

Good morning church family. Good morning. That was a good one this morning. That's good job. All right. Mark chapter 10 if you would with me please. Mark chapter 10. We're going to do a two part message through verses 17 through 31. So we're going to begin by reading the whole passage. So each morning for this week and next week, we'll read Mark 10, 17 through 31. But today we're going to only take the portion of going up through verse 23. So As you prepare this week and next week, I would encourage you to review this passage so that it stays as one unit in your mind. But we're gonna read together again 17 through 31 of Mark chapter 10. Once you've found it, if you would, rise in honor of the one who gave us his word as we read the text together this morning. Mark chapter 10, beginning in verse 17. And as he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and began asking him, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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. And he said to him, Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. And looking at him, Jesus loved him, and said to him, One thing you lack. Go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me. But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. 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. And they were even more astonished, saying to him, then who can be saved? Looking at them, Jesus said, with people it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God. Peter began to say to him, behold, we have left everything and followed you. Jesus said, truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for my sake and for the gospel's sake, except one who will receive 100 times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms along with persecutions. and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are so thankful to be gathered here today. Thank you for the songs that you edified your body with, and I pray, Lord, that our hearts sing those in praise to you. We pray, Lord, that we would hear your word today, listening intently for what you would have us to learn. I pray your spirit would go out amongst us, that we would apply this word to our hearts and our minds, that it would impact us to glorify you. I pray, Lord, for myself, that you remove any distractions, remove any hindrances, remove any fatigue or tying of the tongue, that you would be glorified in the body, edified by your word today. We ask all this in your holy name and for your glory, amen. All right, you can be

seated. So as I mentioned, it's a two-part series, mini series, I should say, little two parts amongst the whole Mark series. Nothing but, nothing, excuse me, nothing before Christ. So this is part one of the two-part nothing before Christ. And our text, as we often see in Mark, he's just jumping right along. There's not a lot of introduction, not a lot of things going on as far as transitional between one particular text and another. But it tells us that he's setting out once again. We know obviously the ultimate end of his journey will be Jerusalem. We've seen him marching ever closer to his passion, especially over the last few weeks. But throughout Mark, what we've seen consistently over and over and over again, is Jesus calling people to leave behind things, leave behind themselves, leave behind their possessions, leave behind different things. He's asked commanded fishermen to leave their nets. He commanded a tax collector to leave behind his profession and ultimately resulted in him giving away massive amounts of his wealth. Peter had to leave behind an incorrect view of who the Messiah is, if you recall in chapter 8. So we've seen over and over, and there's other examples of him asking people and commanding people to leave behind, even to the point of if a relationship to parents were to impede your relationship to following Christ, you will leave even that behind. That must be set aside. So there's been a clear pattern of Jesus bringing men to a point of realizing that they have to give up everything for Him. That all they have cannot save them, nothing they have within themselves cannot save them. And we culminated last week in understanding that He compares those who inherit the kingdom of God to an infant who has nothing. They can bring nothing, there's nothing but need that they have. So now we're going to see this played out in real time, as Jesus explained last week, that you can bring nothing to be a part of the kingdom of God, there's nothing you can attain yourself to do that, and now the disciples are going to witness this teaching lived out in real time. So he's going to take this same viewpoint to the man in our text today. So we'll see a man that has both riches and status, commanded to do no less than everyone else in Mark has been commanded to do that follows Jesus. He's gonna be commanded to do nothing different. But what we're also gonna see is that goodness is defined by Jesus for the first time here in Mark. He's going to define goodness for us very specifically. And another thing that we're gonna learn throughout this text over these two weeks is that there's nothing in our lives that can be before Christ. Not our works, not our status, not our possessions, nothing can be before Christ, because He brings us to a point of understanding that nothing we have in this world can save us. That's the point of where He brings us, where we understand that we are, in fact, infants who have nothing to give to save ourselves. And so this is in perfect context, obviously the Spirit intentionally doing this, inspiring Mark to write this, but this is in perfect context where we came off of last week and flows beautifully to teach out practically what Jesus was teaching the disciples that we discussed last week. So let's dig into the text. We're gonna talk about verses 17 through 23 this week, and

