God’s grace lives the life of the thankful heart!
What we do for Him is in response to what He has already done for us.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

Principle - Only God Is Truly Good

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone."

Was Jesus’ response designed to help this man and the disciples consider His divinity?
I believe yes. The word good that this man used was a word that meant “perfect in moral attributes.” This kind of designation for a man was rarely if ever used.
Jesus’ response may have been intended to help the man see his own sin and his own need for God’s Grace. In other words . . .

God by nature is Holy and Good
Man by nature is unholy and sinful

Two Scriptures, one New Testament and one Old Testament bear this out...

Rom 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Isa 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Principle - Self-righteousness = Self-deception

Mark 10:19 You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

Mark 10:20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

This man probably got excited at this point. “I’ve done all these things.”
But let’s look at what was not in the Lord’s list . . .

The first four commands of the Ten Commandments were missing

Exo 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

Exo 20:4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

Exo 20:7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God . . .

Exo 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

These are the commands dealing with our relationship to God! He had missed the most important commands of all! What comes next is one of the most amazing statements in Mark’s Gospel...

Mark 10:21 Jesus looked at him and loved him.

Principle - God Loves Us

Rom 5:7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Rom 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

There's some here today...

Maybe You've doubted God's love for you
Maybe You've rejected God's love for you
Maybe You've had other things that were more important, Yet God still loves you!!!!

Principle - It All Comes Down To One Thing

Mark 10:21 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."

Mark 10:22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Why did Jesus tell him to sell his possessions? They were his god. They were his idols. As a result, his use of God's name was probably in vain. His possessions were his priority, no time for a day of worship. What is your "one thing"? What is most important in your life? What are your priorities?

Principle - Simple Not Easy

Mark 10:23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

Mark 10:24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:25 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."

Receiving God's forgiveness, mercy, grace and love is simple, but it is not easy. It requires removing yourself from the throne of your heart and allowing Jesus Christ to be your King. This takes a child-like faith! Not blind faith, but faith non-the-less!

Principle - It's Okay to Ask Questions

Mark 10:26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

Principle - All Things Are Possible With God

Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

God can change any heart yielded to Him! When we are willing to come to God as a little child, with child-like faith, with child-like hope, with the humility of a little child, and admit we can't save ourselves, then we are ready to experience all of the amazing benefits that come when we let go of the lies of this world and embrace the truth of God's offer to us through Jesus. Which leads us to this life changing principle...

Principle - You Gain More Than You Give Up!

But you'll have to come next week to find out more about this awesome principle!
Let's pray!