

The Difficulty of Riches

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- [0 : 0 0] With me please and turn to the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, as we continue to walk through the second half of the book of Mark, which is really about the walk of the cross, the way of the cross.
- Ever since the end of chapter 8, when Jesus asked the disciples, who do you say that I am? And Peter gave the confession that you are the Christ. After that confession, it changed everything.
- Jesus began then at that point to focus upon the 12 and training them. We see a lot less of him with crowds. We see a lot less of him with miracles.
- We see more of a focus on the 12 and the training of them. Not only what is Jesus' mission, that he says three times to them in this journey to Jerusalem, he tells them, I am going to die.
- I am going to be killed and then I will rise again on the third day. And then he begins to teach the implications of what it means for those who follow him to also go and die, to also lay down their lives.
- [1 : 1 1] So this is kind of where we're at. We're in our 12th study since chapter 8, the end of chapter 8 in Mark, looking at this training of the 12.
- So we are now at verse 17 in chapter 10. Jesus is training distinctive values in his disciples.
- Values that are not worldly. Values that are actually counter-cultural. Values that are upside down to the world. And in fact, in this story, verse 17 through 27, Jesus will shock his disciples.
- He will blow them away. They are not ready for the kind of attitude he talks about in regard to wealth.
- So, we want to read the word, then we'll ask the Lord to send his spirit to teach us, and then we'll dig in. If you're able, please stand as I read from Mark chapter 10, beginning of verse 17, and we'll read through verse 27.
- [2 : 1 6] As he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?
- And Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.
- And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, you lack one thing. Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come, follow me.
- Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. 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.

[3 : 37] 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. 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.

And they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man, it is impossible, but not with God.

For all things are possible with God. So reads his word. Let us pray for understanding. Father, we ask you to come in that special way as we open your word.

We know that you're already here with us. We know that you're always with us. But we pray that you would come by your spirit to teach, to open our eyes to see, to cause us to hear.

Help each of us, Father, in our own situation, to hear what you are saying to us. We pray this for your honor and glory in Christ's name.

[4 : 57] Amen. Please be seated. So did you know that the Colorado lotto, you know, where people put money down hoping to win money, since 1983 has raised three billion dollars.

So that's 35, I calculated, that's 35 years. that is an average of 85 million a year just for Colorado.

Coloradans are spending 85 million dollars a year in hopes of winning the ticket. Desire for riches.

That's natural. That's understandable. Our state is sponsoring that. They want us to go in debt. Well, some preachers aren't helping the issue.

There is also the prosperity gospel, which is growing in popularity. Prosperity gospel, which feeds on the covetousness of men. see, the prosperity gospel, also known as health and wealth gospel, also known as the word of faith movement, proclaims financial blessing and physical health is always God's will.

[6 : 40] They say that by faith, if you have enough faith, and if you use positive speech, you say positive things, it can increase your wealth and health.

I heard this morning, I wasn't intending to hear Joel, but as I prepared my, preparing my message, I always turn on the music, the jazz station, helps me relax.

And the TV was on, and here was Joel Osteen, you know, with the J-O on the pulpit. By the way, once you see my initials on the pulpit, you'll know that's not good.

So, so, he was saying this very thing, he was saying you have to speak to make it happen.

And then he quoted, let the weak say I am strong. See, so you have to say, if you're weak, say you're strong, have a positive attitude. And then he went on to talk about, if you're sick, speak healing.

[7 : 53] If you're poor, speak wealth. Like, okay. See, faith preachers see the Bible as a contract between God and man.

That if you have enough faith, God will deliver security and prosperity. But by the way, if you do not have enough faith and you are poor, that's your fault.

If you are sick, that's your fault. If you're in debt, that's your fault. If you had enough faith, you would be out. That's what they preach. Shame on them.

Shame on them. The problem I see in the prosperity movement is that the only ones that seem to prosper are the preachers.

Because they're at the top of the pyramid. I'm not going to rail on them today. I'll let Jesus do that. Money. I don't know how they deal with texts like this.

[8 : 55] It's crazy. When you hear preaching like that, when you hear those kind of messages, all you got to do is go back and see what Jesus said. I mean, the prosperity one, that's easy.

Jesus doesn't go anywhere near that. Didn't live anywhere like that. Didn't put that kind of shame on people. So money can buy you a really nice bed.

I've been looking at a nice adjustable bed. I can't afford it. But it won't buy you sleep. Money can buy you a really nice beautiful house, but it won't give you a home.

