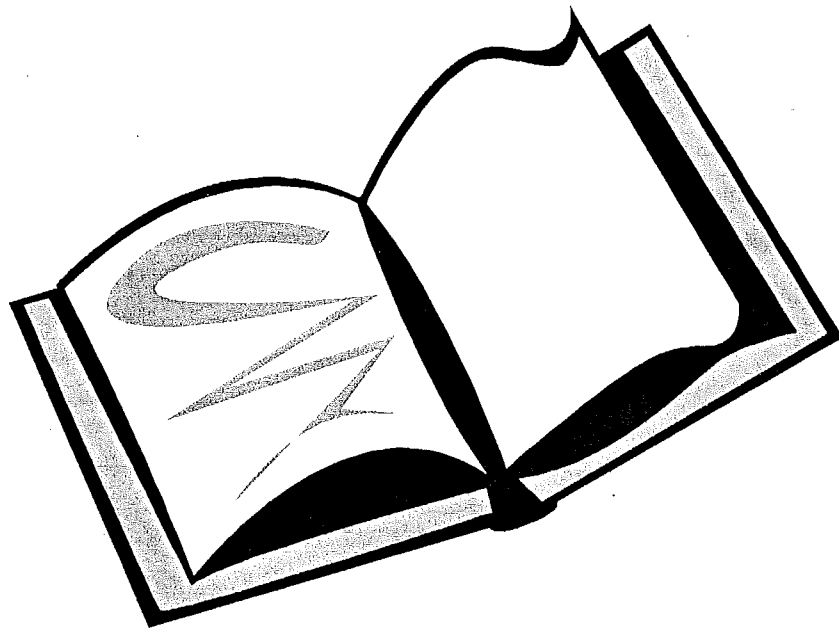


FIRST OR LAST

(Real Living From The Perspective Of The Lord)
Mark 10:17-31



FIRST PLACE CHRISTIANS

- ◆ Keep Their Eyes On Jesus
- ◆ Keep Their Eyes Off People
- ◆ Keep Their Eyes On The End

“Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first”
(Matthew 19:30)

Bill Kirk

“FIRST OR LAST”

Text: Mark 10:17-31
Subject: How Not To Be Last In Line!

Introduction

(Our Text Has A Unique Setting)

- ◆ Its all about a man who came to Jesus.
- ◆ The man is described in three of the four Gospels:
 - #1. Matthew said he was a **young man**. (Matthew 19:22)
 - #2. Mark said he was a **rich man**. (Luke 10:22)
 - #3. Luke said he was a **ruler**. (Luke 18:18)

(Thus, the traditional title of this account, known as, “**The Rich Young Ruler**”)

Question: What’s the message from the rich young rulers decision?

- #1. He asked the right question in verse 17: “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”
- #2. He was a good moral man and wasn’t practicing any of the sins in verse 19. (Verse 20, “Master all these have I observed from my youth”).
- #3. He was a man loved by Jesus (verse 21), “Then Jesus beholding him loved him”.
- #4. He was given an incredible opportunity in (verse 21).

“Sell your material things, give to the needy, take up your cross and follow me”

Question: What was the decision?

Answer: (Verse 22), “And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions”. (**In Other Words**)

- ◆ Jesus was first place in a lot of areas in his life.
- ◆ But there was just one great obstacle. (**What Was It?**)
- ◆ His security was misplaced. (It was in his money).
- ◆ And his insecurity disabled him so that he would not follow Jesus.

(Verse 21 Is Sobering)

“One Thing Thou Lackest”

- ◆ One thing stood between the man and Jesus.
- ◆ One thing stood between the man and heaven.
- ◆ One thing stood between the man and true success.

Question: What did Jesus then say?

Answer: (Verse 24), “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God”. (**In Other Words**)

- ◆ Its okay to have money (lots of it in fact) as long as you’re willing to use it for God.

(But)

- ◆ It’s not okay to have money as long as you’re trusting in that for security (instead of Jesus).

