

March 17, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church
Message Series: The Gospel of Mark
Week 38: “All Things are Possible with God”
Text: Mark 10:17-31

We’re unpacking and understanding the Book of Mark. The Gospel writer’s audience is Roman believers and he really focuses on presenting Jesus as the Messiah King and Suffering Servant and works to answer three questions “who is Jesus?”, “what did Jesus come to do?”, and “what does Jesus expect of you?”

Since I’m a guy, I don’t go to the doctor much, or at all. When I’m filling out paperwork that asks for my primary care physician, I don’t have an answer or I write “Google”. I don’t know many, if any, people that like going to the doctor, and we will live with many discomforts and just hope “it will get better” rather than go. But worse than not going to the doctor at all would be going to a doctor that cares only about your feelings. We may think this sounds caring and merciful, but is it really? If you go in with a nagging pain, would it be caring to just tell you what a nice and helpful person you are and how you need to focus on that. Or just try to mask the symptoms rather than find the cause of the pain. If I do go to the doctor, I want them to tell me what’s wrong and what we need to do, if anything, to take care of it. The most merciful thing a physician can do, is tell me the truth about my condition, to put his or her finger on the source of the problem, even if it’s upsetting at first.

Let’s READ our TEXT

So here’s a man that comes to Jesus with seemingly the right posture and attitude, the right question, and comes to the right person. Jesus’ response is not at all what we would expect though, because He doesn’t look at the outside, but sees the heart. Jesus lists a few rules that he needs to keep, and the man responds that he kept all of them since he was young. He’s a good guy, a nice guy, a wealthy guy, which are all signs that God had blessed him to the people around him. But there’s a nagging sense of something missing, and because Jesus loves this man He exposes for him what it is. That although he might have kept all these outward rules well, he was breaking the first commandment – to have no other gods before the one true God, and greatest commandment “to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength”. No one could see that but Jesus, and in love, Jesus being the Great Physician put his finger on the terminal disease in this man’s life, and in love, gave him the cure. You’d think this would have been great news, but instead he leaves sad. This story is recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke’s gospels and is the only story where someone leaves Jesus’ presence saddened. Many leave rejoicing, many leave furious, but only one leaves disheartened.

What this man wanted was to check another box and just make extra sure that he was good enough to get into heaven. For him eternal life was a place not a person, a destination not a relationship. He wanted eternal life, but not the Giver of Life. Depending on what you’ve been told, you too may not understand what eternal life is, or in your living this life, you may have lost sight of what it is.

Eternal life is found when we realize our deep need, and are willing to abandon everything in order to know, love, and follow Jesus.

Eternal Life is Found When We...

✓ **Realize Our Deep Need – v 17-20**

- Hopelessness of our sin
- Never good enough on our own

Jesus’ first words to this man are to help him understand God’s holiness. No one is good but God alone. Only God is good. Only God is perfect. If we do not see God’s brilliant perfection, we will always think we’re pretty good, and should

definitely be on the good side of whatever awaits us after death, but once we see how incredibly holy He is, all of the sudden we know we are hopelessly unworthy of being anywhere near God's presence. This is a struggle for most Americans though – to really think we're not good enough for heaven on our own. A 2016 Barna Group survey showed that 73% of Americans identify as Christian, and 55% believe that being a good person is enough to get you into heaven. That's where we are as a culture. I've preached 96 funerals, and the vast majority for people not connected to a local church. Almost every single one of those families believed their loved one was in heaven, and the only assurance most all of them had was because they were a good person. They had no testimony of that person loving Jesus or even speaking of Jesus, but were convinced that person was with Jesus. Nice and good people will populate hell probably more than other kind of person, because compared to God's holiness, there is no one who is nice enough or good enough without Jesus. We have to see our deep need and once we do, we...