then we'll do 24 through 31 next week, all with the same thought in mind that nothing is before Christ. So number one today, goodness defined. Goodness defined. And I apologize if there's not sermon notes, that's 100% my fault, I forgot. Just full transparency. Made them, forgot to send them to be printed, so my fault. Goodness defined, excuse me, verse 17 through 20. Let's read those few verses again. And as he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to him and knelt before him and began asking him, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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. And he said to him, teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. So we see in the text that Jesus is on a journey, as I mentioned a few moments ago. We don't know where he's traveling from. There's no details, which is very common to Mark. Mark spares us the details so we can use his limited space to get on with what Jesus is doing and teaching. So we don't know where he's coming from. We do know his ultimate destination is Jerusalem. He's marching ever closer there. And I'll let you know just from a textual, linear process, he'll actually arrive in Jerusalem in chapter 11. So we as going through Mark are nearly there as well. So he's getting closer and closer to Jerusalem, and at this time a man runs up to him. Now we've seen men approach him, people approach him before in Mark. This isn't something uncommon, there's been different people throughout the text as we've studied it that approached him. But this one's a little bit different. Matthew calls this man a young man, so Matthew 19, 20. Luke calls him a ruler, Luke 18, 18. And so many of us know this particular story as the rich young ruler. And that's his title combined from what different authors of the gospels have called him or given him specific attributes. So this rich young ruler runs up to him, bows to him, and asks him a very important question. Now I want to make sure we understand in Mark's approach, he avoids the use of anything extra besides a man. Remember, Mark is very simplistic in the way he explains things. He's very concise. He just says a man comes running up, it could even be translated a certain person. So he had He's running up to him and he kneels down, and this posture that he takes, this sense of urgency in his immediate kneeling down, tells us, as we've read through Mark, someone who is approaching Jesus potentially to be a disciple. He's taking an air of humility, he comes up, kneels down, and he asks Jesus a question. And what's interesting is, he says, good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Now, when we first read this, the first thing that I think should go through our minds, this is the first time anyone has asked Jesus this question. and all of Mark. His disciples didn't ask him this question. No one has asked him. And this is the quintessential question for Jesus. Isn't the core of his ministry the core of what he came to earth to do, to reconcile people to a holy God? And so this is the first time he's being asked this question. And it would seem by the way he runs up, the way he kneels down, he

was almost looking for reassurance. And we know that because of his answer that we'll discuss here in a couple minutes. But I want us to read this question with that idea of he's just wanting Jesus to tell him he's done a good job. And as he's knelt there, he uses the term good. Now it's interesting that he calls Jesus good because in the Jewish world, they would understand that only God is good. That is a very common understanding in Judaism. In fact, rabbis in their writings and in their interactions with people would reject the title good to keep from having a blasphemous idea attached to who they are. So they would actually decline to be called that. They would ask people not to call them good. Goodness was one that was assigned to God and God alone. and we'll discuss more about that here in just a moment, but I want us to really grasp the weight of this question. This is the essential question to ask the Messiah. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? And what's so interesting about Jesus's reply is he often does, is he cuts right through all the fluff. He cuts right through whatever we bring, doesn't he? When we come to Christ and we pray and we look to him, he cuts right through all of our additional human baggage that we tend to bring to everything, don't we? We work things out in our own minds. If I ask it this way, if I have this particular posture, if I kneel to pray, this will get me what I want. And yet Jesus being the son of God cuts right through this young man's question. and says, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. So Jesus' immediate response is to draw this man's attention back to God. This is the question Jesus has been waiting to have answered. This is the quintessential question. This is what his ministry is about. I come to initiate and bring the kingdom of God to