(In Other Words)

- #1. Money is okay to make, invest, spend and give.
- #2. Money is not okay if you trust it, instead of the One who provides it.

Question: Pastor, what affect did this confrontation have (between Jesus and the rich man)?

Answer: It affected Peter in a negative way:

(Verse 27)

“Then Peter began to say unto Jesus, Lo, we have left all and have followed you”.

(This same Account is in –Matthew 19:27)

“Then answered Peter and said unto him (Jesus) Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? (or) “Hey Lord, what’s in it for us?” (In Other Words)

- ◆ “You let the rich guy off the hook and he’s drowning in his wealth”,
- ◆ “So Lord, what do we get out of this life of cross-bearing, self-denial and total surrender?”

(And Jesus Says Peter, Peter)

- #1. In verse 29, “You’ll get 100 times more plus life everlasting”.
- #2. In verse 30, “Many that are first shall really be last, and many that are last, shall really be first”.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Peter watched the rich man walk away from Jesus.
- ◆ Peter notices that Jesus doesn’t beg the rich man to follow Him.
- ◆ Peter is stunned that Jesus doesn’t beg, badger, force or coerce this “Man with the money” to get on board. (In Other Words)
- ◆ Jesus doesn’t flip out over the decision of the rich man,
- ◆ And Peter watched the rich man walk away with all of his stuff, (while Peter gave all of his stuff up to follow Jesus).

(It’s Eating Away At Peter)

- ◆ Peter takes up his cross to follow Jesus.
- ◆ But the rich man doesn’t take up his cross, and gets to keep all of his stuff and walk away from Jesus.

(Peter Is Irritated)

Question: How do we know that Peter is irritated?

Answer: By how he responds to Jesus:

Question: Pastor, what does it mean to be a “First Place” Christian?

Question: And pastor, how can I be a spiritually healthy First Place Christian in my life?

(Jesus Tells Us In His Answer To Peter:) Read Matthew 20:1

Question: What is Jesus saying?

Answer: He tells us 3 things about First Place Christians that please the Lord.

- ◆ 3 characteristics that make you strong!
- ◆ 3 characteristics that make you healthy!
- ◆ 3 characteristics that make you enjoyable!
- ◆ 3 characteristics that will protect you from self-implosion and spiritual shipwreck and attitude dysfunction.

Question: Pastor, how can I be a “First Place” Christian?

I. Keep Your Eyes On Jesus

Fact: The owner of the vineyard needed to get his harvest in before the rains.

Fact: He went to the labor pool and recruited some workers.

Fact: He encountered a large harvest, needed more workers and came back to hire some at 9:00 AM, Noon, 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM.

(2 Kinds Of Laborers)

- #1. The men hired early in the morning wouldn’t work until they knew how much they would be paid. (Verses 2, 13) (The owner agreed on a denarius a day).
- #2. The other men had no contract, but trusted the owner to give what was right. (v. 4)
 - ◆ They trusted in the owner’s word. ◆ They trusted in the owner’s character.

Fact: The owner pays the men in reverse order, starting with the last workers hired. (Why?) To show the 6:00 AM workers how generous he was to the employees without a contract.

Fact: When the early workers saw the 5:00 PM workers receive one denarius for one hour, (they thought they would receive 12 denarii for their 12 hours worked). (Pg. 2 of 4)

Fact: But all men received one denarius, and the men complained.

Fact: They argued with the master who addresses them in (verse 13) and declared: "You received exactly what you had bargained for early in the morning".

Question: How does this apply to Peter, you and me?

Answer: When Peter saw the rich young ruler, he became a little envious.

- ◆ He felt taken advantage of,
- ◆ He felt a little overlooked,
- ◆ He felt a little cheated,
- ◆ He felt a little wounded and offended,
- ◆ He felt that Jesus might forget about his commitment.

Question: Why was Peter a little ruffled in his flesh?

Answer: Because he got his eyes off of Jesus, and on somebody else.

