

All Things are Possible with God

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost) is Mark 10:23-31. This text is a continuation of the young man unwilling to give up his wealth. Jesus goes from working with the young man to teaching his disciples about wealth and the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells the disciples that very often the wealthy, like the young man, cannot give up their love and trust in their wealth. They were amazed at what Jesus told them.

Jesus goes to explain further pointing out that *“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich person to enter the kingdom of God”* (v. 25). This really blows their minds.

A camel, proverbially the largest animal, had a better chance of slipping through the eye of a needle, proverbially the smallest opening, than the most favored human being had of entering the kingdom of God through works. (TLSB)

At this point Jesus says: *With man this is impossible, but not with God* (v. 27). The issue is not wealth but what people trust for eternal life. Salvation is totally the work of God. Every attempt to enter the kingdom on the basis of achievement or merit is futile. Apart from the grace of God, no one can be saved. *“But all things are possible with God”* (v. 27)

In verses 28-31 Peter appears to accept Jesus’ statement that the rich do not merit the kingdom. Yet, presumably Peter does not understand Jesus as saying that saving oneself is impossible, but rather understands it to be just “difficult.” As a result, Peter may be smugly pointing to the disciples’ sacrificial acts, expecting merit before Jesus. They have forsaken everything. Jesus indicates that they indeed have a share in Jesus’ blessing but also in his suffering.

The life of discipleship is a combination of promise and persecution, blessing and suffering. God takes nothing from a Christian without making multiplied restoration in a new and glorious form.

The statement *“first will be last”* (v.31) is a warning against pride in sacrificial accomplishments such as Peter had manifested.

We, too, may at times wonder if our lives are good enough to merit salvation. But, thanks be to God that he has done everything needful for our eternal life. We can be comforted by the knowledge that all things are possible with God when it comes to our salvation.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus Christ, thank you that you did everything to save us for eternity. Help us to see that we can trust you solely when it comes to being a part of your kingdom. Amen