

Lesson #1 – The ‘cost’ of being a disciple

Let's begin in prayer, saying together:

God, we thank you that you are living and active, that you are present here with us, and that you reveal yourself by your Word and Spirit. Lord, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that understand what you want to teach us about yourself, and about our lives in you. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Next, read or listen to the story. As you do this, keep the following questions in mind:

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?
- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

Mark 10:17-31

A Rich Man Refuses to Follow Jesus

¹⁷Jesus started to leave, but a man ran to him and bowed down on his knees before him. The man asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get the life that never ends?”

¹⁸Jesus answered, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good. ¹⁹And you know his commands: ‘You must not murder anyone, you must not commit adultery, you must not steal, you must not lie, you must not cheat, you must respect your father and mother ...’”

²⁰The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

²¹Jesus looked at the man in a way that showed how much he cared for him. He said, “There is still one thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to those who are poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

²²The man was upset when Jesus told him to give away his money. He didn't want to do this, because he was very rich. So, he went away sad.

²³Then Jesus looked at his followers and said to them, “It will be very hard for a rich person to enter God's kingdom!”

²⁴The followers were amazed at what Jesus said. But he said again, “My children, it is very hard to enter God’s kingdom! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s kingdom!”

²⁶The followers were even more amazed and said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, “That is something people cannot do, but God can. He can do anything.”

²⁸Peter said to Jesus, “We left everything to follow you!”

²⁹Jesus said, “I can promise that everyone who has left their home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farm for me and for the Good News about me ³⁰will get a hundred times more than they left. Here in this world they will get more homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms. And with these things they will have persecutions. But in the world that is coming they will also get the reward of eternal life. ³¹Many people who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And the people who have the lowest place now will have the highest place then.”

Responding:

Spend some time responding to the general questions below, using the space provided to record your thoughts.

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?

- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?

- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

Now, spend some time drilling deeper into the story, and the meaning it might hold for your life, by responding to the following additional questions:

- Have you ever been asked to 'lose' something in order to 'find' something else?
*(For example, maybe you've had to give up certain activities that you enjoy in order to focus more exclusively on something else – like getting **REALLY** good at piano, or some sport.)*
- Reflecting back on that experience of *losing* and *finding*, would you now say that the sacrifice was worth it? Why or why not?
- It seems as if Jesus might be asking his followers to make similar sacrifices in following him. Why do you think he would do this?
- It seems like Jesus is kinda picking on rich people. How does that make you feel? (especially considering that, here in North America, we are amongst the richest in the world) Can you think of any other places where Jesus talked about money? What did he have to say? Why do you think he liked to talk about money so much?
- If Jesus were here right now, what questions might you want to ask him (related to what you have seen in this story)? What might he want to ask you?

Conclude this lesson with a time of prayer, speaking with God as a friend (remember... ***The Lord is here; His Spirit is with us!***) about anything that you have noted above, or anything else that is on your heart and mind.