It can buy you meds, but not health. It can buy you amusement, but not happiness. can buy you Christian adornments, but not a Savior. In Mark 10, Jesus teaches the difficulty of riches.

The difficulty of riches. He warns that riches are a barrier to salvation. His shocking stand on riches not only stuns His disciples, but disintegrates this prosperity teaching going on today.

[10 : 16] Just disintegrates. Jesus has been training, we have seen, from the end of chapter 8 through 10, His followers.

He's been training them that there is a distinction of those who follow Jesus, a uniqueness, and extraordinariness about those who follow Jesus. They're not at all like the world.

He calls His followers to a countercultural Christianity that is so opposite of the world's thinking and value system. He tells them to deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Him.

He tells them if they want to be first, if they want to be great, be last, be the servant of all. Not just serve once in a while or on the side, be the servant of all. He speaks to them about reversing their own natural selfish biases, to be gracious instead of suspicious.

And He calls us at the end of chapter 9 to root out the source of our sins, not just kind of fiddle with the symptoms of our sin, the way they actually express themselves, but to seek out to find the root of those sins.

[11 : 31] If it's the hand, if it's the foot, if it's the eye, get rid of that source that you might overcome the sin itself. Deal radically in your life where you will feel it.

You're talking about getting rid of something that continues to cause you to sin. Then in chapter 10 He's been teaching these distinctive values.

In the first 12 verses we saw Him teaching about the value of marriage. He holds a higher standard of marriage than they did in the first century, by far. And then verse 13 He shocks them with His value of children.

As He wants the children, He values the children. He talks about how children teach us. And now in verse 17 He's going to deal with the subject of wealth, riches, and again stun His disciples.

They are exceedingly astonished. What? He turns their whole value system upside down.

[12 : 46] I want you to note before we dig into this, what is at stake? Look at verse 17. the man asks about eternal life. Eternal life is at stake.

Verse 23 Jesus turns to His disciples and talks about how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. It's about entering the kingdom. And then the disciples after they're astonished in verse 26 say who can be saved?

So notice He's tying those three concepts together. Eternal life, entering the kingdom and being saved are all about the same thing. Just now we're discovering that entering the kingdom is the same as being saved, is the same as inheriting eternal life.

So that's what's at stake in terms of our value of riches. If we get this wrong our salvation is at stake. Our soul is at stake. So now let's look in verse 17 to 27 and see how Jesus warns of the danger of riches, the difficulty of riches.

That riches become a great obstacle to salvation. And we see by the way Jesus answers two questions. There are two scenes here. Verses 17 through 22 is the first scene.

[14 : 09] Jesus is handling the question of the man who comes to Him and asks Him, what must I do to inherit eternal life? That's the first scene. First question He's answering.

And then secondly, beginning in verse 23, after that man leaves, then He's there with His disciples and He turns to His disciples and warns them and they bring up the question, then who can be saved?

So we still don't see it building here. So we'll take it in those two ways. We'll look at each scene separately and answer the two questions that Jesus answers. So first question, verse 17, is what must I do to inherit eternal life?

The scene unfolds in three ways. First there's the question that comes and then Jesus brings up the commandments and finally in verse 21 Jesus exposes what the man lacks, the barrier that is in his life.

So let's look at the question first in verse 17. Mark tells us that He, Jesus, was setting out on His journey. This is the journey. Remember, He's on His way to Jerusalem and by the next chapter He'll be entering, doing the triumphal entry.

[15 : 25] So this is coming to a climax. So He's on His journey to Jerusalem and on His way a man runs up and kneels before Him. Well that tells us that the man is serious and urgent.

He runs up, kneels before Him. There's sense of desperation, there, urgency there. He's anxious about eternal life.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? That's good. What is His actual question? Look at that.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? what must I perform? What must I achieve? What must I accomplish?

What that also reveals is that the man seems to know there's something more. That just keeping the commands is not enough. He seems to know that.

[16 : 30] So He's looking, what's the secret? Is there some other secret, some other command, some other duty that I can perform to inherit eternal life? Because He seems to know He's short.

Surprisingly, well, not surprisingly, we're used to Jesus. When He gets asked a question, what does He usually do? He asks the question back. He doesn't give quick answers. He's a teacher.

He wants them to figure it out. He wants them to learn. He wants them to think. But this one surprises us. Because He turns and says, why do you call me good?

I'm like, what? Jesus focuses on the very first word the man says, good teacher. Why do you call me good?