II. Keep Your Eyes Off Of Other People

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? (Is thine eye evil, because I am good?)"
(v. 15)

Fact: Peter had seen the rich young ruler walk away from Jesus.

Fact: Peter had compared his possessions with the rulers.

Fact: Peter's attitude was poor because he was watching, judging and drawing conclusions.

Fact: Peter made this mistake once before in John 21:

"Follow me. Then Peter turning about seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow Me". (John 21:19-21)

Question: What are the signs that a person has taken their eyes off of Jesus?

(This Story Tells Us Clearly)

- #1. We **compare** ourselves with others whom God blesses, (This is what Peter and the laborers in the story did).
- #2. We **forget** that God is the judge and He alone is responsible to weigh the scales. (This protects us from envy and jealousy and carnality).
- #3. We become **discontent** and dissatisfied because of feeling cheated. (Why?) Because we forget what we do have by looking at what we don't have.

Question: What causes us to compare, forget and become discontent?

Answer: The cause is taking our eyes off of Jesus and putting focus on other people.

III. Keep Your Eyes On The End, Not Just The Present

"They supposed that they should have received more" (verse 10)

Fact: These workers were brash, overconfident and therefore, disappointed.

Fact: They had negotiated their own contract but did not want to stick to it.

Fact: They reflect the same attitude that Peter was corrected for:

"Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what do we get out of all this?" (19:27)

(Failure, Failure, Failure:)

Fact: Peter thought he was among the first!

Fact: Peter was warned that he might be among the last!

(The Problem?)

- #1. Peter was brash in thinking that he would receive anything!
- #2. Peter was overconfident in thinking he deserved much!
- #3. Peter was in danger of serving Christ for reward instead of love!

#4. Peter's motive and ours is addressed:

(So Much So That Jesus Says:)

- A. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first" (Matthew 19:30)
- B. "The last shall be first and the first last" (20:16)

(What Does It Mean?)

Jesus' statement relates to the statement of the master in (verse 8), "Give them their hire, beginning from the last to the first".

(It Warns And Encourages:)

- #1. Some who are first in their own eyes will be last in His eyes on that day.
- #2. Some who are last in their own eyes will be first. **(In Other Words)**
- #1. We can be sure that God will give us far more than we deserve.
- #2. We must simply serve Him out of love and not for pay or reward.
- #3. We can accomplish God's work and yet not really do God's will.
- ◆ (The six-o'clock workers got their work done, but they did not get God's will done.
- ◆ They criticized the master for being too cheap.

(Two Kinds Of Workers)

- #1. The workers who bargained with the Master did not trust Him.
- #2. The other workers believed the Master and left all reward with Him (and joyfully entered their labors). They trusted His words in (verses 4 & 7) "Whatever is right, I will give you!"

(Which One Are We?)

"For many be called, but few chosen" (V. 16)

Fact: The word "Chosen" refers to the quality of people who serve God:

- #1. The called work for God out of payment & reward.
- #2. The chosen work for God out of love, and never get caught up with, "What's in this for me?" (19:27) **(In Other Words)**
- ◆ **"Many are called"** (Those are believers who serve God for reward and what He does for them). Their spirituality vacillates according to what they receive and get.
- ◆ **"Few are chosen"** (Those are believers who are spiritually healthy, and serve God because He is worthy regardless of whether they get what they want or not).

Question: Pastor, how can you live a chosen life?

Answer: By understanding that you can be overlooked, misunderstood and last place on earth (and yet be first in the eyes of God where it really matters).

Question: How do you know if Jesus is first place in your life? **(2 Ways)**

- #1. When your love for the Lord compels you to obey Him (and),
- #2. When your heart's sole desire is to please Him.
- ◆ Not for pleasure received in return (but just because, for the love of Calvary).

#1. Obey Him

#2. Please Him

Altar Call

(Corporate Response By Us All)

- #1. Have you taken your eyes off of Jesus?
- #2. Have you put your eyes onto other people?
- #3. Have you lost sight of the end for the sake of the immediate?

AMEN!

Bill Kirk, Pastor

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