

Matthew 19

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Matthew 19

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven

Cultural Background: The "eye of the needle" is actually a small gate on the wall of Jerusalem, called the "eye of the needle". When the gate is closed, there is only a thin gate, and the camel has to unload all its loads to pass through it, even if it kneels down before it can barely pass. This explanation emphasizes the need to lay down the burdens that one carries and humble oneself in order to enter the kingdom of heaven first.

The metaphor of a camel passing through the eye of a needle is used to emphasize the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom of heaven. Being rich is not a sin in itself, but wealth can bring some challenges and temptations. For example, wealthy people tend to be dependent on their wealth and feel that they can rely on material things to solve their problems rather than relying on God. Jesus emphasized that purity of heart and total trust in God are more important than material possessions.

The key to entering the kingdom of heaven is to sincerely seek God in your heart. When people have too much material possessions, they may develop pride, covet the world, or become overly dependent on possessions and neglect faith and obedience to God. Therefore, Jesus warned that wealth can easily become a stumbling block to entering the kingdom of heaven.

Man cannot be saved on his own, and "the camel through the eye of a needle" is an extreme metaphor that suggests that human efforts cannot enter the kingdom of heaven at all. Only God can make this "impossible" possible (Matthew 19:26, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.")) ° This shows that salvation does not come from human works or efforts, but from the grace of God.

Jesus said to a rich young man, "Sell what you have and give to the poor, and there will be treasure in heaven; Then come, follow me." This reminds us that the true value of spiritual life is far greater than earthly wealth.

Spiritual wealth (faith, love, obedience to God) is eternal. Only by relying on God by faith and being willing to lay down the burdens of this world can we truly enter the kingdom of heaven.

The contradiction between faith and the ease of entering the Kingdom of Heaven is often discussed. While justification by faith is central to the salvation of believers,

Paul emphasizes in Romans, "A man who believes in his heart is justified; confess with your mouth, and you will be saved." This shows that salvation is possible if you truly trust Jesus.

Even after being saved, believers still need to make sustained efforts in their daily lives to meet God's standards.

The balance between the two is to emphasize two important aspects of the life of faith: receiving God's grace and actively pursuing holiness.

Believers are both thankful for God's grace and constantly striving in their faith life to achieve true spiritual growth.

In Matthew 19, Jesus records a conversation with the Pharisees about marriage and divorce. Emphasizing the sanctity of marriage, Jesus said, "In the beginning man was created male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.'" So, he emphasized God's cooperation that no one can be separated, and opposed the idea of divorce at will.

Then the disciples were amazed at the seriousness of marriage and thought that if it was so difficult, it would be better not to marry. Jesus spoke of the gift of celibacy, saying that some people voluntarily become celibate for the sake of heaven, and that this is also an option.

The apostle Paul's choice of celibacy to better serve the Lord was indeed courageous and respectable. In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, he mentions his reason for choosing celibacy, believing that it would allow him to serve God more intently. He said, "I want you to have no worries. He who has not taken a wife is anxious about the things of the Lord, and wants to please the Lord. He who marries is anxious about the things of the world, and how he may please his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:32-34).

Paul's choice emphasized absolute devotion and total devotion to God, and his willingness to devote all his energy and time to the work of preaching and building up the church.

Then some people brought children to Jesus, and the disciples tried to stop them, but Jesus said, "Let them come to me, and do not forbid them, for such are those who are in the kingdom of heaven." The importance of innocence and humility of heart in faith is emphasized.

The little ones have innocence, humility and a heart of complete trust. They have no complicated minds, they are curious about the world and have a simple love. In this way, Jesus reminds us to approach our faith and life with a childlike mindset and to reject pride, self-righteousness, and excessive attachment to material things.

We pray

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank You for your love and grace, and for your companionship and protection throughout our lives. Today, we pray to You for all married couples, single friends, and families, that Your mercy and blessings will be upon each and every one of them.

Lord, You created marriage, and You know that the relationship between husband and wife is both challenging and gracious. Grant all couples more patience, understanding, and love to help them find support and trust in each other through difficulties and disputes. May their marriage be a testimony of Your glory and be strong in Your love for a long time.