humanity, sinful humanity, to rescue my people. And yet his focus is to draw this man's, and likely Jesus, understanding his heart, knowing his motives, says, why do you call me good? Only God. is good. So he immediately draws his attention back to God. It's been said Jesus's answer forces him to recognize that his only hope is an utter reliance upon God, who alone can bestow eternal life. Because already in the way that this man's formulated his question in the way that Jesus knows his heart, we know already this man thinks he has achieved what he needs to achieve. He's just looking for affirmation. And Jesus doesn't even answer his question, completely ignores it, and draws his attention immediately back to God and God alone. And it's interesting in the original language, in God alone, at the end of verse 18, could be read, except the one God. It doesn't quite flow in English as well as we'd like it to, so most translators say in God alone. In the LSB it says no one is good except God alone, so depending on what translation you have. But I want us to understand that this is a direct point back to Deuteronomy 6.4. Deuteronomy 6.4. Hear, O Israel, Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one. So he's pointing back to the God of Israel, only the God of Israel, the one true God, He is good. So Jesus's intent is to draw this man to the only one who can give eternal life. He's immediately drawing his attention off of himself. off of what he thinks the ideas of eternal life should be and drawing them immediately back to God, the

one true God. Now, many have been puzzled by this phrase. There's been a lot of debate, there's been different interpretations. But truly, when you think about the context of Mark, how many times have we seen Jesus over and over and over again, hide his messiahship from the people that he's talking to? Because many people have argued, why didn't Jesus just embrace the title, say I'm the Messiah, and teach this man about eternal life? Why didn't Jesus just answer the question? Well, it's not uncommon in Mark at all, as we've seen Jesus over and over again, telling people to not talk about who he is, not talk about the miracles that he's done, especially in the Jewish society. We saw one instance in a Gentile society where he told the man to go tell everyone to the Gentiles, but in Jewish Society he is over and over and over again hidden his Messiah keeping his identity as Messiah a secret So when you think about it in that context It makes perfect sense that he would simply bring the attention of this man back to God and God alone Keeping his identity as Messiah a secret still So again, we Jesus still has not answered this man's question He simply points him back to God and then brings in the law Verse 19, you know the commandments, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not fraud, defraud, excuse me, honor your father and mother. So we see five instances of the Decalogue or the 10 commandments being cited to this young man. Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, and honor your father and mother. Those are five of the ten commandments. And then Jesus adds in an extra one here. Do not defraud. That is not technically part of the 10 commandments. There's not the 11th commandment of do not defraud. Now there is do not covet, and there's ideas of how you relate to your neighbor. And so that could be just simply a combination of several of them and the idea of not defrauding it. It could also be, perhaps, that this is an insight into how this man got his wealth, especially in the context of those days. Most rich people came about their wealth, especially in those times, at the expense of someone less fortunate, the poor or the impoverished. So perhaps it's an insight into this man's way he got his wealth. There's no way for us to know for sure, but the clear context of what Jesus is saying is, in order to inherit eternal life, you have to be able to perfectly live out the commands of the good God that I just pointed you to. And again, he still isn't answering the essential question that the man has asked. He's simply pointing him back to God and saying, this is what God commands you to do, do all of these things. But what this man doesn't understand, and what we're going to unpack here this morning, is that this man still had the confidence that he thought he could do it himself. But what we're going to learn is, I found a quote this week about this, and there's just, it was too good not to share, keeping the individual commandments is no substitute for the readiness for self-surrender to the absolute claim of God imposed through the call of the gospel. And that's essentially the bottom line of what we're getting at in this text today. What the author, Mark, through his writing, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

