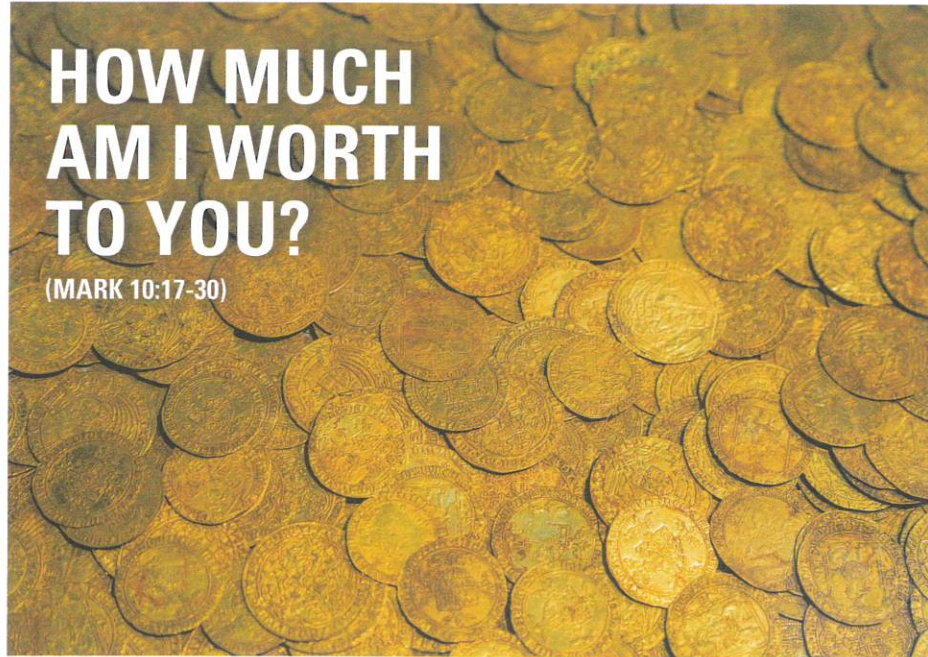


HOW MUCH AM I WORTH TO YOU?

(MARK 10:17-30)



Jesus sets out on the next stage of his journey to Jerusalem and Mark illustrates the cost of becoming a disciple by the arrival of an unnamed man, who asks about the requirements for eternal life.

He tells Jesus that he has faithfully kept the commandments, then Jesus invites him to come with him as his disciple. But the cost proves too high: it is only when he sadly declines the invitation that the evangelist reveals that he is a wealthy person.

This leads on to Jesus' teaching about riches as an obstacle to being a disciple, and to the disciples' fundamental question about being saved at all. They are then confronted with the idea of salvation as God's gift. A rich person may have ample opportunity to keep the commandments, but this is no advantage over those less fortunate.

Peter then raises the question of those who have embraced voluntary poverty so that they can accompany Jesus as his disciples, unencumbered by possessions. Mark is the only Gospel writer in which we find Jesus' promise of a new family and new possessions, the hundredfold promised by hearing and putting into practice the word of God in the parable of the sower. The inclusion of the reference to persecutions would make perfect sense to Mark's community, as it would to many Christians in our time. ■

SAY

"We hold a treasure, Christ the Lord, in earthen vessels."

(John B. Foley)



LEARN

Mark does not have a sermon on ethical behaviour as do Matthew (on the mount) and Luke (on the plain).

Jesus' teaching is given in response to actual situations.

Mark's community is familiar with persecution under the Roman emperor Nero.

DO

Take some money, coins or a note, in your hand: reflect on how much Jesus means to you.



REFLECT

Mark does not have the same very negative attitude to wealth as we find in the writings of his fellow evangelist Luke, but, all the same, he does regard it as an obstacle to being a disciple of Jesus. It is hard to imagine that this demand of Jesus for a radical break with family and possessions which he describes is remotely possible for all but a small number of people. Many Christians will, understandably, conclude that this incident does not have anything to say to them.

