

Sunday, September 25, 2016  
Pastor Don Denyes

## Introduction to Mark 10:23-31

Famous nineteenth century missionary, David Livingstone, thought of Matthew 28:20 as his “life verse.” Matthew 28:20 is a beautiful promise that Jesus makes to His disciples, right before ascending to Heaven, in which He says He will be with His disciples until the end of the age. This single promise is part and parcel to the great promise of Christianity: that God dwells among His people.

Other religions emphasize how a person might work their way towards God. Some of these include paths of suffering. Others include keeping certain moral laws. All of them could be categorized—in reality—as impossibilities. It is impossible for human beings to know God fully, make up for their sins, and spend eternity with God. So how can God dwell among His people? Answer: He must make it happen. Thankfully, Jesus reminds us that with God all things are possible.

## Context

Jesus has just finished speaking with the rich man. The rich man refused to follow Jesus because he was too attached to his great wealth and possessions. Jesus loved this man, and recognized his need, but the man would not follow Him. In this scene, Jesus demonstrates the necessity for those who come to Him to come to Him as little children do, and not as accomplished adults. And while it may seem impossible for someone like the rich man to repent and trust Christ, Jesus informs us that nothing is impossible with God...

## Structure

- I. Jesus explains the danger of loving riches (23-25)
- II. Jesus explains how salvation works (26-27)
- III. Jesus affirms the reward for those who leave their sinful pleasures for His sake and the gospel (28-31)

**Read and Reflect** *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read Mark 10:23-31

“The God of the Impossible”

23- Stunning Statement

24- Curious Analogy

27- Amazing Revelation

- Power of Salvation belongs to God
- Promise of Reward comes from God

29- This Age: Relationships

Persecutions

30- Coming Age: Eternal Life

The way to navigate through this life is to remember:

- 1) God can do the impossible
- 2) No one loses who honestly serves the Lord

## Discuss

- 1) Why is material wealth so enticing? Where does the desire for it come from? And why would someone be inclined to desire it more than a relationship with Jesus?
- 2) According to this passage, the value system of the kingdom of God is vastly different than our natural value system (see Mark 10:31). How can we re-orient our values to flourish under God's rule rather than struggle under the weight of temptations to sin? In other words, how can we learn to think the way Jesus does about issues like material wealth?
- 3) Jesus said, "all things are possible with God." Have you ever found yourself limiting Him in your mind? In what circumstances did you find yourself doing that? Why do we tend to lack faith that God can accomplish things that seem impossible to us?
- 4) What role does reward play in the Christian life? Is it wrong for the Christian to seek to obey God out of a desire for eternal reward?
- 5) What is something you have sacrificed since you have become a Christian (see Mark 10:28)? Is there anything you sometimes wish you could have back? Why? How can we encourage each other as a group to press on knowing that the reward that awaits is greater than anything we've given up?

**Go Deeper** *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

Gospel Connections: The gospel is all about God making possible what seems impossible. It is not that we were weak in our sins or terribly sick in our sins... we were dead in our sins (Eph. 2). So whether rich or poor, educated or not, “moral” or immoral, God is able to save. We fool ourselves if we start to believe that we had some part in our salvation. Certainly in our experience we may have made a choice to become a Christian, but we also know from Scripture that what seems to be the case isn’t always. It is a work of God any time a sinner repents and trusts in Christ.

Whole Bible Connections: Salvation has always been all of grace. Jonah the prophet recognized that salvation belongs to the LORD (Jon. 2:9), and many before and after him did as well. Abram was an idol worshipper that the LORD saved from that and gave him the promise of a great reward—the blessing of many nations through his family. Moses was raised as a pagan Egyptian who murdered a guy and spent much of his life on the run and the LORD saved him from that. There are many such stories in the Old Testament. While many people today believe that the God of the Old Testament is all about judgment and the New Testament God is all about grace and love, that is clearly not the case.

Theological Connections: The basic theological premise to this passage is that God is the only truly free being. While we are finite creatures who have many limitations (whether we choose to acknowledge them or not) and often see things as impossible, God is omnipotent and therefore free to do as He pleases (Ps. 115:3). We must remember this basic distinction: that God is the all-powerful, infinite creator; we are the often-powerless, finite creatures. If we fail to grasp that fundamental distinction, we will become discouraged when our efforts to win people to Christ do not end in conversion. We will also burn ourselves out trying to convince people or trying to “save” people, when the only One who does the convincing in the soul is the Holy Spirit and the only One able to save is the Lord Jesus Christ.