**10v17-27 #33 The problem with money**

* Said last week: got to receive KoG like a little child – baby – or /enter it.
	+ Children: /money. /Resources -> /buy way into heaven.
		- Grown ups: make a large donation – God will be pleased. Build a church. Found a charity. Leave a legacy. Stand me in good stead when it comes to pearly gates.
		- No: children have nothing. Dependent.
		- Be like children, says J.
* Love way: **v23** Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!”
	+ His disc = children -> faithful ones in the story. They’re the ones w childlike faith: got nothing except J.
		- Left jobs – family – stability – security to follow.
		- Literally got nothing – except J.
	+ See today: s/o failed to enter Kingdom. Refused to come like a child. His obstacle: wealth – money.
* Key psg for preachers who want to get rich:
	+ Good man comes to J: J look at all good I’ve done.
	+ /Enough. Lacking in area of giving. Give more – do more – more generous. Then you’ll be worthy of KoG.
		- Now we’ll hand round the offering baskets.
		- Preacher gets rich – cong gets poor – same time: false gospel that you can buy God off w money.
		- Better way to understand.

Meet main character today:

* **Good man:**
	+ Ran up to Jesus –> enthusiasm.
	+ Fell on his knees ->humility.
	+ Recognises who J is: good teacher[[1]](#endnote-1).
		- Jewish thinking: only God is good. Rem: Moses asks God: show me your glory[[2]](#endnote-2). God: hide behind that rock – I will cause all my goodness to pass I front of you. The glory of God is in his goodness. He alone is altogether good.
		- Man -> Jesus – good teacher – teacher from God.
	+ What must I do to inherit eternal life? -> asking qns.
		- B teaches: after die – judgement – heaven or hell -> most impt qn of all.
* Man is **morally upright**:
	+ J says, You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother.’
		- 10C + /defraud. Interesting: J added that. Many rich ppl get rich by oppressing poor ppl of course. Lots of OT commands protecting poor[[3]](#endnote-3).
	+ **v20** “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Good man!
		- S/t we think: see how gospel is for bad ppl – drug dealers – car thieves etc – hear their testimonies. But what abt good ppl in my office? Family? Lovely auntie?
		- This man was v good. But a v good person can be v far from Kingdom:
	+ This man just claimed to have kept the whole law – since child.
		- Last time: special grace for little children.
		- He’s saying: since I’ve understood – since the age when I’ve been accountable for my actions – kept it all.
* **Believe him?**
	+ Sounds good until you say that to the SoG –> perfect man.
		- Like if you claim to speak fluent French on CV[[4]](#endnote-4). – sounds good until interviewer speaks fluent French.
		- Standing before the SoG, claiming to be perfect.
	+ Suppose: technically keep most of them – appearance to s/o else. But J always more interested in heart:
		- Sure, /adultery. Lust? Adultery w/o opportunity.
		- Sure, /murder. Anger? Murder w/o courage.
		- Sure, love God – turn up to ch -> In honesty: inside: love money more.
* J /angry - **v21** Jesus looked at him and loved him – pity – s/t quite endearing abt a delusional person:
	+ 5 y/o: *I don't want to go to my school any more. I've learned everything they're teaching me now*[[5]](#endnote-5).
		- That look: think: full of love – but /have a clue do you.
	+ What’s the kindest thing J could do for him? Kindest thing God can do for anyone who is delusional abt own goodness?
		- Burst the bubble. J shows him what he’s truly like.
	+ Good ppl in your office – kind BiL - lovely auntie: need to understand they’re not as good as they think.
		- Discover: law utterly condemns – every one of us – exposes deepest recesses of our souls – finds: filth.
		- When s/o says: /perfect. Agree wholeheartedly. By God’s standards - all sinners – all failed test – all need forgiveness.
	+ Wonderful thing: come to Jesus with that: fearful at what he will say – find: looks at you and loves you.
* **So how does J do that for this man? Sets a test for his heart:** One thing you lack.
	+ That’s where it all came crashing down for him:
		- /Think he did lack. Thought: all +ve.
		- Think: wanted affirmation: what must I do to inherit eternal life?
			* Expected: nothing – just carry on as you are.
			* Do? You have eternal life.
			* That’s what most ppl believe isn’t it?
	+ Instead: you lack.
		- Terrible realisation: /enough. At this, his face fell.
		- Everything I’ve dedicated my life to – good moral behaviour - /enough.
		- Pretty devastating.
	+ What you need to do – says J – get rid of all your stuff – give it to the poor – then follow me.
		- J: Put urself in a posn: /fall back on - /safety net. Only me.
	+ Problem w wealth – money – tend to reply on it - money can buy us out of trouble – keep us comfortable – stop us from needing to reply on God’s protection – provision.
		- Ppl w money tend to think: I can fix my own situation – whatever it is - /need God[[6]](#endnote-6).
* This man: great wealth. Loved his money. His money was more impt to him than following J. His money kept him from J.
	+ He went away sad, because he had great wealth – and he loved it very much. More than God. More than J.
	+ J asked him to choose: exposed his heart. Heart said: no. Walked.
* **Does that mean everyone has to sell everything they have** & give to poor – before – follow J?
	+ No. But here’s a qn: if you had to do that, would you? If J said: give away everything you have – follow me – would you?
		- How much is J worth to you?
		- More than freakishly over-priced takeaway coffee?
		- More than fancy phone?
		- ^Car? ^ House?
	+ What does your attitude to money say abt your attitude to J?
		- Spend ^holidays than give away?
		- Spend ^new car payments than give away?
* Been a long time since our country faced a financial crisis of this scale.
	+ Fuel prices - energy bills – inflation.
		- Most ppl: reduction in income.
		- Some here: genuine poverty. ?how pay gas-electric.
	+ Wish: massive pot of cash we could hand out to neediest among us.
		- Some of us: plenty. Some: great need.
		- Church community: /going hungry – cold.
	+ Faith problem: those of us with more: do we love J more than our money?
		- After that it’s a logistical problem – how do we get money to those who need it?
		- Say: real need? /Quiet. Have money, want to help: /Quiet.
* J disciples are amazed at all this.
	+ J: glint in his eye: Children, how hard it is [for rich ppl] to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.
	+ **All about? Ppl tried to find an explanation:**
		- May have heard: Gate in wall nickname “eye of needle” – really hard to get through – unload camel.
		- Problem[[7]](#endnote-7): no-one suggested that until Bishop Anselm of Canterbury in C11.
		- Nowhere in Jer that historically – archeologically fits[[8]](#endnote-8).
	+ Mean? Tells us:
		- The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”
	+ Point of story: impossible to fit camel -> eye of needle.
		- Reckon: J looked up – camel walking past. As much chance of getting that through eye of a needle – than a rich person -> KoG.
		- Hyperbole – funny!
	+ Saying? Rich person /Xn - /follow J. Impossible. /Happen. Radical! Point of the story!
		- If you have money: always master you. Always dominate you. Always love it.
		- **Ecclesiastes 5:10** Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.
		- J – elsewhere **Luke 16** No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.
		- Parable of soils – s/t gospel comes – starts to grow in s/o – looks promising - but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful[[9]](#endnote-9) Money deceives us: happy & satisfied -> one more game, sofa, pair of shoes whatever. Deceitful stuff, money.
* Disciples: Who then can be saved? Great qn
	+ Need God to intervene. With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.
	+ Humanly – naturally: impossible. We have no hope. Most of us instinctively love money - /change on own.
		- Need God to intervene. He can change our hearts. He can show you a greater treasure than all the money in all the world - a better object of your affections - Jesus himself.
	+ For a rich person to enter Kingdom: God must open eyes to see J as supremely wonderful – better than all the houses and cars and sofas and phones and power and sex and influence and everything.
		- God has to do that. Only God.
		- When you’ve gained the supreme treasure – far more willing to let go of other little treasures.
		- Got to see his death on cross – for your sin – did that for you – b/c of you – suffered & died on our behalf. Glory of that.
* Love how:
	+ J looked at the man and loved him (**v21**)
	+ J looked at his disciples (**v27**) when they’re aghast
		- Could be trans: gazed. Intensity.
		- Started service today – invited you to *turn your eyes upon Jesus.*
	+ J looks at you today – through scriptures – s/t change today?
		- Chasing after the stuff of this world? /Millionaire to have this problem.
		- Can own the name of J but in reality – in actual fact: love money – stuff - so much – he comes distant 2nd.
		- Will you look to him – ask him to reveal his glory to you – highest treasure - will you look away?

