

Matthew 19:1 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

Matthew 19:2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

Once again we start with a time marker indicating a chronological flow of the narrative. Jesus departed from Galilee and headed to the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan toward Jerusalem. Great multitudes of people followed Him seeking healing, and they were healed.

Matthew 19:3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

Matthew 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female,

Matthew 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

Matthew 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Once again, we find the Pharisees attempting to discredit Jesus in some way. This time they chose the subject of divorce. The question they posed to Him was basically, “Can a man divorce his wife for any reason?”

I really liked the following observation by Burton Coffman: “The Pharisees were not asking for information but in the hope of opening up a conflict between the teachings of Moses and those of Christ. This is actually an unconscious admission on their part of the weakness in Moses' permission of divorce because, if Christ had agreed with Moses, they would have had no case. The proof of weakness in Moses' position is that they instinctively knew Christ would not agree with it! Why? They knew in their hearts that Moses was wrong (or at least partially so); and, intuitively, those evil men recognized in Christ a higher purity and knowledge than existed in Moses and decided to take advantage of it if they could.”

Jesus answered by immediately pointing them back to scripture—the very earliest scriptures. Moses recorded that God made male and female in the very beginning with the intent that man and woman should join together as helpmeets throughout life. A man was to leave his parents (implied—and the woman as well) to join together as one flesh in the eyes of God. Once joined together as one flesh, it was God's will for that union to be permanent and never torn apart.

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

I think it is significant to note that we were created so that the very anatomy of

our bodies declare the truth of marriage being for one man and one woman—not man and man or woman and woman.

Matthew 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Matthew 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Matthew 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Question 2 from the Pharisees, which they assumed would stump Jesus—“Why did Moses give a command to allow a man to divorce his wife? He told them that it was because of the hardness of man’s heart that Moses made allowance for divorce; however, that was never God’s intention.

Deuteronomy 24:1 “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”

Note that Jesus emphasized the fact that the ruling of Moses was an allowance made in light of the hardness of man’s heart, not a command. He then goes on to declare that if a man divorces his wife for any reason except fornication and marries someone else, he is guilty of adultery and the person who marries the divorced woman is guilty of adultery.

Matthew 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

Matthew 19:11 But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

Matthew 19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

The statement by the disciples was rooted in the societal standing of the women of that day. They were considered property.

David Guzik shared the following observation: “In theory, the Jews of that day had a high ideal of marriage. Yet they had a low view of women. ‘The Jews had very low views of women...A wife was bought, regarded as property, used as a household drudge, and dismissed at pleasure.’ (Bruce) Today, men also have a low view of women; tragically, *women also have a low view of women*, and often reject the idea that women should be different than men in any way.”

Jesus did not deny that what the disciples stated was true; He stated that basically very few men could tolerate celibacy. Only those “to whom it is given” seems to

be a reference to a special calling by God. He then explains further. Some men are born eunuchs, some are made eunuchs by the actions of others men, and some have purposed to be eunuchs in the service of the Lord.

Eunuch = one who is castrated, impotent or unmarried (from the Greek)

I liked David Stern's comment in his Jewish New Testament Commentary: "Depending on the calling and preferences of the individual, Yeshua allows that either the married or the single life can be one of service to God and humanity; and he takes care to minimize needless guilt on the part of those making the choice."

Matthew 19:13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

These verses seem to be an abrupt change of subject. Matthew records that the little children (very young according to the Greek) were being brought to Jesus for Him to bless them with prayer. The disciples evidently considered this to be too bothersome to Jesus and rebuked those bringing the children. He, however, rebuked the disciples and told them to allow the children to come. He used it as an opportunity to reinforce previous teaching (see beginning of previous chapter). He reminded the disciples that those who want to be part of His kingdom must come as little children—humble and trusting. I like Mark's additional insight.

Mark 10:16 "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

Jesus took the children up in His arms and blessed them and left the area.

Matthew 19:16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Matthew 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

This section of scripture is widely known as the story of the rich young ruler. In Mark's account he is depicted as running to kneel before Jesus before asking his question—"Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" As do so many people today, this young man thought he could earn his way to heaven.

Jesus first focused on the fact that the young man called Him "good" master. Scripture is clear in declaring that no man is good, only God is good.

Psalms 14:1 "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."