✓ **Are Willing to Abandon Everything – v 21-27**

- Because only Jesus is King
- Nothing compares to Him

We have many pictures of Jesus and ways to describe Him that we like throughout the Scriptures. Most of those pictures we like the most center around what He has done and can do for us. Those are very true pictures as we know from John 15 that "without [Jesus] we can do nothing". One reality of who Jesus is that we don't think on too much and how it should impact our lives, is Jesus as King. Of course we're thankful He is King when it comes to Him defeating sin and death, and one day conquering the devil once and for all, but we don't as much celebrate Him as King when it comes to us submitting our pet sins and confessing our cosmic treason and thinking of ourselves as slaves to Him. So many of us would rather have a Christian version of Hinduism where we can worship all kinds of gods and still win in the end. Where we could worship our wealth and the things it affords us, our children, our hobbies, our children's hobbies, our job, our health, or anything else not named Jesus. Now, here's the deal: Jesus may not call you to walk away from everything to follow Him, but have you asked Him or listened to Him about that? Is there anything that you spend time pursuing that if Jesus were to say, "Stop following that, and start following me" that would cause you to become disheartened? It's never that Jesus is calling you to miss out on something. That's the voice of the enemy. It's not that He calls you abandon anything or everything and then you're empty. It's to empty you of death and fill you with life. It's just as the great theologian J.I. Packer said *"Still He seeks the fellowship of his people, and sends them both sorrows and joys in order to detach their love from other things and attach it to Himself."* Then we hear Jesus make this incredible statement to His disciples about those with wealth and the impossibility of entering the Kingdom. The disciples are blown away by His illustration and asked who can even be saved. Jesus tells them that it is a work only God can do. That this miraculous work of grace causes us to see our deep need because of sin, and be willing to abandon everything in order to...

✓ **Know, Love, and Follow Jesus – v 28-31**

- Becoming more satisfied in Jesus
- And less mesmerized with the world

Here's how this true story ends... Peter is always great for us and he asked what we're all thinking. "Umm, hey Jesus, we left everything. What about us?" Jesus doesn't rebuke Peter here, but answers Him and, in that, answers us. "You get back 100 fold everything you've left through the blessing of faith family, the church. You've had to leave biological

family? You get eternal family members. You've left a house? You've got faith family that will take you in. Not everything will be easy though. You also get persecutions in this life as well, but keep your eyes on the eternal reward – life with Christ forever.” Then Jesus ends with a reminder that the value system of the world is backwards. He has an upside-down economy where the first in this world are last and the last in this world are first. Are we trying to make a name for ourselves here or find worth and value by the world's standards, or are we willing to submit to our True King and abandon whatever's needed to know, love, and follow Him more fully? In John 17:3 Jesus said, “This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” **Jesus' definition of eternal life is about a relationship not a destination; a person not a place. *If you're wanting heaven, but not Jesus, then you're not going to heaven.* The hope of Jesus' words is that your security and worth will come from knowing and being known by the King of Creation without earning it or you trying to be good enough. His desire in all of this is to take your eyes and affections off of things that cannot fill you, and set them on the only thing that can – Jesus.** This is a process called sanctification, and it ends when you breathe your last breath. So don't stress over all the ways you need to be more like Jesus, just start somewhere. What is it that most keeps you from knowing, loving, and following Jesus? Do you even know and love Jesus? You cannot follow Him if you don't know Him.

Storying Mark 10:17-31

Spend a little time coming up with your own Observation and Interpretation questions. Look back at past message notes for help.

Questions

- **Observation: What does it say?**

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- **Interpretation: What does it mean?**

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- **Application: How do I respond?**

Use the “Thinking it Through” questions as needed

- Why did Jesus make this particular demand of the rich young ruler? What demand might He make of you? (What is your identity? What is your savior?)
- Is wealth evidence of God's favor? How can it also be an impediment to salvation?
- Are there some who have the gift of managing money for the Kingdom and others who do not? What are the characteristics of this gift?
- Why did Jesus mention “persecutions” among the rewards of discipleship? Does this kind of frank disclosure seem like a good policy for evangelism?

*Application Questions taken directly from Daniel Akin in Christ-Centered Expository Commentary