**Calvary Fellowship 11.20.2022 Matthew 19:16-30 “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous”**

* **Anyone here ever been in love? Anyone here ever done something stupid b/c U were in love? By the way, if U answered yes to the 1st & no to the 2nd, U haven’t really been in love - why?**
* B/c love makes U do crazy things - when my wife & I started dating, about 2 months into our relationship was our 1st Valentine’s Day as a couple
* We started dating the day after Christmas in 1992 - so when January 1st came around, I went to the store to look for a Valentine’s gift
* I found this gold bracelet at Burdines (pic) (anyone remember Burdines - you’re old school Florida if U know about Burdines) for $250
* Not Carey & I had only been dating for 2 weeks when I found this bracelet
* So I put the bracelet on lay-away (who remembers lay-away?)
* For those of U who don’t know what Lay-away is, 1st that tells me that you’re probably not Hispanic b/c for Hispanics, Lay-away was the only way
* But basically, U want something U can’t afford - so U put a deposit on it, but the store keeps it in a social room until U pay it off & take it home
* I like to think of it as a type of jail for your stuff & U keep paying on it until U can afford to get it paroled & get it out of layaway prison
* I was starting college & I was working at a sub shop making $4 an hour, but I paid everything I could on it & got it out of layaway prison before 2/14
* Then I gave it to her & she loved it & I was the hero of Valentine’s Day
* But if someone comes up to me after church & says, “Pastor Bob, I’ve been dating this girl for 2 weeks & I want to buy her a really expensive gift.”
* I’d say, “No way. That’s irresponsible. Your relationship isn’t there yet.”
* **But that’s the thing about love - love doesn’t care about your budget**
* Love isn’t reasonable - love isn’t thinking about measured responses
* Love simply wants to express itself & show the object of your love how much he or she is loved
* Whenever U want to know who or what U love - U simply have to follow what you’re willing to be unreasonable for
* I remember sleeping outside of Sunrise Musical theater in high school all night w/ my friends waiting for Metallica tickets to go on sale - totally unreasonable
* I remember driving 900 miles in 1 day to pick my wife up from college when she got pneumonia - totally unreasonable
* **Here’s why I tell U all of this - we have been working our way through the life of Jesus in the Gospel of Matt. in a series we’re calling “The Story”**
* The reason we call it the Story is b/c we are convinced that if U will learn His story, it will change yours - and this is message # 30 in the series
* And today Jesus is confronted by a guy who had everything we would want
* He’s everything most of us are hoping for - to be rich, young, & in charge
* His story appears in 3 Gospels - he’s called the rich, young ruler
* The reason he’s called that is b/c Matthew records that he was young - Mark records that he was rich, & Luke that he was a ruler
* He finds Jesus & asks Him life’s most important question & Jesus in typical Jesus fashion answers the deeper question that he wasn’t asking
* What’s so jarring about this story is that U or I would never answer him the way Jesus did - in fact, if I answered this way, people would call me a false teacher
* But Jesus, seeing what we don’t see, saw a deeper issue & called him to be unreasonable to prove his love - and that’s when things feel apart