through Mark is trying to get us to understand is that there's nothing that we can bring to the table. And the man's response clearly tells us he thought himself good enough. Verse 20. And he said to him, teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up. Now, we as good Western Christians gasp at that response, don't we? How dare he? I could never say that I've kept all the commandments. That is actually not an incorrect view of oneself in Judaism. In fact, it was very common for people to be able to say that they have kept the law from their youth. First of all, you weren't considered an adult until you were 13, as a male in Judaism. So you get to basically just chop off all of your childhood, right? Thankfully, all of us can, yes, thankfully, we wouldn't have to count that. That's a wash, we get to just scrub that. So at the beginning age of 13, this young man supposedly has kept every single law that he could. Now, we have discussed the law of the Pharisees and how they interpreted the law multiple times, haven't we? They took the law of God, they put check marks on it, and they said, if you do these things, you have fulfilled the law entirely. In fact, doesn't Paul himself say, according to the law, he was blameless? So this is something that Paul himself, through writing his letters, claimed the same. In fact, rabbis, as they were interpreting the Torah and explaining the law and showing you how to live out the commands of God in your daily lives, were not shy at all about writing. They were fully confident that if a man applied himself, he could in fact keep every letter of the law his entire life. And for them, that is how eternal life was obtained. So we have to understand in our Western Christian minds, we gasp and say, how dare he, what a hypocrite. Well, in the view of the Jewish society, the Jewish culture of that day, they actually thought it was possible and he was Himself basically saying yeah, in other words, there was no ill intent of no. No, there's we My heart was far from him, but I was doing what he said that that never entered his mind in his mind He simply thought yeah, I've done I I haven't committed adultery. I don't lie. I don't steal and So in his mind he could checklist those things and say with confidence that he had in fact kept all of the law Now again, we have to understand that by his definition of the law, it's the pharisaical additions, the fences, so to speak, not the heart of the law as Jesus so impassionately, excuse me, so passionately argued with the Pharisees that they misunderstood the law. So I want us to understand in the context of where we are, this is not a gasp moment. This is simply a man who was taught to fulfill certain things to achieve eternal life. Because I think we can often relate to incorrect teachings about God and the law, can we not? We can relate with that. We can relate with the checklist mentality, the things that we have to do or say just right, repeat this prayer after me, check the card, raise your hand, every eye closed, every head bowed, I saw one in the balcony, you guys have all been there, okay? Saw a hand in the balcony. So let us look at this man with compassion because that's exactly how Jesus is going to look at him in just a moment. And we'll look more there. But I want you to grasp and wrap your minds around, despite the fact that he was

following what he was taught, this man's view of himself is in stark contrast to what Jesus taught us last week. And if you recall, what Jesus taught us last week is only those who recognize they are infants, Infants, as we established last week, bring nothing to us, do they? They have nothing to give, all they have is need. They need, need, need, and need some more. And so we as infants are only accepted into the kingdom of God when we have nothing that we can give. So this man's response of, I'm bringing everything I need to inherit eternal life, despite the incorrect teaching, he's not let off the hook for that. I just want us to view him with compassion. He is bringing supposedly to his, in his mind, I'm bringing everything I need to make this happen. Just tell me I'm right. I want you to understand that's the concept. He's knelt down. I bring everything I need. Just tell me I'm right. Tell me, pat me on the back, rabbi, and tell me I'm doing a good job. So as we come to the wrap up this first point of this two-part series, I want to apply a couple things to us. How many people before the gracious work of regeneration view themselves as this man? Fully confident in whatever they have. And we're going to see it's not just his actions that he's putting confidence in, it's his possessions here in just a moment as well. But how many of us before regeneration think ourselves adequate? I don't know if anyone enjoys watching Ray Comfort or some of his conversations that he has with random folks on the street, but how many people, when he asks them, are you a good person, say, yeah, oh, absolutely. How many times in your own conversations with people? Oh, yeah, I mean, I haven't ever murdered anybody or, you know, I don't cheat on my wife or anything like that, so I'm a pretty good guy. Yeah, I think God will let me into heaven one day. How many of us in this very room thought ourselves okay? I may not be perfect, like I know when I was a kid I stole a piece of bubble gum, but that was a long time ago and I've changed a lot since then. Or how many of us, and this may strike us a little harder, how many of us even as believers so often point to what we do to justify us instead of looking to what Christ has done? How many of us in our Christian lives look at our lives and go, look at all the things that I do. I volunteer for the poor. I give, I attend church every Sunday or most Sundays and I do all these things. Surely I'm converted. Surely I'm a follower. I'm a disciple of Christ because of all these things that I do. How many of us have that same mentality after conversion? Instead of relying on the one who does everything for us, instead of understanding and keeping in mind, and that was what I wanted to drive home last week, is that we have nothing to offer Christ. We are infants who have nothing but need. And even after conversion, we need Him no less than the day that we were converted. How many of us live our lives with the pressure of saying, I have to make this happen. I have to keep God happy. I have to work out my salvation. Now we need to work out my salvation. Okay, I'm not saying that, but it's not something we have within ourselves to do. It's not something that we can check a box of. It's not something we pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. We have to understand that that is Christ with his

