Grace, Mercy and Peace unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Last week we had an object lesson from the rich young man who was disheartened and sorrowful about following Jesus. We learned that setting our hopes in worldly possessions prevents one from following Jesus. But Jesus is our Good Teacher and He not only teaches by example, but Jesus did what we cannot do. Jesus gladly gave all of his possessions to the poor. That is, He gave His own life, so that you will not die eternally.

That sermon continues this morning. The Gospel lesson in Mark carries over and you hear from your Good Teacher again. Jesus is the Hope of the World, and He continues leading you away from hope in earthly things, to hope in Him. **Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 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! ---**This task is so difficult that the disciples were totally perplexed and amazed. I'm sure you know the feeling of being perplexed and amazed. Sometimes there comes an obstacle into your life, maybe at home or work or school, and you aren't quite sure how to solve it.

Then, when the trouble amplifies, so does your bewilderment. Now right now your intense amazement should not be any particular trouble at home or work or school, but it is Jesus' own words which present you with a difficult situation. ---Jesus says, **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.” 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?”**

---The Good Teacher that Jesus is, illustrates the magnitude of your predicament. 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!

Now if you aren't shocked along with the disciples then you haven't been listening to your Good Teacher.

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!\*

If you aren't troubled, you should be! Even if you have a little wealth how difficult it is. ---Maybe you're not a big strong camel that carries many possessions strapped to its back, but maybe you're more like an industrious squirrel, with a cache of walnuts buried in the backyard and a wad of kernels of corn off the bird feeder stuffed in your cheeks as you scurry along the power wire and hop onto a nearby tree branch. ---Even a small squirrel will never fit through the eye of a needle! ---You should be shocked, -but do not despair, Your Good Teacher, the God-Man Jesus Christ does what man is not able to do.

**---Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.**

It is impossible to have eternal life if you aren't following Jesus. Let Jesus be your everything.

You have a God who does the impossible. --Jesus knew your unbelief and greed and your inability to enter the Kingdom of God. So He made the way for you. He is the way. God has paid the price to purchase you from greed and all sin and from death. He gave His Son. ---Jesus suffered and died, His precious blood paying the ransom price for rich young men, for the miserly elderly, and for everyone. ---Jesus has passed through the tomb. Your Lord died and rose. The \*camel has passed through the eye of the needle.\* Now, even the squirrel with cheeks puffed with corn is able to pass through the eye of the needle. Christ crucified and risen opens the gate of heaven for you.

Baptized into Him you now walk in newness of life, for Faith possesses Christ. Be exceedingly astonished at what your Good Teacher has done for you. Believe in Him, continue learning from Him, treasure the heavenly riches He gives you.

---Jesus has saved you from consuming passion. ---With His Spirit you are able to be on your guard against all greed, for you know life is more than what you own. ---Now you can steward your possessions and wealth instead of being controlled by them.

---Believing that Jesus Christ fulfills all your wants and needs and that He is your joy, you will be satisfied and your faith will flourish.

Jesus loosens the white knuckle grip you had on your possessions; now your hand is free and you are able to hold onto eternal things: faith, hope, and love. No longer are your hands busy constantly carrying things into your own storage shed, or writing checks to buy things for your own pleasure. Now your hands are free to serve your neighbor. ---And I see that your hands are free. There are so many good works in this congregation done to the glory of God, thanks be to Jesus! But idle hands easily slip into the pocket and do nothing.

As you always consider the nail pierced hands of our Lord Jesus and the impossible good that He was able to do for you, pray that He keep your faith strong and your hands active in good works. Set not your heart on food or drink, nor be weighed down by earthly care... about such things the godless think, yet never thank the Lord in prayer. Set your heart on Christ and always thank Him in prayer.

Though the riches of this world continually try to lure you away He walks beside you in the tempting byways and will keep you in the faith.

You lack no good thing. It is Christ who helps you see what is truly holy and makes you to desire it.

---How amazing this is, ---Now you are willing even to suffer worldly loss for the kingdom of God. Consider Peter who followed Jesus.

**Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” 29 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, 30 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.**

The invitation to follow Jesus so often results in a drastic upheaval and overturning of life. To be a follower of Jesus you must be willing to give up property and even family. With Peter, for the sake of the Gospel, "Be not afraid to suffer loss of all the things for which you pray, For He who faced for you the cross will give you strength to live each day." Christians will suffer injury, but we should never cause injury. You do not leave family in the name of Jesus but even if family refuses to follow Jesus you must keep following.

Loyalty to God supersedes loyalty to anything in this world. ---Only with God is this possible. It is not possible for you to enter the Kingdom of God by your own powers, but Jesus makes it possible, for with God all things are possible.

Seek first God's reign, His boundless grace, His holy name in all you do: Christ first and last in ev'ry place; All else will then be given you. Jesus promises that whatever you lose for the sake of the kingdom will be restored to you with persecution. Despair not, Jesus is the hope of the world and he promises a new world to come, indeed, in the age to come you will have eternal life.

You may lose some things in this world, but you have gained Christ, in his body you are united with him. If the Lord takes away some things, remember that he gives even more. If your family doesn't follow Him you have this church family. You have an abundance of heavenly riches with God, for Jesus has done the impossible. Amen