**———(v. 16-22)———**

**#1 - Jesus is Testing My Love**

* **Luke identifies this man as a ruler - what does that mean? It means he was a ruler of the synagogue, which was a high honor**
* Synagogue rulers were in charge of synagogue services - they were in charge of who conducted worship & who spoke in the services
* He was a respected member of the Jewish community b/c what people heard & experienced in weekly synagogue services was due to his management
* So he approaches Jesus & says, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” - Jesus stops him b/c he’s stumbled upon a truth
* He says, “Why do U call me good? Only God is good.”
* So does that mean Jesus doesn’t believe that He’s good or that He is good & He’s of the same essence w/ God the Father - that He’s God in human flesh
* **Now here’s what U have to understand - rulers of the synagogue were usually older men who were respected in the community**
* This means the fact that this young man rule to a position of influence showed his leadership gifts & ability to administer large groups of people
* He has everything going for him - he’s young, influential, & wealthy - these were the markers of a person being loved by God
* He shows up expecting Jesus to commend him for his life
* He’s expecting Jesus to say, “You’re doing everything right. I wish everyone was like U. That’s why you’re blessed. Eternal life is yours. You’ve earned it.”
* But Jesus throws him a curveball & in 1 sentence exposes this man’s heart
* He tells him to obey the 10th commandment of not coveting & he can’t do it b/c the directive to sell everything he has & give it to the poor was too much
* By the way, it’s important to note that Jesus interacts w/ lots of rich people in His ministry & this is the only person that Jesus asks to do this
* **His possessions owned him & the fact that he couldn’t give anything up revealed that**
* Now we’d never answer the question, “How do I inherit eternal life” this way
* B/c U can’t buy eternal life - the fact that he says “inherit” means he understand that salvation is a free gift given to us by God
* But Jesus knowing his heart & motivations reveals what none of us could ever see on our own - that his possessions were the master in the relationship
* Understand, Jesus never asks anyone else to do this & he doesn’t ask this young man to give the money to Him - that’s not the point
* He’s asking this young man to give away the thing that really possesses his heart & affections & that’s what reveals what he truly loves
* **U see, no 1 likes tests, but they serve an important purpose - tests in school draw out what we know & tests in life draw out who we trust**
* This is always what happens when we’re tested in life - it makes us choose ho we trust & it’s seen in how we respond to the test
* **About 10 years ago when my kids started taking swimming lessons, Mia moved up very quickly through the ranks at her swim school**
* Xander had a tougher time b/c he was a little scared to jump in - but he wanted to graduate from yellow team to red team
* To graduate from the yellow team U have to jump into the pool, turn over, put your arms out & float for 20 seconds - Xander had it all down except jumping in
* When Mia got promoted again, he was determined to graduate to the red team
* From that moment, Xander’s life became about nothing except passing his test
* He asked to pray at every meal b/c he wanted to talk to God & ask God about helping him pass his swim test - at night, he prayed the same thing
* The day of the next class, when I was leaving for the office, I told Xander to get dressed for school & he put on his swim trunks b/c he wanted to be ready for class - I said, “Xander, it’s 8AM. Your class isn’t until 4:30PM.”
* I left for the office, but Carey told me even though Xander couldn’t go into the pool at home b/c the water was cold, he practiced jumping in the pool all day
* I asked, “How was he practicing?” - She said, “He would stand on the couch in our family room & jump off like he was jumping into the pool. Then once he hit the ground, he would roll over on the floor & put his arms out & float.”
* So I pick Xander up for swim class & he says, “Dad, today I’m moving up to the red class.” - He got to class & announced it to everyone - Here’s the pic (pic)
* What’s amazing about this test for Xander is that after this, he wasn’t in red team ling before he got promoted again & again & again
* It wasn’t long before he made the black team, which was the highest team in the swim school
* Listen, some people interpret tests in life as a sign that God as forgotten them
* The opposite is true - it’s a sign that God wants to do more in your life
* This young man missed out on being disciple #13 for what? Some stuff
* He could have had legacy that lasted for 2,000 years & instead he’s a short story that serves as cautionary tale
* This is why, when God tests U, make sure U pass the test b/c we don’t move on until we get it right - but when we do move on, it’s always to better things

