

More than Sunday: Part 2

Childlike Faith

A Look at Faith, Dependence, and the Barriers to Following Jesus

Mark 10: In this passage we explore an important question about faith, dependence, and the things that sometimes keep us from fully following Jesus.

Before diving into the text, consider a simple question: *Is there anything in your life that you probably should let go of, but you haven't?*

Maybe it's something small. For example, I have an old Under Armour shirt that I've owned for years. It started out black with red lettering, but over time it has faded to gray with pink lettering. My wife has reminded me more than once that there are other shirts in the world, but I refuse to believe her. I wore it again this past week. It's just one of those things I can't quite let go of.

Others might be holding on to a pair of jeans that used to fit, hoping that if they lose a few pounds someday, they'll work again. At some point you may have to let go of that dream.

For some people it's a phone that's cracked, outdated, and barely holding a charge, yet they keep it anyway. For others it's clutter—collections of items filling a basement or storage space that should probably be cleared out but never are.

Why do we hold onto things like this? Sometimes it's comfort. Sometimes it's familiarity. Sometimes it's about control or security.

But the deeper question is not about old clothes or phones.

What Might Be Keeping You from Following Jesus?

On a spiritual level, the question becomes more serious:

Is there something in your life that you are holding onto that keeps you from following Jesus?

For many people, the answer is yes.

It might be a relationship. Perhaps you know the relationship is not healthy or does not honor the Lord, yet the fear of being alone keeps you holding onto it.

For others it might be something you're viewing online—something that offers temporary escape but ultimately brings guilt or shame.

Sometimes the barrier is **comfort**. Comfort itself is not wrong, but it can grow into something unhealthy if we begin avoiding anything that might stretch us or make us uncomfortable.

For some people the struggle is **doubt**. They have heard about Jesus and may even believe in Him, but certain questions or experiences make them wonder whether God truly has their best interests in mind.

These things promise comfort, security, or fulfillment. Yet when we really examine them, they often leave us empty. Still, we hold onto them.

And that is exactly the kind of struggle we see in Mark 10.

A Man Who Seemed to Have Everything

In this passage we meet a young man who appears to have everything going for him. He is young, wealthy, influential, and respected. In today's culture he would likely be someone admired and followed.

If you looked at his life from the outside, you would probably assume he had it all together.

Yet something is missing.

An uneasiness in his life drives him to Jesus, where he asks one of the most important questions a person can ask: *"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"*

This question immediately draws our attention. Out of all the questions someone could ask, this is the one that matters most.

Childlike Faith: The Way to Enter the Kingdom

Before meeting this young man, the passage presents a different scene. People are bringing little children to Jesus so that He might bless them. These are infants and toddlers being carried to Him by their parents and grandparents.

But the disciples begin rebuking the families, telling them to go away.

Jesus is not pleased.

In fact, the text says He was indignant. He tells them:

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Then He makes a powerful statement:

“Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Jesus uses children as an illustration of what genuine faith looks like.

Children are dependent. They know they need help. They rely on others to care for them. They are also hopeful, affectionate, and trusting.

Jesus is not calling for childish faith, but childlike faith—a posture of dependence and trust toward God.

We cannot earn salvation through our own effort. We must rely completely on Christ.

And even after becoming followers of Jesus, that same dependence continues. As we grow in faith, we increasingly recognize our need for Him every single day.

The Rich Young Ruler’s Question

Immediately after this lesson on childlike faith, we encounter a striking contrast.

A man runs up to Jesus, falls on his knees, and asks: *“Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”*

The man appears admirable. He is successful, wealthy, influential, respectful, and moral. In many ways he represents the kind of person people look up to.

That is why it is surprising to see him wrestling with such a question. But his question reveals that despite everything he has, something is still missing.

Jesus Clarifies What “Good” Means

Jesus responds in verse 18:

“Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.”

In Jewish culture at that time, the word **good** was reserved for God. It was not used casually the way we use it today.

So Jesus is directing the man’s attention to something significant: the conversation they are about to have is not merely advice from a teacher. It comes from **God Himself**.

The Commandments and Moral Living

Jesus then references several commandments:

- Do not murder
- Do not commit adultery
- Do not steal
- Do not give false testimony
- Do not defraud
- Honor your father and mother

These commandments come from the second half of the Ten Commandments, which focus on how we relate to others.