spirit working in us to then produce the fruit of the change that He has wrought within us. And so I tell all of you in here, I plead with you to rest in what Christ has done. Stop looking at a list of things that you can check off and look at what Christ has done, because it's only in an attitude of thanksgiving and praise to God for providing everything for us that we then have the right motives to do what He's called us to do. So as a point of application, let us not look to what we bring or what we can do, but let us look to what Christ has done and is doing. Number two, goodness rejected. So we've looked at goodness defined, and now we're going to look at goodness rejected. Verse 21 through 23. And looking at him, Jesus loved him. and said to him, one thing you lack, go and sell all you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. But at these words he was saddened and he went away grieving for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus looking around said to his disciples, how hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. Now many of us, if we were to read in our Christian Western minds, read the man's response in verse 20, would expect Jesus to come down on him and say, there's no way you have, you can't truly live out the commandments, it's a heart issue. We expect him to correct this young man the same way he corrected the Pharisees, right? Hypocrites. But that's not what he does. He looks at him. Now this is not a normal look. This word here in the original language is a very descriptive word, and it intensifies the action. It means to examine, to look at intently, or to scrutinize. This is more than just simply viewing something. This is to examine this young man. And he examines him. It doesn't tell us, Mark doesn't tell us what he necessarily sees, but we can somewhat at least assume partially that this man saw him as a naive, childlike man who just simply came doing what he was told, thinking that he had gotten there. Because the word for loved here is the most intense love in the Greek language. Many of us know if you don't just know there's multiple words for love in the Greek language. It's not just in English we have love and then we just add descriptors to describe different kinds of love. In Greek there's different words and the word here for love is agapeo or agape is the root there. This is the highest form of love in the Greek language. This is the same word that is used to characterize God or for the kind of love for which God is worthy. So Jesus looks intently at this rich, young ruler and instead of castigating him or putting him down or correcting him for his flawed view of the law, he agapes him. He loves him with an unconditional love, a love that is used to characterize God in other places. The kind of love that Jesus, in this context, is the only one that can love him in that way. And did you know, furthermore, that this is the only place in the entire Gospel of Mark where he records Jesus loving someone. Loved him. with that word. It's the only place. This is the only person in all of the Gospel of Mark that received that kind of intent, study, and then expression of love by Christ. So this is a loving Savior looking at the very one that He came to save, the very type of people that He came to save, those who have been straddled with the law, having this



intense yoke of do this, do this, don't do that, and if you work hard enough, you might be able to attain eternal life, that idea of this heavy burden and yoke placed on the shoulders of this rich young man who thought himself able to do that. And we're gonna see next week that this is not possible for anything. But Jesus looks on this man with love, with agape, And then he instructs him to sell everything. Jesus said to him in verse 21, Jesus said to him, one thing you lack, go and sell all you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me. Now some have pointed to this verse out of context and saying, well, to really be a follower of Christ, you have to become destitute and poor. You have to sell everything you have and give it to the poor and live like the poor. That is not the context of what this verse is saying. What does Jesus over and over and over again do to people that He calls to follow Him? He rips them out of their current context. whatever that might be. The fishermen were pulled away from their boats and nets. The tax collector was no longer a tax collector. Peter had to leave aside his ideas of messiahship that he had been taught since he was a young man. So he pulls them out of the incorrect context that they're in. So the context of this rich young ruler to leave everything and to become like an infant who had nothing but need to rip him out of the context of where he was, this