But there must be some lesson which applies to all of us, and it might be summed up in the implicit question which Jesus is asking this prospective disciple: "How much am I worth to you?" The cost was too high for the person in the story, and Mark is challenging all those who read or hear his Gospel. Is there anything in our lives more important to us than Jesus? Having a family and the responsibilities that go with it is the way in which most Christians live their calling as disciples,

so perhaps the idea of living as simply as we can would make more sense: not getting caught up in the relentless pursuit of things which are not really essential, and which can distract us from those which are truly important.

Many of the details in the Gospel stories do not apply to our time, but the teachings of Jesus which they present do. It is up to us to find appropriate ways to live them in our own lives. ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
But with you is found forgiveness,
O God of Israel.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Wisdom 7:7-11

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

I prayed, and understanding was given me;
I entreated, and the spirit of Wisdom came
to me.
I esteemed her more than sceptres and
thrones;
compared with her, I held riches as nothing.
I reckoned no priceless stone to be her peer,
for compared with her, all gold is a pinch of
sand,
and beside her silver ranks as mud.
I loved her more than health or beauty,
preferred her to the light,
since her radiance never sleeps.
In her company all good things came to me,
at her hands riches not to be numbered.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 89

Response:

Fill us with your love that we may rejoice.

1. Make us know the shortness of our life
that we may gain wisdom of heart.
Lord, relent! Is your anger for ever?
Show pity to your servants. (R.)
2. In the morning, fill us with your love;
we shall exult and rejoice all our days.
Give us joy to balance our affliction
for the years when we knew misfortune.
(R.)

3. Show forth your work to your servants;
let your glory shine on their children.
Let the favour of the Lord be upon us:
give success to the work of our hands. (R.)

SECOND READING

Hebrews 4:12-13

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

The word of God is something alive and
active: it cuts like any double-edged sword
but more finely: it can slip through the place
where the soul is divided from the spirit,
or joints from the marrow; it can judge the
secret emotions and thoughts. No created
thing can hide from him; everything is
uncovered and open to the eyes of the one to
whom we must give account of ourselves.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 10:17-30

(For shorter form, read between > <)

> A reading from the holy Gospel according
to Mark.

Jesus was setting out on a journey when
a man ran up, knelt before him and put
this question to him, "Good master, what
must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said
to him, "Why do you call me good? No
one is good but God alone. You know the
commandments: You must not kill; You must
not commit adultery; You must not steal; You
must not bring false witness; You must not
defraud; Honour your father and mother."
And he said to him, "Master, I have kept all
these from my earliest days." Jesus looked
steadily at him and loved him, and he said,
"There is one thing you lack. Go and sell
everything you own and give the money
to the poor, and you will have treasure in
heaven; then come, follow me." But his face
fell at these words and he went away sad, for
he was a man of great wealth.

Jesus looked round and said to his
disciples, "How hard it is for those who have
riches to enter the kingdom of God!" The
disciples were astounded by these words,
but Jesus insisted, "My children," he said to
them, "how hard it is to enter the kingdom of
God! It is easier for a camel to pass through
the eye of a needle than for a rich man to
enter the kingdom of God." They were more
astonished than ever. "In that case," they
said to one another "who can be saved?"
Jesus gazed at them. "For men" he said
"it is impossible, but not for God: because
everything is possible for God." <
Peter took this up. "What about us?"
he asked him. "We have left everything
and followed you." Jesus said, "I tell you
solemnly, there is no one who has left house,
brothers, sisters, father, children or land for
my sake and for the sake of the gospel who
will not be repaid a hundred times over,
houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children
and land – not without persecutions – now in
this present time and, in the world to come,
eternal life."

> The Gospel of the Lord. <
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful
with the sacrificial offerings,
that, through these acts of devotedness,
we may pass over to the glory of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The rich suffer want and go hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no
blessing.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We entreat your majesty most humbly,
O Lord,
that, as you feed us with the nourishment
which comes from the most holy Body and
Blood of your Son,
so you may make us sharers of his divine
nature.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