Surprising. There is, no one is good except God alone. I think what He's pointing to in the man is a false focus on behavior and status.

[17 : 37] you're good. How do I become good? And Jesus is pointing out to him, He doesn't know who Jesus is.

He doesn't know that He's the Son of God. Jesus isn't denying that He is good. Simply saying, why do you call me good? How would you know?

The standard isn't doing good things. The standard is God. good? Have you not read the Psalms that say, no one does good, not even one?

Do you not realize that? So I think He's pointing, He's starting to shift him. then He brings up the commands in verse 19.

Is Jesus implying that the commandments are the way to inherit eternal life? No. But He's trying to expose this man. He's seeking to expose him.

[18 : 43] And notice how He brings it up. Look what He says in verse 19. You know the commandments. This must be a young Jewish man. You know the commandments.

And then notice the ones He names. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Those sound familiar? He ends with honor your father and your mother.

That sounds familiar. Then He includes one that doesn't sound as familiar. Do not defraud. Where that one comes from. What do you think? Remember the Ten Commandments? In class?

Have you gone through the Ten Commandments yet? No, you haven't got there yet, have you? What are the first four? The first four are related to God, right? No other gods before me. Two, no images that you serve or worship.

No idols. Three, be careful with my name. Don't use my name in vain. Four, Sabbath day.

[19 : 46] Sabbath day. And then from five on, it's related to horizontal. So five is honor your father and mother. And then six is do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness.

Jesus names all of those from honor from five through nine. What's he leaving out? If you were in class, don't say it. What's he leaving out?

He names the commandments but he leaves one out. What's the last of the Ten Commandments?

Coveting. Isn't that interesting? He also doesn't name the first four which I think this man also has trouble with.

Number one. Number two, we're going to see. Jesus will expose that. He does not mention covet.

[20 : 51] Might be a clue, right? Because in the next verse the man says, well I've kept all these. I've honored my father and mother.

I've not murdered anybody. I've not stolen, not committed adultery, not bared false witness. Good thing he didn't bring up coveting. I've kept all these.

Really? Really? Now Jesus doesn't challenge him directly but he will get to it.

He will expose him. See the purpose of the law is not to save us. Remember the law came under a covenant.

It was the first covenant at Sinai. It was a contract between God and his people. And if you obey my word I will bless you. If you do not obey my word I will curse you.

[21 : 56] And what did they do? They did not keep his word. The Old Testament proves that over and over and over again. They could not keep it. They could not keep it.

So Paul tells us what's the purpose of the law? to reveal our sin. To show us how we have fallen. How we have failed. That's the purpose of the law. So Christ isn't done with the man.

He brings up the commandments. Guy says oh I've kept all those. Uh huh. Then Christ reveals the barrier in verse 21. Okay one thing you lack. Now notice first of all what Mark tells us in verse 21.

Jesus looking at him. I wonder what that was like. What's it like to have Jesus look at you? It could be wonderful because for this in this one it says he looked at him and loved him.

So he saw something sincere in him. Something good. Something hopeful. It's going to mention it twice more.

[23 : 02] He's going to talk about looking at the disciples. Going to give them a gaze. Going to get the Jesus gaze. Now what you called it Randy and Clyde the Jesus gaze.

The Jesus look. Getting the Jesus look. Peter got that right after he denied Christ three times. Remember looked across the garden and saw Jesus. Their eyes met and what happened to Peter after he saw it?

He fell apart. Goes out and weeps. Oh my gosh what have I done? So he looks at him. One thing you lack.

One thing you need. The word lack there can also mean to fall short. All have fall short of the glory of God. One way you've not measured up.

One way you've not cut it. way you've got it. So Jesus loves him and so what does he do to one he loves? He tells him what he needs to hear. He speaks to him the truth in love.

[24 : 13] He tells him what he needs to hear. Oh I'm good with the law are you? Let me point something out to you. And he gives him this duty that exposes his heart.

Bless you. And I mean that in a biblical way. Go sell all that you have give to the poor and follow me.

Don't miss the follow me part. That's crucial. Go sell all that you have give it to the poor and follow me. And what? You will have treasure in heaven.

You have treasure in heaven. that reminds us that he calls this man. By the way this is the only man he calls to do this. This is not a universal command of everybody.

Okay? Paul teaches later. He doesn't tell the Paul teaches Timothy in 1 Timothy 6 to tell the rich. He doesn't tell the rich to sell all your riches and give to the poor.