particular man needed to abandon everything and follow Christ. In a general principle, that's what we all must do, but we have different things to abandon. So this man is not, he's not earning his salvation by selling all of these things, because I've heard that argument as well. Well, this simply shows that salvation truly is synergistic because this man had to sell everything he had in order to follow Christ. No, Christ is still the one that helps us achieve the position of being able to acknowledge our neediness as an infant, needing something that we can't provide for ourselves, and in order for this man to come to that realization, he had to give up all of his preconceived notions of success that he had. His status as a ruler, his riches as a rich man, and his idea that he could keep the commandments since he was a small, or became an adult, since he was a child. And so this man is now being presented with the full abandon that must be achieved by every single person that follows Christ. Now when I say achieved, I mean through the work of the Spirit and regeneration. It's not something we can achieve ourselves, so please understand. the context of the motivation behind that. But ultimately, this man is being offered, in essence, I've heard it said, in essence, Jesus is offering himself as a substitute for the man's possessions. So that helps you kind of wrap your mind around that idea. That's what he does for all of us. He offers himself as a substitute for our work, our own status, our own possessions. And he says, none of that will save you, but I am here. And so he offers this man the same thing. There was so much as I studied this week that I wanted to share with you that I simply didn't have as good of words as what I found. So I'm going to give you another quote. I usually don't read a lot of quotes, but I found this one incredibly enlightening in the context of what we looked at

last week and what we're studying this week and next. So I'd like to share it with you. How profoundly ironic is the kingdom of God. The children of former story who possess nothing are not told that they lack anything, but rather that the kingdom of God is theirs. Yet this man who possesses everything still lacks something. Only when he sells all he has, only when he becomes like a vulnerable child will he possess everything." End quote. Do you think there's a reason that Paul writes that the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world? Because it's completely backwards on everything that we think. Everything that we're often taught even. Everything we've come to understand about how life works is we achieve it if we work hard enough. And so we just apply that philosophy to our salvation, to our standing before God. But that is not how the kingdom of God is achieved. And this is what Christ does for all men who are His. He brings them to a point of understanding that they have nothing that they can offer. Every person who has professed the name of Christ in this room was brought to a place of understanding by the work of the Spirit through regeneration that they cannot save themselves. They have nothing. Every individual who is saved by the grace of Christ is brought to that same place. Grace levels the playing field. Because He brings us to a place that we go, yeah. I can't do that. My status isn't going to save me. My riches aren't going to save me. My own righteousness isn't going to save me. In fact, God calls our own righteousness filthy rags. And let me assure you, believer in here, your righteousness is no better after salvation than it is before. It's only his righteousness that makes us clean. And so I want you to understand we can have nothing before Christ. We have to keep that attitude of infants as we looked at last week, even after salvation, there is nothing we can bring to the table to affect our righteousness. It is only the righteousness of Christ. And every deed that we do somehow by God's grace, happen to do for the glory of God is because He gave us the strength and the faith to do it. There can be nothing before Christ. And this young man's reaction tells us so much. But at these words, he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. Riches were measured very much in property. In those days, it wasn't necessarily how much gold you could carry around or how many coins or dollars you could pull out of your wallet. It was very much measured in gold and in barns that were full of food as your servants worked the land or in multiple changes of clothing. So it was more in possessions than it was in tangible dollars where we, in our Western American mindset is generally, you know, I've got a million dollars in my 401k or whatever the case may be that we consider ourselves rich. So this man who had many possessions became saddened. This is another very descriptive word in the original language. Some translations say the man's face fell. But the word in the original language means shocked, appalled, or overcast as the sky. This man was appalled. Understand what Jesus has just told this young man. He didn't applaud him for his ability to uphold the Pharisaical laws. He didn't say how good a job you have done. Remember, the likelihood of this man running up for a pat on

