

Follow – Walking in the Way of Jesus

The Deception of Wealth

Mark 10:13-31

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Review: The Romans were amazed at two things of early Christians – 1) Their commitment to keep sex within marriage covenant and 2) Their radical generosity and willingness to share and give away their possessions.

Mark 10:13-31 SUMMARY: The Rich Young Ruler didn't FAIL because he LOVED money too much but because he TRUSTED it more than Jesus. The disciples were ASTONISHED because Jesus was dismantling the very system they thought proved God's BLESSING.

Mark 10:13–16 — The children and “receiving” the kingdom

Children embodied dependence, vulnerability, and lack of achievement. Jesus turns this into a GOOD thing.

[16] After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands on them and blessed them.

- Jesus EMBRACES them – Jesus INITIATES closeness.
Children are not climbing into His arms. He gathers them in. That is grace enacted.
- Jesus BLESSES them by GRACE – Speaks God's favor onto them which confers identity and promise.
The Kingdom is bestowed in blessing, not achievement.
- Jesus LAYS hands on them – He shows them acceptance.
You lay hands on people as a declaration of inclusion. Belonging precedes behaving.

Mark 10:17–22 — The rich man: moral seriousness meets the one thing he won't release.

The man is ADMIRABLE on the surface (eager, respectful, moral, earnest).

“Sell... give to the poor... and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” compresses:

- Relinquishment of false SECURITY
- MERCY toward the vulnerable
- ALLEGIANCE to Jesus as the true TREASURE

The Disciples' Astonishment - The disciples are **“AMAZED,”** then **“even more ASTONISHED.”** Why?

Because Jesus has OVERTURNED a core ASSUMPTION of their WORLDVIEW:

- Wealth was seen as a sign of God's favor
- Poverty was often read as divine displeasure

The Rich Young Ruler as a Case Study in Self-Deception

- Physically - He feels secure
- Emotionally - He feels competent and composed
- Spiritually - He feels obedient and approved

Jesus' invitation collapses all three illusions at once. Wealth deceives us by making us feel more secure than we are, more capable than we should be, and more righteous than we ever could be, which is why Jesus must lovingly confront it if we are to truly follow Him

Q: What possession, status, or security do I treat as proof that I'm “okay,” rather than resting in the reality that in Christ I am already an heir of God?

Date: Feb. 1st, 2026

Series: Follow

Title: The Deception of Wealth

Primary Passage: Mark 10:13-31

Secondary Passage: Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:11, 1 Peter 1:4, Revelation 21:7

Big Question: Why is wealth a hindrance to discipleship?

Big Idea: Wealth deceives us by making us feel more secure than we are, more capable than we should be, and more righteous than we ever could be, which is why Jesus must lovingly confront it if we are to truly follow Him.

Keywords: Generosity, Wealth, Children, Rebuke, Emotion, Love, Dismay, Direction, Self-Deception, Security

GOING DEEPER – Life Application Questions

When was hope challenging this week? How did you sense the presence and promises of Christ elevating your hope?

Read Mark 10:13-31. What do the children, the rich man, and the disciples each assume qualifies a person to receive the kingdom? How does Jesus quietly overturn every one of those assumptions?

Why does Jesus look at the rich man with love before exposing what he lacks, and what does that reveal about the difference between moral sincerity and true dependence? How does the disciples' question, "Then who can be saved?" expose that they were trusting in something other than grace, even after leaving everything?

What do you rely on; achievement, morality, security, reputation, or wealth, to reassure yourself that life is safe and your future secure (apart from Christ)?

Ask yourself: What would it look like for me to receive the kingdom like a child, empty-handed, unqualified, and trusting that Jesus gives what I cannot earn?

What concrete act of release, generosity, or obedience is Jesus inviting me into this week as a way of living as someone who already shares in His inheritance?

Spend some time praying through this passage. Read the promises regarding inheritance in Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:11, 1 Peter 1:4, and Revelation 21:7. Express gratitude for the blessing of Christ and ask for the faith to identify when you may be tempted to trust wealth over Him.