



### 03.04.10/ Mark 10:17-31

#### Materials Needed

- A needle (a plastic kids' needle if you have one), thread, and thick yarn.

#### Opening Activity and Discussion

Show children the needle and length of thin thread. Talk about how a needle is used, and how the yarn needs to be threaded through the "eye of the needle." Demonstrate or have an older child demonstrate how the needle is threaded. Next demonstrate what happens when you try to thread something thicker through the eye of the needle, such as the length of thick yarn (it doesn't work out very well). Tell the children that we are going to discuss a story where Jesus used a very similar example in His teachings.

#### Read Mark 10:17-31

"And 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!' 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.' Peter began to say to him, 'See, we have left everything and followed you.' 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, 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. But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

This same story is also told in Matthew and Luke. From all accounts we learn that this man was very wealthy. In other gospels the man is described as a "ruler." He was probably part of the educated elite of the day. He had lots of enthusiasm for Jesus and tried to flatter him by referring to him as "Good Teacher." Jesus immediately takes the focus away from the man's flattery and puts it on God, saying that only God is good.

#### Question 1

What is the answer to the man's question, "... what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

*Let children answer on their own first. There is nothing WE can do to inherit eternal life. We are incapable of saving ourselves.*

*Jesus said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. With God all things are possible." We can DO nothing to save ourselves.*

*It's when we simply believe that Jesus died for our sins and came back to life and destroyed death that we're saved. Romans 10:9 says this:*

*"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*



Like so many of us, the man wanted something that HE could do to inherit eternal life. He thought that his actions would be good enough to save himself. God says that all of our good deeds are like filthy rags – only the blood of Jesus can truly wash away our sins and make us clean! Jesus can save rich people and poor people. Because of God’s grace, God can save us!

### Question 2

We had trouble fitting the thick yarn through the eye of our needle. Can you imagine trying to fit a camel through this needle? It’s a ridiculous thought, isn’t it! It sounds impossible! Was Jesus saying that no rich people can be saved? NO! As we said before, it is impossible for us to save OURSELVES, but GOD can save anyone who is willing to accept his gift of salvation by grace. There are several examples of wealthy people becoming saved throughout the Bible (Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimethea, Nicodemus, etc.). However, just like in today’s times, it was easy to fall into a trap of thinking that money provides for our needs, rather than God. Jesus was not saying that rich people cannot be saved, only that the love of something more than God is an obstacle keeps people from seeing their need for grace and mercy.

### Wrap Up

In all Gospel accounts, we read that the man went away sad. When he didn’t like what Jesus said, he turned away from him. Have you ever read a passage of Scripture that you didn’t like because it pointed out something in your life that you needed to change? Did this cause you to turn towards Jesus or away from Jesus? How would the young man’s life have been different if he had turned towards Jesus rather than away? We already know that Jesus loved the man. If the man would have taken a step of faith, Jesus would have accepted this man and would have softened his heart. Can you think of a time when Jesus changed your heart’s response to a difficult passage of Scripture because you turned towards him?

The irony of this story is that this man had everything but one thing (eternal life). He wanted it but was unwilling to give away everything else to get that one thing. In other words, he loved something else more than he loved God. For this man, he put his trust in his monetary riches. But money is not the only thing that we can put our trust in rather than God. Reflect on your own life and the things that are important to you. Are you putting some things higher than God? If so, take some time this week to turn TOWARDS Jesus rather than AWAY from him, so that your relationship with him can be restored and made whole. As you close in prayer, pray for a generous and wise heart that trusts in Jesus and nothing else.