the back is very high. You can tell by his attitude, by his kneeling down, addressing Jesus as a good teacher. You can see all these signs that shows this man and his quickness to reply that I've kept all these things. He wanted a pat on the back. In his mind, he had achieved what he should have achieved to get an attaboy from the rabbi. This would have been a punch in the gut. The response of Jesus would have been a punch in the gut. He was appalled. He was overcast as the sky. Some translations may even say gloomy. Became like Eeyore. That's what I, every time I hear the word gloomy, that's where I go. And so this man's entire countenance fell. He got punched in the gut, as it were, with these words. He was grieving over the command of Christ. as the unconverted often do, grieve over the command of Christ because it challenges the very framework of which they are enslaved to. And so this man's thinkings of his own righteousness, his own riches, his own status, choked out the word. I hope that rings a bell to you. You guys remember Mark chapter four and verse 19 in the parable of the sower? I'm going to read you one verse from that parable. So if you recall, the sower had spread the seed, and it's describing the different soils that it lands on, what happens to the seed sometimes. Mark 4.19 says, but the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for anything else enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. So this man has encountered the word like a seed, but the deceitfulness of his riches choke out that word. This man was not given the gift of understanding his nothingness. This man was not given the gift of faith. This man had not been regenerated by the Spirit. Now, we don't know what happens to him. We don't know if later on, perhaps, the Word does take root and grow and the gift of faith is given to him. But in this instance, in the clear Scriptures here, black wording on white paper, this man rejected the commands of Christ and he left, gloomy and saddened. His exemplary life was not what saved him. And we see a clear picture here that even those who do live what we would consider an exemplary life by culture can still not follow Jesus because they're an idolater. So this man has rejected the commands of Christ. to hold on to his status, his riches, and his own righteousness. And so this man leaves Jesus and by his actions has shown that he has trusted his status and wealth to get him into the kingdom of God more than he trusts Christ. And then Jesus adds, chose to bring in verse 23 for this week instead of putting it on to next week because I think it really sums up well what this man is experiencing. So Jesus adds commentary for his disciples, verse 23. And Jesus, looking around, said to his disciples, how hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God. So what Jesus does is He looks around intently. This word for intently only occurs six times in Mark and only one other place in the New Testament. It means to take a commanding survey of the situation. Jesus was looking to see if His disciples were going to go with Him too. He was taking a commanding survey of the situation. He was taking a hard look around, were his disciples going to follow this rich young ruler as well? Because remember, this is the first time in all of Mark that

the quintessential question of Christ's ministry has been asked, how do I inherit eternal life? And Jesus's response was to fully abandon everything this man ever knew, ever owned, ever thought about himself, and to simply follow Christ. And so Jesus looks around to see if the disciples were going to follow as well. And what we're going to see next week is that he's going to go on and elaborate that it is impossible for man to achieve eternal life. but first he addresses here the wealthy specifically. Now, let me ask you, when we've looked in the context of last week and seeing infants as needy and those who are needy and only have needs are the ones who inherit the kingdom of God, and we've seen it played out practically today in this man's view of himself and his wealth and his riches, doesn't it make sense that those who have made it, quote unquote, would find it harder to enter the kingdom of God? Because if you've achieved everything you think you need to achieve to be successful and you have no great need, doesn't it make it harder to reach a place that you must reach in order to enter the kingdom of God, which is one of absolute need? Doesn't mean it's impossible. Jesus will tell us that next week. Only God can make that happen. But those who are wealthy, those who don't see themselves as having a need, don't see their need being fixed. If someone, if a doctor walked up to you and said, here, take this medicine, it's going to make you feel better, but you don't know you need the medicine, do you take the medicine? I wouldn't. If you don't need a vaccine or a shot or any sort of pill or something, if you don't know that you have cancer and you need chemotherapy, are you going to take chemotherapy? No, of course not. If you don't know your limb is broken, are you going to have a cast put on it? No, of course not. But when you understand that you have a need, you then want the remedy for said need. And so it's much harder to bring someone to a place of need who does not see themselves as needy. And so Jesus is simply elaborating to the disciples that it is hard for those who are wealthy, those who don't have need to enter the kingdom of God. You know, I chose to split this up because I knew this first half took about an hour. So I knew it would take a while to get through all of it, and I