**———(v. 23-26)———**

**#2 - Jesus is Changing My Perspective**

* Couple of things U need to understand - in that culture, if U are rich it meant God loved U- if U were healthy, God loved U - If U were influential, God loved U
* Conversely, many believed if U were poor, sick, or unknown, U were cursed by God - this guy met all the criteria for what most thought it meant to be blessed
* So Jesus is blowing the minds of his disciples b/c Jesus is saying the opposite of act everyone thought
* That’s why their answer is, “Well, then who can be saved?” - they’re saying, “Lord, if the rich aren’t getting in, then no one’s getting in.”
* And Jesus’ answer is so important - He says, “With man it’s impossible, but w/ God all things are possible”
* He’s saying, “No 1 can be saved by human effort. No 1 is ever going to be good enough to earn their way into heaven. Instead, salvation is a work of God”
* **Now, there’s something I want to do that’s going to give us some context for this passage & hopefully open our understanding to a greater level**
* So let’s zoom out to 35,000 feet & find out what Jesus is doing - Jesus has left Galilee at the beginning of chapter 19 & is headed towards Jerusalem
* He’s going to meet the Pharisees who ask Him about divorce, then He blesses some kids, then he sees the Rich, Young Ruler - but He’s still headed south
* Then Luke’s Gospel tells us that He on His way to Jerusalem, He walks through Jericho & meet a guy named Zacheus
* “Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.” (Luke 19:1-2)
* This is the 2nd wealthy guy Jesus has met recently - both are very excited to meet Jesus & interact w/ Him
* “He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’” (Luke 19:3-7)
* Now, the differences between these 2 people is becoming clear - The rich, young ruler was loved & respected b/c of his position w/in the synagogue
* Zacchueus was reviled in the community b/c he was a tax collector
* “But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’” (Luke 19:8)
* Now we really see the difference - Jesus never asks Zacchaeus for anything
* Zacchaeus simply says, “I’m giving 50% of my stuff away to the poor & if I ripped anyone off, I’m going to use the other 50% to make it right.”
* Zacchaeus did what the Rich Young Ruler wouldn’t do w/o being asked & here’s why - b/c love makes us do unreasonable things
* **So I took my 9-year old daughter to lunch last week b/c she said we hadn’t spent enough time together lately & I wanted to correct that**
* So I tell her that we’re going to have a lunch that she’l never forget
* So we go to this place she really likes, & she orders sushi & I order a salad b/c I want to live longer & not have very much joy in my life
* And they make my salad w/ croutons & they didn’t blacken my salmon - So they remake the salad & that was right, but they didn’t do anything w/ the salmon
* So the manager comes over & apologizes & offers to make me a new 1 to go
* Livi thanks this is amazing - “Wow! We just got a free dinner”
* Well, while all of this is going on, a lady walks in w/ a mylar ballon & a gift card attached the end of the string - but she let’s go of it
* The problem is, the ceiling in this restaurant is about 50 feet up - So it starts to come back down - but every time it gets to a/c vent, it shoots back up
* So I say to Livi, “Watch this.” - So the ballon is coming down a little near the bar area & I walk up & climb on top of the bar (which I’m probably the 1st person to climb on top of the bar who hadn’t had anything to drink)
* But I jump & catch the birthday ballon & people are clapping - it’s a great moment - my daughter is super impressed w/ her dad
* Then we drive home & we saw a fender bender as 2 cars collided b/c someone was playing on their phone & Livi saw the front end of someone’s car come completely off - She thought it was like a ride at Disney
* But we get home & she says, “Dad, there’s no way U have this much excitement when you’re with my mom.”
* I’m like, “Well, it’s a different type of excitement.”
* The point is, love will make U just off the top of the bar to catch a balloon so your daughter know that dad is really trying
* And this is what Jesus is getting at - love prompts us to action
* It forces us to do something b/c love can’t stand still

