

1. **Introduction:** There are many things in life that can distract a person from obedience to God. Wealth and the power that accompanies it are so attractive to people that Jesus emphasizes the difficulties they can cause in living a life according to the principles of the Kingdom Of God.
2. **Mark 10: 23-25:** *“And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”²⁴ And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”*
 - It is not that wealth or power are of themselves evil. The problem is in the attitude of people toward their wealth and power. Paul says love of money is the root of all evil.
 - It is a great danger to love possessions and power more than loving God and His commandments.
 - That statement by Jesus turned the contemporary theological view upside down.
 - According to religious experts of the day, the wealthy were virtually assured of a place in the kingdom of God.
 - Jesus emphasizes (10:24b) that, it is difficult for the rich and powerful to see their need and receive the grace that God gives to all who believe.
 - But it is difficult (impossible in their own power) for anyone, rich or poor, powerless or powerful, to enter the kingdom.
3. **Mark 10:26-27:** *“And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.’”*
 - The disciples are concerned. Jesus eased their worries reminding them that with God, all things are possible (Gen. 28:14; Lk 1:37, etc.)
 - If it is impossible for a person to choose God over wealth or other things desirable or vital to life during mortal life, but all things are possible for God, then God must choose those who are to be saved.
 - Sounds a lot like Predestination, doesn't it? All people are fallen and incapable in their own power of choosing God. Unless God chooses for them, no one will be with God in heaven.
4. **Mark 10:28-31:** *“Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.”²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel,³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers*

and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ *But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”*

- As the wealthy man left in despair, Peter wonders about his own sacrifice. Will it be rewarded? Had he misunderstood Jesus?
- Jesus affirms that Peter made the right choice.
- God never asks for sacrifice without rewarding the one who sacrifices.
- God grants to believers’ complete access to everything that is His.
- As believers, we are God’s adopted children, heirs and vested joint owner with God of all that His kingdom offers.
- Jesus reminds Peter and the others that the kingdom rearranges all priorities. The things and views that seem so important from earthly perspectives are mostly inverted in the kingdom.
- Spiritual things are most precious.

5. **Mark 10: 32-34**: *“And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³ saying, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. ³⁴ And they will mock him and spit on him, and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise.”*

- As was customary, Jesus led his disciples. That is a good example for us. Jesus leads, we follow. They were on the road going “up” to Jerusalem.
- Their route they had followed was along the Jordan River which was all downhill from the Sea of Galilee. The lake is about 686 feet below sea level. The Dead Sea is about 1410 feet below sea level.
- They reached a point just north of the Dead Sea where they turned southwest to Jericho and Jerusalem. That part of the journey was all uphill as they climbed out of the rift valley of the Jordan.
- The various past trips that the disciples had been on were joyful and fulfilling, times of healing the sick and casting out demons.
- This time Jesus is again talking about being delivered up to the chief priests and scribes who will condemn Him to death.
- Jesus says He will be handed over (*implying betrayal*) to the Gentiles who will mock and spit on Him, flog Him, and then kill Him.
- But, after three days He will arise from the grave.
- Being “handed over” by the chief priests and scribes would have been a dreadful betrayal for any Jew. Unbelievable to betray the Messiah.

- Jesus implies these terrible events will start suddenly and unfold quickly.
 - The disciples heard Jesus' words, but they totally failed to understand what He was so earnestly telling them.
 - They were anticipating a great victory with Jesus being crowned king.
 - Jesus said they would witness a great disaster with Jesus arrested, condemned, flogged, killed, but then rise again. What does He mean? He must be confused.
 - The disciples heard Jesus' words but grasped none of His meaning.
 - Their minds were still set on a great victory with Jesus crowned king.
 - Jesus had said they would have important roles in His kingdom.
 - James and John decided they deserved leading roles.
6. **Mark 10:35-37**: *“And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’³⁶ And he said to them, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’³⁷ And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’”*
- Positions on either side of a king were for His key ministers, second and third in command. The brothers were asking for honor and power.
 - Jesus was preparing for rejection, humiliation, suffering, and death. His closest companions were maneuvering for places of power in what they believed to be His imminent earthly kingdom in Israel.
 - It seems obvious that the disciples had no clue about what was about to happen to Jesus or to them.
7. **Mark 10:38-40**: *“Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?”³⁹ And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized,⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”*
- This is a fascinating passage. Jesus' response was you have no notion of what you are asking. Jesus alludes to the cruel events He must face.
 - The cup He must drink refers to His willingly sacrificing Himself in an agonizing death for the benefit of believers.
 - The baptism He must endure seems to refer to His passive obedience, not resisting the actual events He must endure. The betrayal, arrest, condemnation, flogging, and crucifixion are all done to Him by others.
 - Jesus chose to die for our benefit, quietly submitting to a wicked death.

- When Jesus asked if , like He must, could they bear the weight of unjust suffering and death, their answer was ***“We are able.”***
- The two brothers were not a ready or able. When Jesus was arrested, they and the other disciples were all afraid of what might happen to them and were not involved in any active defense of Jesus.
- Soon they will be tested. Fear for their own safety will dominate their response. They will not be willing to risk their lives to help Jesus.
- James and John’s appeal had demonstrated they were not yet prepared and able to actively give up their life to benefit others or to passively accept punishment for acts for which they are innocent.
- Ultimately, they too will face the cup and the baptism of suffering and death that Jesus must endure. Though they are not yet able, God will prepare them so that when their time comes, they will “Be Able.”
- James will become the first of the disciples to be martyred. John will be exiled to Patmos.
- The positions in the kingdom of God are not His to distribute. They were determined by God’s eternal counsel (see Mt. 20:23, ***“for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”***)

8. Next lesson, we begin with Mark 10:4.