[25 : 24] He tells the rich what? Don't set your hope on riches. Be aware that the riches are dangerous. They're a snare. And the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

And those who are coveting rich have been those who have wandered away from the faith. I don't know how prosperity teachers deal with that text either. He's talking about this.

He's going to expose this man. And we're going to apply it in a different way. Might not be riches for you. Might be something else. But remember the parable that Jesus told in Matthew 13 44.

He said the kingdom of God is like this. It's like a man who finds a treasure in a field. And what does he do? He covers it up and he goes and he sells all that he has.

By the way he goes and sells all that he has. Same phrase Jesus says to this man. And does what? And buys the field. But don't forget two words Jesus added to that.

[26 : 40] In joy. In joy he went and sold all and bought the field. Why? Because the treasure was worth more than everything that he had.

That's the kingdom. The kingdom is like that. The kingdom is this treasure. It's worth more than everything we have on earth. So that's what he's saying to this man. What's your treasure?

Where's your treasure? He exposes his heart. And it's at this point that Mark tells us he's a rich man. We didn't know that at first.

Mark's just telling the story. We're going, why is he doing this? And then we find, oh he's rich. And the term there for rich means not probably liquid riches, not money, so much as properties and lands and fields.

It's where he had his wealth. So what happens, verse 22?

[27 : 42] When he hears these words, verse 22, he's disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. See, this call of Jesus exposes his heart.

And the word disheartened can mean kind of a shock with gloominess. in other words, his whole countenance just changed.

It's just, oh, oh. And then he leaves. We don't know what happened to him later, by the way. This stunned him.

Maybe he needed time. I don't know. We're not told. We're just told that he's at that moment. He ain't ready for that. He so he walks away sorrowful.

He's unwilling. He's reluctant to give up. That shows us that riches stand in the way of his following Jesus. Now, let me apply this.

[28 : 58] Jesus said, this man lacks something. What do you lack? Could Jesus look at you and say, one thing you lack? What would that be?

That could be riches. That could be something else. What's your idol? What is it that stands in your way of following Jesus? Really following Jesus?

Is there something you're reluctant to give up? To really trust him? see, for this man, it was riches.

He trusts in his riches. They give him his security. So they have become his God. What's your God?

Your idol, your God, is whatever you serve, whatever you trust in, whatever you rely on. And so only God can tell you what that is. Only you know what that is in your own heart.

[30 : 03] And we all struggle with it. It's natural to have idols. It's natural to have things we look to for security. Hmm?

Getting uncomfortable yet? Yeah, you're welcome. Yeah, I had to do with it all week, okay? So relax. So Jesus teaches us again in another place in Matthew 6 about riches.

This is the only time he talked about it. So he says in Matthew 6 verse 19 he says, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. Don't do that. Where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

See, those aren't securities at all. They can vanish in the night. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

In other words, those treasures in heaven are absolutely secure. Then he gives a reason. Why? For where your treasure is, there your heart will be.

[31 : 09] Remember, Jesus is always about the heart. It's not really about the riches, it's about where your heart is. Where's your heart? That'll expose where your riches are. Then he talks about the eye, the eye because that's where we see, that's what we're looking at.

The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, clear, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

That's where the envy of your eye or the covetousness of your eye, if then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. Principle, no one can serve two masters.

You can't do it. It's impossible. No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot, you're unable to serve God and mammoth and money.

Then he goes on to apply it more practically. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food?

[32 : 13] The body more than clothing? So what do you treasure? Where is your treasure? Which master do you serve?

You can only serve one. Proverbs 30, which talks about riches in both positive and negative ways, ends this way, Proverbs 30, it ends in a prayer, it says, give me neither poverty nor riches, lest I be full and deny God, or be poor and steal and profane his name.

I would imagine that's where most of you are. I don't want to be affluent, but I also don't want to be poor. I just want to be able to make it. You know, make it month to month, okay?

So, these words of Christ to this man who walks away leads us to a second question, verse 23 through 27, where the disciples ask in verse 26, then who can be saved?

Which implies, if the rich man can't be saved, who has all the advantages, how can the normal person be saved? So, this scene, verse 23 to 27, unfolds in three parts.

[33 : 50] We have Jesus' warning in verse 23, we have the question that comes up by the disciples, verse 26, and then we have Jesus' final answer, verse 27. So, let's look at it part by part.

First is the warning in verse 23. again, Jesus looks around and said to his disciples, how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

How difficult. And then he's going to repeat that again at the end of verse 24. How difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God, period. There he doesn't say for the rich.

