

Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon 10.10.21 Mark 10:17-31

Grace and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

So, I'm going to throw out something radical to start off today. Jesus says this super famous quote in today's Gospel

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God

He says this and instantly everyone's just what!!!! No way did he just say that. That so profound, it's so meaningful that just gets stuck in my head and I'll remember that and write that down. But what if that's not what Jesus Said. Here we go, we are going to dive into the exciting intriguing world of ancient Greek let me tell you it's going to blow your mind. Here we go.

καμηλος (camel) Kamelos (camel)

καμιλος (rope) Kamilos (rope)

We are talking one letter difference, we are talking about the ever so slight difference between an "el" sound and an "il" sound. This changes everything. Camels do not fit through needles. Ropes do not fit through needles. Not much fits through needles. Ok this might not be as radical as I thought. Or perhaps you thought it would be. In fact, this little factoid isn't really that disputed in the wider world of theological review because does it matter if it is a thick rope or camel? The message remains the same. And it is a radical one either way.

And just to be clear I'm not saying radical the way that we hear it almost every day in the news and on social media and from cousin Eddie who's always bringing the radicals of either side of the spectrum. I'm talking about the meaning of radical in its meaning from the Latin on which the word is based. I know I'm pulling out another dead language but bear with me.

"radical" comes from radix, radices and refers to the roots of a plant, a problem, the grounding assumptions of an argument."

The radical side of Jesus' story with this rich man isn't the camel or the rope, it's the issue that humanity has with what we got right in front of us.

Let me be clear here. God is our Creator and has created everything to be used well and justly. But the issue that is before us is all of this stuff that God calls good and then our own sinful selves getting those greedy hands, eyes, and hearts over everything we can touch, see, and feel should be ours.

The radical issue that Jesus points to, the core root issue that is presented, is not having money or stuff, it is the sin that corrupts us all.

And the radical solution that Jesus offers this man, the core solution, the solution to the root of his problem is the same one we say all the time in our lives to other people.

Got a problem with alcohol, stop drinking.

Got a problem with drugs, stop doing drugs.

Got a problem with gambling, stop gambling.

No one says if you got a problem the healthy thing is to just cut back, it isn't "yeah, you've got a problem but only have a drink once and a while, only gamble when you know it's a sure bet.

Jesus is radically saying to this man, and let's be real here, he's saying this to us too, you've got a problem, and here's what you've gotta do about it.

And here is where our Hebrew reading really comes to life:

The "word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow;"

These words to the rich man are as hard for us now 2000 years later as they were back then. So much so that it seems almost like we have a completely heartless God commanding us to do the almost impossible. But grace and good news comes in the words from Hebrews as well. "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" Jesus knows our weakness. Jesus knows what divides us from each other and God. Jesus is trying again and again to remind us what will cause us pain and suffering. Jesus reminds us again of the lifelong peril we find ourselves in. You will be continually tempted in a way that will undermine you and overcome you. It will separate you from each other and it will separate you from God.

This leads us ever back to God. Who knows our weakness and wants to help us. Wants us to focus ourselves, our whole selves with everything we are and everything we have, we focus on our God. Focus on God so that we can see the world around us as God sees it. This great gift which we have been given to care for and watch it thrive and grow. Every piece, every blade of grass, every plant, every animal, every single person that you can think about and the 7 billion that are on this earth, are meant to be cared for, tended, and watched over. Our greed forces us to only look inward, God looks outward. That is our hope. That is the radical hope that we know right now. That is the hope that will win this ultimate fight. That is the hope that you and I live in today, tomorrow and always. Amen.