didn't want to make you guys sit here for two hours today. So now you know why it's in two parts. So as an application for this second point today, Jesus told this man by the instructions that he gave them, there is nothing that he can bring. He must become like the infants we saw last week. Understand, everyone who comes to Christ must come to him as an infant with absolute need, nothing but need, and a need that only Christ can fill. And so that should change how we relate to those who are unconverted around us. Coming to Jesus isn't about having a better life. I've heard the gospel shared in such a fashion that it's put on Jesus for 90 days and see if you like it. It's a full refund if you don't. Has anybody ever heard the gospel presented like that? It's atrocious. It's an atrocity. When we explain that people need Christ, they understand they need the remedy. So I challenge you to absorb that thought process when you're sharing the gospel with your children, when you're sharing the gospel with your family, when

you're sharing the gospel with those who are around you. They must see their need first, and that starts with them understanding they cannot and have not fulfilled the law. But there's something else that's absolutely beautiful here. And it's similar to what we talked about earlier. We have to understand that Christ brings those by His grace to a point of understanding that they cannot save themselves. And I'm gonna reiterate that again, because there's nothing before Christ. There's nothing that can save us outside of Him. There's nothing we can raise up to help us save ourselves. But there's a practical aspect to this. Because as believers, as I mentioned earlier, we're so quick to bring up what we can do, what we have done, look at how far God has brought me, now I can do this, and I can teach, and I can sing, and I can do all these things, look at what I've done, surely I'm converted. But does that hold up in the dark storms? When things are easy, it's easy to hold up. When things are going well and the skies are bright and things look good and we're not having any problems, it's easy for us to point to, look at how great things are, look what I've done, look what I've accomplished, this is great. But when the storms are there, it pulls everything back away from us and all we have left is the cross. And we have to cling to that. So I would challenge every person in here as a point of practical application to point every other person in this room to that truth. Remind them of their need for Christ. Remind them to rest in what He has done. He's already completed everything that we need to have eternal life. It's already done. You are a child of the King. Rest in what He has done. Because you cannot do the imperatives of Scripture without understanding the indicatives, the one main indicative, and that it is Christ and Christ alone in whom salvation is found. And we as a body encourage one another in this race, this marathon of the Christian faith where we are pilgrims and sojourners in this broken and sinful world to keep looking to the joyous, hope-filled prize of seeing Him and being with Him in eternity one day by pointing one another to that finish line. by pointing one another and saying, the starting line was Christ on this journey. The finish line is Christ on this journey. And the bumper guards, the whole trip is Christ on this journey. Let's help each other rest never failingly in Christ and what he has done. Because when we raise things up before him, we fail over and over and over again. So let us unite around Christ and resting in him and understanding that he has done everything for us. And so what Jesus does is he concludes this first passage that we're going to examine that this longer passage, the first half of it here, that we've seen this wealthy man not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. because he chose to lift something up before Christ. And next week what we're gonna see is Jesus elaborate further as he explains that man cannot save himself, it is only God who can save. It is Him and Him alone. For as we saw last week, as we saw today, as we'll see next week, it is only through Christ and His righteousness that we can call ourselves children of God. So I pray that that is what you carry with you the rest of the day. I pray as we will approach the communion

table in just a moment, we'll look at this again then, but I pray that this truth embeds itself into every fiber of who you are. Because this is where everything else in our Christian life comes from, is from this foundational truth. It is Christ and Christ alone and nothing before him. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for the truths that we are able to examine in your word today. I pray that this truth, the one truth of Jesus alone and nothing but him would ring true and that we would rest in that essential fact of our Christian faith. And that you would give us the grace to not only remember that ourselves, but to point one another to that, as there are so many trials in a body of this size, there's something going on in everyone's life, things are, hard when this world is broken. And I pray, Lord, that we would trust in you, rely on the strength that we have from you, and would point each other to you, never failingly, by your grace and strength to do that. Help us to do all that we do in this coming week for your glory. In your holy name, I pray. Amen.