

Matthew 19:23-24 The Extreme Difficulty for a Rich Man to be Saved

Introduction: In our text last Sunday a young man wanted to be saved, but turned down the opportunity because of his riches. Jesus said that a rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven.

I. Difficult, but not impossible, verse 23.

- A. Jesus did not say that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. A rich man can be saved, but not because of his riches.
 - 2. He may be accustomed to using his money to get whatever he wants, but it will not get him into heaven.
 - 3. If he gets saved, he will get saved the same way that a poor man gets saved.
(Repentance and faith.)
- B. What He did say is that it is hard for a rich man to get saved and very few would ever do it.

II. The camel and the eye of the needle, verse 24.

- A. To illustrate His point, Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go thru the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. Jesus did not originate the expression about the camel and the eye of the needle.
 - 2. It was commonly used in His day to say that something was very difficult.
- B. Bible interpreters have wondered if Jesus referred to the pedestrian gate beside the large gate into the city of Jerusalem, (Often called “the eye of the needle”).
 - 1. A camel could squeeze thru, but only if unloaded and on his knees.
 - 2. This indeed presents a beautiful picture of repentance.
 - 3. But most likely Jesus used the expression the same way that it was commonly used in His time.
(With reference to a literal needle, but only to point out the extreme difficulty of the rich man getting saved.)

III. The question of “Why?”

- A. Why is it so difficult for a rich man to get saved?
 - 1. Is not the plan of salvation the same for all men?
 - 2. It is.
 - 3. They why is it harder for a rich man to get saved than it is for anybody else?
- B. The answer is: Because of his attitude.
 - 1. For one thing, a rich man may make his riches his god.
 - 2. For another, all of one's time and interest can be consumed in seeking his riches that he will give little thought to getting saved. (Luke 12)
 - 3. Also a rich man may feel that he has all he needs and does not need to be saved.
 - 4. Or he may feel that whatever he needs he can buy.
 - 5. Or he may be lifted up in pride so that he will not admit that he cannot do it himself. (Apparently this was this young man's problem.)
- C. One man used a jug to trap monkeys.
 - 1. He would put nuts in the jug to tempt the monkeys.
 - 2. The monkey could put his empty hand in but could not pull his full hand out.
 - 3. He could turn loose and be free, but he wouldn't and so he was trapped.
- D. At any rate not many rich people ever get saved. (Most of the rich who are saved got their riches after they got saved. If they had gotten rich first they would probably never have gotten saved.)

IV. About us.

- A. If one is saved, he ought to thank God.
- B. And maybe he ought also to thank Him that he was not rich.
 - 1. Although you have probably felt at times that you have been short changed because you were poor.

2. But if you had been rich, you probably would not be saved right now. (And probably would not ever be saved.)
- C. If you are not saved, do not let your riches or anything else stand in your way of being saved. (Money is not worth going to hell for.)

Conclusion: If it is money or pride or self-righteousness or whatever it is, turn it loose so that you can get your hand out of the jug and come to Jesus Christ and be saved.