

The Journey Toward Jerusalem (Matthew 19:1-2)

Jesus now moves south, leaving Galilee and heading into Judea, beyond the Jordan River. As usual, large crowds follow Him, and He heals them (v.2). This shows the continuing impact of His ministry—people were drawn to Him, not just to hear His teaching but also to experience His healing power.

Personal Application:

Even today, people follow Jesus for different reasons. Some seek Him out of desperation, others out of curiosity, and some out of a genuine desire to be with Him. What is my reason for following Jesus? Am I seeking Him only when I need something, or do I desire to be in His presence no matter what?

The Question of Divorce (Matthew 19:3-12)

The Pharisees come to Jesus with a trap question: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” (v.3). They are trying to force Jesus to take a side in a long-standing Jewish debate. Some rabbis taught that a man could divorce his wife for anything (even burning his dinner), while others said only serious moral failure was grounds for divorce.

Instead of debating rabbinic interpretations, Jesus points back to God’s original design for marriage:

“Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?” (v.4-5).

Jesus emphasizes that marriage is sacred and intended to be permanent. But He also acknowledges that because of human sinfulness, divorce was permitted in the law of Moses—not as God’s ideal, but as a concession to hardened hearts (v.8). However, He allows one exception: marital unfaithfulness (v.9).

The disciples, realizing how serious Jesus’ teaching is, say, “If that’s the case, it’s better not to marry!” (v.10). Jesus then speaks of celibacy, saying some people are called to remain unmarried for the kingdom of God’s sake (v.11-12).

Personal Application:

- Do I see marriage as God sees it? Marriage is not a casual contract but a covenant designed by God.
- Do I take my commitments seriously? Whether in marriage, friendships, or ministry, faithfulness matters.
- Am I seeking God’s will for my relationships? Whether I am called to marriage or singleness, am I surrendering my desires to Him?

If you’re married, commit to honoring and strengthening your marriage. If you’re single, ask God how He wants to use your season of singleness for His glory.

Jesus Welcomes the Children (Matthew 19:13-15)

Parents bring their children to Jesus for a blessing, but the disciples rebuke them (v.13). They see the children as an interruption, but Jesus sees them as the heart of the kingdom.

"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."
(v.14)

Personal Application:

- Do I have childlike faith? Children trust completely and love without conditions. Do I trust God the same way?
- Do I value children as Jesus does? Whether I have kids or not, do I take time to encourage, teach, and bless the next generation?
- Do I see interruptions as opportunities? Sometimes God brings people across my path, not as distractions, but as divine appointments.

Jesus made time for children—do I make time for what truly matters?

The Rich Young Ruler: The Cost of Following Jesus (Matthew 19:16-22)

A young man, wealthy and morally upright, comes to Jesus asking, "What good thing must I do to have eternal life?" (v.16). He assumes that eternal life is something to be earned through good deeds.

Jesus responds by pointing him to the commandments—but only the ones dealing with relationships with people (v.18-19). The man confidently replies, "I've kept all of these since I was young! What do I still lack?" (v.20). He believes he is good enough, but deep down, he knows something is missing.

Then Jesus gets to the heart of the issue:

"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (v.21).

This was not a universal command—it was specific to this young man's struggle. His wealth was his god. When faced with the choice, he walks away sorrowful (v.22).

Personal Application:

- What is holding me back from fully following Jesus? The rich young ruler's problem wasn't his wealth—it was his unwillingness to surrender everything.
- Do I think I can "earn" eternal life? The man wanted to "do" something. But salvation isn't about doing, it's about surrendering.
- Am I willing to let go of anything that competes with Jesus? Maybe it's money, career, comfort, relationships, or sin. Am I truly willing to lay it all down for Him?

Jesus doesn't just want part of my heart—He wants all of me.

The Danger of Riches (Matthew 19:23-26)

Jesus turns to His disciples and says, *“It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven”* (v.23). Then He gives a shocking analogy: *“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”* (v.24).

The disciples are stunned: *“Who then can be saved?”* (v.25). They assume that riches are a sign of God’s blessing. But Jesus corrects them, saying, *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* (v.26).

Personal Application:

- Do I trust in my own abilities more than in God? Jesus is saying that salvation is impossible through human effort—it is only by God’s grace.
- Do I see wealth as a tool or an obstacle? Money itself isn’t evil, but if it owns me, it can keep me from following Jesus.
- Do I believe that God can save anyone—even those who seem farthest from Him? Nothing is impossible with God!

Rewards for Following Jesus (Matthew 19:27-30)

Peter, always quick to speak, asks, *“Lord, we’ve left everything to follow You—what will we get in return?”* (v.27).

Jesus responds with a promise of future reward: those who have sacrificed for Him will be rewarded in the age to come (v.28-29). However, He warns: *“Many who are first will be last, and the last first”* (v.30).

Personal Application:

- Do I follow Jesus for the right reasons? Am I seeking Him for who He is, or just for what He can give me?
- Am I willing to sacrifice for Jesus? Following Him often means letting go of comfort, reputation, or even relationships.
- Do I have an eternal perspective? Earthly sacrifices are nothing compared to eternal rewards.

Conclusion: What is Holding Me Back?

Matthew 19 challenges us with three key questions:

1. Am I willing to trust Jesus like a child? (v.13-15)
2. Is there anything in my life that I love more than Jesus? (v.16-22)
3. Do I believe that God’s ways are worth any sacrifice? (v.27-30)

The rich young ruler walked away sad because he wasn’t ready to surrender. What about me? Is there anything I need to lay down so I can follow Jesus completely?

Jesus wants my whole heart. Will I give it to Him?