The young man responds confidently: *“Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy.”*

He is not claiming perfection, but he is saying that he has taken these commands seriously. From the time he was old enough to understand right and wrong, he has tried to live a moral life.

Perhaps at this point he feels hopeful. Maybe he thinks he is close to receiving the answer he wants.

But something deeper still needs to be addressed.

A Loving Challenge from Jesus

Verse 21 begins with a powerful detail: *“Jesus looked at him and loved him.”*

Before challenging the man, Jesus expresses compassion. This man is sincere. He genuinely wants to know the answer.

Jesus is not trying to embarrass him. He is trying to help him see the truth.

Like a doctor who must apply painful pressure to set a broken bone, Jesus is about to expose the real issue in the man’s heart.

He says: *“One thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

Jesus is not establishing a universal rule that every believer must sell everything. Throughout Scripture we see wealthy believers who use their resources generously for God’s purposes.

Instead, Jesus is addressing the *specific barrier* in this man’s life.

His wealth has become his functional god. It is the one thing he cannot let go of.

The Man’s Devastating Response

Verse 22 tells us the man’s reaction: *“At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.”*

The original language suggests something stronger than simple sadness. He is shocked and devastated. He came running eagerly to Jesus, hoping for an answer. Instead he walks away grieving.

But he does not leave confused. He understands exactly what Jesus is asking. He simply cannot bring himself to do it.

His wealth has become central to his identity. Letting go of it would feel like losing himself.

Identifying Our Own Barriers

This story naturally leads to a personal question:

What is the thing you are holding onto that keeps you from fully following Jesus?

For some it may be a relationship. For others it may be approval from people. Maybe it is money or the sense of security money provides.

Every person has at least one area that becomes a barrier. Sometimes that barrier keeps someone from initially trusting Christ. Other times it is the recurring temptation that continually trips up believers.

Identifying that barrier is an important step in learning to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

When Following Jesus Feels Impossible

After the rich young ruler walks away, the disciples are stunned. In their culture, wealth was often seen as evidence of God's blessing. If someone like this man could not follow Jesus, they wondered, who could?

The task seems impossible.

But that brings us back to the earlier lesson about **childlike faith**.

Following Jesus becomes impossible when we rely on ourselves. It becomes possible when we depend completely on Him.

The Ultimate Rich Young Ruler

Pastor and author Tim Keller, in his book *Jesus the King*, offers a powerful insight about this passage.

Keller points out that Jesus Himself could be described as the **ultimate rich young ruler**.

At this point in the Gospel story, Jesus is around 31 years old—a young man. Yet before coming to earth He possessed incomprehensible glory, wealth, joy, and love in heaven.

And He willingly gave it all up.

Keller summarizes the idea this way:

Jesus is essentially saying, "I am giving it all away for you. Now you give away everything to follow me. If I gave away my big 'all' to get to you, can you give away your little 'all' to follow me? I won't ask you to do anything I haven't already done."

Jesus left the riches of heaven to come to earth. Ultimately, He demonstrated His love through His sacrifice on the cross. When we wonder whether God truly has our best interests in mind, the answer is found at the cross.

Jesus never asks us to surrender something that He Himself has not already surrendered in an even greater way.

Letting Go and Trusting Christ

It is through the love and sacrifice of Jesus that we find the power to live with childlike faith.

To say:

“I let go, and I trust you.”

“I release this thing I’m holding onto because you, Lord Jesus, are worth it.”

So the question remains:

What is the thing you are not yet willing to let go of in order to follow Jesus?

Identify it. Bring it before the Lord. Release it to Him.

Like the disciples, you may feel that surrendering it seems impossible.

But look again at Jesus—at His love, His sacrifice, and His willingness to give up everything for us.

This life is temporary. In this story, the young man clung to wealth that might last only a few decades.

But when someone crosses the line of faith and trusts in Christ, something extraordinary happens. Our sins are forgiven. We become friends of God. We are welcomed into His family as His children.

And because we belong to Christ, we share in His inheritance.

The invitation of Jesus remains open:

Lay down what you are holding onto and follow Him.