He simply says at the end of verse 24, how difficult it is, period, to enter the kingdom of God. For anybody. But especially for the rich. This word difficulty, it's interesting, I looked it up, actually in its root sense it has to do with food that disagrees with you.

So in other words, it's not just difficult, it's disagreeable to the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God.

[34 : 58] Because it means doing something that's not agreeable with them. It's difficult to enter. And then verse 24, he repeats it, and then verse 25, he adds this odd visual.

He talks about a camel and a needle. And he makes a comparison. It's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

what? It's easier for a camel which would be the largest animal in Palestine. Largest animal likely that most people in the Holy Land had ever seen.

Camels are pretty big, pretty tall. You need ladders to get up on them or you need them to kneel so you can get on there. Dromedaries. Through the eye of a needle.

He's talking about a sewing needle, the smallest opening you could think of. That's absurd. Well, some preachers have latched on to this idea in order to make this more palatable, that, oh, in Jerusalem there's this gate called the eye of the needle.

[36 : 22] the problem with that is it's not discovered until the ninth century after Christ. It did not exist in the first century.

So as much as you want to make it easier for the rich man, sorry, that's not what he said. He's literally exaggerating again, just like he did when he talked about cut off that hand, cut off that foot, right?

He doesn't really mean literal amputation, he means get to the source. And so what he's saying in this graphic exaggerated language, imagine a camel, and imagine trying to put it through the eye of the needle, and he's probably getting a laugh here.

The disciples are going, wait a minute, you know, they're probably laughing and then they're going, wait a minute, what do you mean by that? Because notice their reaction, verse 26.

First, verse 24, the disciples were amazed at his words. Then Jesus kind of rubs it in a little bit more, verse 26, they were exceedingly astonished. This word astonished, we've seen it before, back in chapter 1 of Mark where he casts out demons, and the crowds are amazed.

[37 : 43] He has authority over unclean spirits, and they obey him? We haven't seen that before. They're astonished. This word astonished means to be struck out.

I don't know how we put it in our modern language, blown away, probably not good enough. It was a blow to them. It throws them off.

They are stunned and shocked. exceedingly! Struck out! Like, boom!

Okay, I don't know what to think anymore. I don't get it. This is not what we were taught in synagogue school.

This is not the common Jewish view. common Jewish view is that those who are rich and healthy have God's blessing upon them. If you are sick and poor, it must be because you have sinned.

[38 : 51] See, it's just the same as the prosperity gospel teaching today. And Jesus blows that teaching out of the water.

Jesus turns their values upside down. No, riches don't help you.

Riches hinder you. Wealth does not give you an advantage. It gives you a disadvantage because they will tend to make you think you're safe.

they will tend to make you think you're okay. They will not make you desperate for God because I can provide for myself. I can make it.

I just need to spend a little more money. I just need to buy a little bigger car. I just need to buy another piece of land, something to work on, give me something to do. I don't know. The deceitfulness of riches.

[39 : 53] So, they raise the question in verse 26, then who can be saved?

Then who can? Who is able? Who has the ability? If the rich don't, then who?

Who? If it's not the people, quote unquote, blessed by God, how do we, lowly ones, poor in spirit who have nothing, how do we get saved?

Again, Jesus' answer in verse 27, here comes the look. He looked at them again and said with man, it's impossible.

That's the point. It's impossible. It's impossible for anyone to enter the kingdom of God by your ability.

[41 : 13] Man can't save himself. You are inadequate. You lack what is essential. This is what the law teaches you. It's the whole point of the law, to show you your sin.

What did David finally discover? The man after God's own heart, what did he finally discover in his tragic scandal with Bathsheba? We hear in Psalm 51, what does he say?

Have mercy. If there was a sacrifice, I would offer it. There's no sacrifice for intentional rebellion and sin. How many commandments did I break?

Adultery, cover-up, murder, covetousness, another man's wife, stealing, another man's wife.

How many did he break? false witness? David, a man who is a wonderful example to us of a man after God's own heart.

[42 : 27] Okay? And like Peter, he needed to fall to expose his sinfulness, his heart, his inability, his absolute desperateness to cry out for mercy alone.

Because that's all he says in Psalm 51. Have mercy. Have mercy. Have mercy. Please blot out my sins. Blot out my sins. Wash me. Cleanse me. Create in me a new heart. I haven't got a bad heart.