**Video: It’s not enough**

 Ecclesiastes in 4 minutes. Can have everything – but /satisfy

* Can have all wealth – all pleasures – all honour of every person – indulge every dark desire – devote life to doing good -> not enough to satisfy our souls.
* Only Jesus. Come to him?

**Sing: May the Peace of God our Heavenly Father**

**Benediction**

**Proverbs 20:8-9**

Give me neither poverty nor riches,

 but give me only my daily bread.

Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you

 and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’

Or I may become poor and steal,

 and so dishonour the name of my God.

*Lord, this week and always - help us be content with what we have – and generous with what you’ve given. And so may your peace go with us. Amen.*

1. Jesus’ comment about only God being good might be a rebuke to the man for using the words lightly, albeit it in a truthfully. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Exodus 33:18-23; Deuteronomy 24:14-15 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Eg Leviticus 19:13,15; [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Apparently, most people lie on their CV. Putting numbers to this is very difficult. Here are links to two British recruitment companies. One says 92.5% of people lie. The other says 50%. Either way, it’s clearly commonplace.
<https://www.cv-library.co.uk/recruitment-insight/tareas-brits-are-willing-to-lie-about-on-their-cv/>
<https://responsewebrecruitment.co.uk/online-recruitment-blog/why-do-people-lie-on-a-cv/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. That was our little borrowed one. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cut for space:

	* Me: /always had enough to be comfortable – except for a few short periods. Always known I can go a long way to fix kids’ problems by throwing cash at it.
		+ Bullied b/c of xyz – buy nicer shoes. /Want to - /bad idea. Option always avail.
		+ Daughter living in Bham last 12mo. If nec – drive – train down – fetch her.
			- Abt move to S Korea. If it came to it: fly out to help her.
		+ End of first lockdown: child had a problem /fixed w money – influence – letter-writing – begging – negotiation. Literally: /nothing. No power – no ability – nothing to help her.
			- First time in my life: entrusting her into your hands. Said a thousand times before. First time: true. Inc humbling. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Go down the rabbit hole here! <https://classictheology.org/2021/10/12/through-the-eye-of-an-actual-needle-the-fake-gate-theory/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. There’s plenty of tourist traps though… <http://www.best-travel-deals-tips.com/jerusalem-eye-of-the-needle-gate.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Mark 4:19 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)