

Surrey Chapel Fellowship Group Notes March 9-10th 2011

The Master at Work

The Rich Ruler

In this first section which is paralleled in Matt 19:16-29 and Mark 10:17-30, Jesus talks to a rich ruler who was probably a synagogue leader or a member of the Sanhedrin. He comes to Jesus with what appears to be a genuine question. As is typical in the gospel accounts Jesus doesn't give a straight answer. Why not?

In reading this passage it is easy to focus on verses 22 and 25, and come away with the feeling that Jesus is anti-wealth. But is this the true focus of this passage?

Many people (correctly?) assumed that wealth was equated with God's blessing which made Jesus teaching here all the more surprising. - v.26 who then can be saved? V.25, which is an example of hyperbole, makes the point that it is impossible for the rich (or indeed anyone) to enter the kingdom of God¹ based on their works, or wealth, or to have the desire to seek God apart from God's grace. In v.27-31 Jesus emphasises the totality of the commitment that he requires and the blessings that will be received.

v.21 "All these I have kept" - Have a look at the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20) especially the first and last commands. Also compare the rich ruler's statement with Paul in Philippians 3:6.

Jesus Predicts His Death

Jesus gives another prediction of his death as he gets closer and closer to Jerusalem - the triumphal entry is in the next chapter. Why was the meaning of this passage hidden from the disciples v.34? One result of this prediction was that the disciples were able to later look back and see that everything that happened was part of God's plan and not a tragic accident.

From reading the gospel accounts we get an increasing sense that Jesus is going purposefully towards Jerusalem and that he knows the fate that will await him there - a fate that is both planned and pre-ordained. Paradoxically, although he is to be "turned over to the Gentiles" it is also evident that he was always completely in charge of the situation. The phrase "turned over to the Gentiles" parallels the Old Testament where Israel was handed over to the Gentiles for punishment of their sin. In the New Testament Jesus is handed over to bear God's wrath for the sins of his people.

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

The rebukes of the crowd in v.39 led the beggar to cry-out all the more. Do you see any parallels with the Parable of the Persistent Widow in Chapter 18? Although he was begging when Jesus does stop to talk to him he asks for his sight and not money. This confirms the man's faith in Jesus and Jesus responds by healing him saying "your faith has healed you". (This can be more literally translated as 'your faith has saved you' and the same Greek verb is used in Luke 7:50 and 8:48.) The man was healed both physically and spiritually. Can you think of other Gospel examples where this happens?

ADB

Prayer Points

- 1 Middle East and North Africa, especially Christians in this area.
- 2 New Zealand - Christchurch Earthquake
- 3 Public reading of the King James Bible and other KJV anniversary events.

¹ "The Kingdom of God is the rule or reign of God over people's hearts and lives and over other parts of creation." -Wayne Grudem