Create in me a new heart. Sustain me with a willing spirit because my spirit's unwilling. It's a broken spirit that I have. I can't even worship, he goes on in Psalm 51. I can't even worship. I can't even worship. Okay?

The point of the law was to show us our need and our lack, our inability, and to show us that apart from God, it's only possible with God. We're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ.

Thank you. To the glory of God. Hello? Based on solas, trying to get the five solas in there.

[43 : 47] Salvation is recognizing that we fall short. Isn't it? We stand before a just God, a holy God, and we cry out for mercy.

That we can only rely and trust and hope in God's grace and not in anything in ourselves. We trust in what Christ has done and accomplished for us, that he has lived a righteous life, and that he has done this great exchange with us.

He has taken our sins and carried them away on the cross. And then he gives to us his righteousness. See, we don't need just forgiveness.

We also need righteousness. And so we have this, what Luther called this, this extraordinary exchange. Here, Jesus, take all my junk and dirt and baggage.

Oh, thank you for all your perfect righteousness. As if we would say it so tritely. that's the treasure. That's the treasure. So, hear how Paul explains this in Romans 8.

[45 : 08] He says, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Watch this. For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. See, with man it's impossible.

God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. That's not the law's fault. The law is holy and righteous and just. It simply tells us where the line is.

It simply tells us what's righteous and holy and pure. It simply shows us, okay, when I cross that line I've transgressed. It's not the law's fault.

The law weakened by what? My flesh. Could not do. God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do.

[46 : 10] By sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin he condemned sin in the flesh. Watch this.

Here's the great news. In order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us. Wow. Not just forgiveness.

Fulfillment of righteousness. Oh, do we even know what that means? And then look at what kind of people we become who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit people who have been transformed.

So here's the gospel, right? Remember the gospels, those four things? God, man, Jesus, response? Who's God in these verses in Romans 8? He's just and holy.

He must condemn sin. He is just and holy. There's nothing else he can do. He cannot deny himself. He cannot stop being holy. He must condemn sin.

[47 : 11] Well, then we're dead, right? Because who's man? Well, we're weak. We cannot keep the law. We're sinful. We lack the ability.

How does God remedy this? Third point, Christ. What does Christ do? Christ is sent by the Father to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law for us and put it in us as well as die and take the condemnation on the cross for us.

So God is just. God fulfills his justice by pouring out his wrath on Jesus for us. There's that great exchange.

And what's our response? Trust. Repentance. Walking according to the Spirit. Okay.

So can we apply anything from this text? In case you missed it, let me give you two. One, taking from the first scene, what do you lack?

[48 : 27] I already asked you this question. What do you lack? And to answer that, you have to go before the Lord. I can't answer that for you. Psalm 139, search me, O Lord, see me, see if there's any harmful way in me, try me, show me.

Right? He'll do that. What do I lack? What stands in your way of devotion to Christ? Is there something that's keeping you reluctant from stepping out and following Him?

okay? That's between you and the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Secondly, has God saved you?

How do you know? are you trusting your salvation in something you did? Well, I prayed the prayer. Praying the prayer doesn't save you.

It's not bad praying the prayer. Pray the prayer. It's part of the process. But that doesn't save you. How do you know if you're saved?

[49 : 35] Well, have you been transformed? I don't mean perfect. Have you been changed? Do you know and hate sin? And do you desire and yearn?

Not every moment of the day, of course, because you have flesh. But do you not long in the depths of your being to be right with God? To be faithful to Him?

To walk in the Spirit? To depend on Him? That's the difference. How do you know? See, has God done something, not you? Has He answered your prayer? You know, my testimony.

Fifteen years praying the prayer. Fifteen years before He answered it. Doesn't mean He wasn't working, because He was working the whole time. Conviction, conviction, conviction. Walk the aisle, conviction.

Walk the aisle, conviction. Walk the aisle. Got old. Got old. But He was determined to save me.

[50 : 39] So do you trust in Christ's righteousness and His sacrifice for sin? Do you know Him? That's enough application. I think you've got plenty to deal with.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the way Jesus stuns us with His views. No one has a higher view of marriage, a higher view of children, a more concerned view of wealth.

Father, help us, because we have natural tendencies in us that cause us to wander, that cause us to be deceived, that cause us, Lord, to covet.

So show us Your truth. Expose our own heart, our own lacking, that we might come to You to fill that, to change that.

We know that You alone, You alone can make us right. These things we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you.

[51 : 53] Thank you. Thank you.