**———(v. 27-30)———**

**#3 - Jesus is Encouraging My Engagement**

* **Peter asks a valid question - he says, “Lord, we’ve done what U asked the rich, young, ruler to do - we’ve left everything to follow U**
* And Jesus tells them that there’s eternal reward for those who follow Him & aren’t possessed by their possessions
* Listen, had the rich young ruler listened to Jesus, the reward would have been greater than anything we could possible imagine
* I mean, we’d be naming our kids after him like Christians have done w/ the 12 disciples for 2,000 years
* He would have an enduring legacy that would have lasted for generations & into eternity & he gave all of that up for a bunch of stuff
* “Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” (1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV)
* Listen, if U live in a household where your income is more than $50,000 , then U are in the top 1.5% of the world’s income earners
* So I’m sorry to tell U this, but you’re 1 of those 1%’s that people gripe about
* At 50,000 , U make 17.7 times more than the global median income
* Most of the world looks on at us & thinks we’re rich
* Listen, only 9% of people in the world own a car & I’m guessing most of us in this room own 2 cars in our family - that means we’re rich
* If you’ve ever stood inside a closet full of clothes & said, “I have nothing to wear” - guess what? You’re rich
* If you’ve ever stood in line to buy a new iPhone while holding your current iPhone, then you’re rich
* I have a friend who just bought a new computer & we were out to lunch & another guy said, “Oh, U bought a new computer. Did the old 1 break?”
* We all laughed - b/c no 1 buys a new piece of technology b/c the old 1 broke
* Now, we might drop the old 1 a few times in hopes that it will break, but we buy a new 1 b/c it’s faster or lighter or has more memory - why? B/c we’re rich
* And if you’ve received an Amazon box in the mail & when U opened it said, “Oh yeah! I forgot I ordered that.” - then U are rich my friend
* **Now don’t misunderstand - I’m not trying to teach U how to get rich**
* There’s lots of places where U can hear a message about how to get rich
* That verse says Pastors need to teach people to be rich - b/c most of us just found out that we already are rich & we didn’t even realize it
* And what does he say rich people should do? Do good, be generous, share, & lay up treasure for the coming age
* U might be thinking, “I think Pastor Bob is going to hit us up for some money.”
* Yeah. I am - so U may want to hold not to something for a couple minutes
* I’m going to invite the ushers to hand something out to each of U
* **So let me share something - when we moved into this building 7 1/2 years ago, we got in w/ just enough money to open the doors**
* We’ve ben using all of the equipment that we had in the high school
* We bought a few things, but for the most part, we’ve been repairing stuff & keep it together w/ duct tape
* Well, we’ve gotten to the point where we need to replace some equipment in the church
* We need to replace the speakers in the auditorium, the computers in the children’s ministry, the printers that print the labels for kids & parents
* We need to replace some equipment in the cafe if we can’t make tostadas in this church I think there’s going to be mutiny
* Altogether, it’s about $65,000 to replace everything that needs replacing
* This isn’t something we do all the time - In fact, we’ve never asked for resources for repairs - we’ve done our best to make due w/ what we have
* But, every family knows when it’s time to make upgrades & changes & that time for us is now
* If U are at church last Sunday, Pastor George gave a really good message & 1/2 way through the 11:30 service, the speakers turned off
* We had a battery backup that’s supposed to keep that from happening, but the battery backup fried & everything had to restart - it was a disaster
* Listen, I read every card that comes through our VIP area on Sundays & 1 of the things people love about Calvary is the level of excellence in our services
* I’m grateful for that & it’s 1 of our core values - that it doesn’t have to be perfect, it just has to be amazing
* But U need the right gear to make that happen
* I want U to invite your friends, family, classmates, & coworkers w/ total confidence that the Sunday U pick to bring them is the perfect Sunday
* And that our team is going to present the Gospel in a way that’s understandable, engaging, & inspiring for them & for U
* **So each of U got an envelope - in there is a brochure that tells U about the Christmas offering & there’s a commitment card**
* This way U can commit to what U want to give w/o giving it all today
* If U want to take it home & pray about it, that’s totally fine too
* **Now, let me explain something - what we’re talking about is an offering**
* It’s not a command in the Bible - tithing is a command
* This is a freewill offering if your heart is in it - I would hope that everyone’s heart is in it b/c we all enjoy the services here & we care about the kids’ experience
* But this is an offering over & above your normal giving if U believe this to be a worthy cause that
* In Exodus 35, Moses is collecting all of the resources for the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness & he gives this command to the people
* “Moses said to the whole Israelite community, ‘This is what the Lord has commanded: From what you have, take an offering for the Lord. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the Lord an offering…’” (Exodus 35:4-5 NIV)
* Everyone who is willing - there was no heavy-handed pitch or guilt trip
* Moses didn’t take his glasses off & say, “Our ministry won’t continue w/o your support” - It was a response to the God who had freed them from slavery
* “Everyone who was willing and whose heart moved them came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.” (Exodus 35:21 NIV)
* Everyone who was willing brought their gift for the tabernacle & here’s the report card in Exodus 36
* “So Moses gave the command, and this message was sent throughout the camp: ‘Men and women, don’t prepare any more gifts for the sanctuary. We have enough!’ So the people stopped bringing their sacred offerings. Their contributions were more than enough to complete the whole project.” (Exodus 36:6-7 NLT)
* Maybe this Christmas season, we give the Lord a gift in proportion to all that He has done for us & if we all do that, it will be more than enough
* And we become a blessing not just for us & our kids, but for everyone who’s going to walk in here after us