Psalms 106:1 "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

In light of that truth, the Lord asked the young man why he called Him good. Implied in that question is another question—Do you recognize Me as your Messiah? Jesus then goes on to answer the young man in a way that seems to affirm the necessity of good works.

Matthew 19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Matthew 19:19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Jesus basically tells the young man that he must obey the commandments of God in his dealings with his fellow man.

Matthew 19:20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Matthew 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

Matthew 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

The young man quickly answered that he had obeyed these commandments since he was but a youth. Then Jesus instructs him so as to reveal the true purpose of His question—insight to his character. He told the young man that he lacked but one thing—to go and sell all that he owned and give it to the poor to assure his possession of treasure in heaven. He was then to come and follow Jesus as His disciple. Mark also tells us that Jesus explained that this would involve taking up his own cross—a willingness to deny self.

Mark 10:21 "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."

The young man could not believe what he heard and went away sorrowful. Why? Because he was very rich and had many and valuable possessions. Did he understand that his response revealed that he did not truly love his neighbors as himself? We see that Jesus used those commandments to reveal that the young man was not as pure as he thought he was. When confronted with having to choose between his money and possessions and following Jesus, the young man chose his wealth.

Mark also shared another important bit of information—Jesus looked at the young man and loved him. Because He loved the young man, He told him the truth; He was concerned about the young man's eternal future. That should be

true of every believer today. We should be willing to share the truth with those we love without regard as to how that might impact our relationship with them in this life.

Matthew 19:23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

As the young man walked away, Jesus told His disciples that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. In fact, He said, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. This is a statement declaring how hard it was for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Notice that the Lord uses the terms kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God interchangeably.

Matthew 19:25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

The disciples were amazed at what Jesus said. The prevalent view of the day was that wealth was a sign of God's blessing. In light of that belief, it would make one wonder how anyone could be saved if those whose lives evidence God's blessing cannot be saved.

Jesus understood the mindset of the disciples and declared that what seemed impossible for man was possible for God. This is a truth that is declared many times throughout scripture.

Job 42:1–2 "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee."

Isaiah 14:24 "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:"

Isaiah 43:11–13 "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Jeremiah 32:17 "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy

great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee....Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?"

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Scripture gives us many examples of men of wealth who were men of faith in God—Abraham, Job, Boaz, King David, Joseph of Arimathea, etc.

Attaining wealth is the goal of most in the world today. Obviously, some have greater opportunity to do so than others. Wealth is also relative according to where you live. Still, the culture prevalent throughout the world today is to attain as much wealth as possible. Those who reach that goal and accrue great wealth usually find themselves more and more possessed by their wealth. It becomes harder and harder for one in such a position to truly lay down his life before God and say, "I want you to be my Lord and Savior. I want to do your will whatever the cost."

Note that the disciples automatically equated salvation to being part of God's kingdom.

Matthew 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matthew 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

The disciples were human—just like us. As usual, it is Peter that blurts out his thoughts in connection with what Jesus had just said. My paraphrase: "Lord, have we forsaken all we own to follow you for nothing?"

Again, Jesus understands Peter's heart. He lets Peter know that God rewards those who give their lives to Him in this life to use as He so chooses. When (not if) the Son of man (a term the Lord often used to reference Himself) comes to take His earthly throne, they will sit on twelve thrones as judges over the twelve tribes of Israel. In fact, every person that is willing to forsake all in this world in faith and obedience to God will be rewarded far beyond their expectation (as clarified by Luke) in the kingdom and will inherit the greatest blessing of all—eternal life, life in the presence of God for time without end.

Luke 18:29–30 "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Note that the kingdom is referenced as a time of “regeneration,” a time of spiritual restoration. I think it also includes the alleviation of the curse against the earth as foretold in many scriptures.

Isaiah 11:5–9 “And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

Jeremiah 23:5–6 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Romans 8:19–23 “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God....Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

Matthew 19:30 But many *that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.*

Jesus then explains that those who seem to be most esteemed in society today will find themselves in lower positions in the kingdom than those who have been willing to sacrifice their all for Jesus without regard to wealth or position in this life. This truth applied directly to the disciples. Though they would not be esteemed by the multitudes as they sought to spread the gospel in obedience to the Lord’s command, they would find themselves greatly esteemed in the kingdom.