Lord, we also pray for all our single friends to give them peace and joy, knowing that You love and care for them, regardless of their marital status. Ask You to guide them as they wait, fill their hearts with trust in You, and give them a suitable partner or be a blessing to others in their single days.

Heavenly Father, we also pray for every family, whether parents and children, or other family members, that Your peace and love will always be with them. When they face difficulties and pressures, please give them wisdom and strength to help them build harmonious family relationships, so that each family can be a haven of love and support.

Lord, You are our trust, and we are willing to entrust all our burdens to You and to move forward in Your guidance. Work in our lives so that we experience Your love, grace, and compassion at every level of our marriage, our singleness, and our family.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we pray, amen.

Matthew 19

Concerning Divorce

19 Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, He left Galilee and went into the part of Judea that is beyond the Jordan; ² and large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.

³ And Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?” ⁴ He replied, “Have you never read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined inseparably to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.” ⁷ The Pharisees said to Him, “Why then did Moses command us to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?” ⁸ He said to them, “Because your hearts were hard *and* stubborn Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. ⁹ I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery^[a].”

¹⁰ The disciples said to Jesus, “If the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.” ¹¹ But He said to them, “Not all men can accept this statement, but *only* those to whom [the capacity to receive] it has been given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who have been born that way from their mother’s womb [making them incapable of consummating a marriage]; and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men [for royal service]; and there are eunuchs who have ^[b]made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.”

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹³ Then children were brought to Jesus so that He might place His hands on them [for a blessing] and pray; but the disciples reprimanded them. ¹⁴ But He said, “Leave the children alone, and do not forbid them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” ¹⁵ After placing His hands on them [for a blessing], He went on from there.

The Rich Young Ruler

¹⁶ And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what [essentially] good thing shall I do to obtain eternal life [that is, eternal salvation in the Messiah’s kingdom]?” ¹⁷ Jesus answered, “Why are you asking Me about what is [essentially] good? There is *only* One who is [essentially] good; but if you wish to enter into *eternal* life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to Jesus, “Which commandments?” And Jesus answered, “You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not give false testimony; ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother; and love your neighbor as yourself” [that is, unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others]. ²⁰ The young man said to Him, “I have kept all these things [from my youth]; what do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus answered him, “If you wish to be perfect [that is, have the spiritual maturity that accompanies godly character with no moral or ethical deficiencies], go and sell what you have and give [the money] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me [becoming My disciple, believing and trusting in Me and walking the same path of life that I walk].” ²² But when the young man heard this, he left grieving *and* distressed, for he owned much property *and* had many possessions [which he treasured more than his relationship with God].

²³ Jesus said to His disciples, “I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, it is difficult for a rich man [who clings to possessions and status as security] to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man [who places his faith in wealth and status] to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were completely ^[c]astonished *and* bewildered, saying, “Then who can be saved [from the wrath of God]?” ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “With people [as far as it depends on them] it is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

The Disciples’ Reward

²⁷ Then Peter answered Him, saying, “Look, we have given up everything and followed You [becoming Your disciples and accepting You as Teacher and Lord]; what then will there be for us?” ²⁸ Jesus said to them, “I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, in the renewal [that is, the Messianic restoration and regeneration of all things] when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you [who have followed Me, becoming My disciples] will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother ^[d]or children or farms for My name’s sake will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many *who are* first [in this world] will be last [in the world to come]; and the last, first.

Matthew 19: Full Description, Important Verses, and Spiritual Influence

Full Description of Matthew 19

Matthew 19 is a powerful chapter in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus teaches on marriage, divorce, celibacy, humility, wealth, and eternal life. The chapter contains significant lessons about God's will for relationships, the kingdom of heaven, and the cost of discipleship.

Here's a breakdown of its key sections:

1. Teaching on Divorce (Matthew 19:1-12)

- The Pharisees test Jesus by asking if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason.
- Jesus responds by referring to Genesis, emphasizing that God created marriage as a lifelong union.
- He states, *"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matthew 19:6, KJV).
- He allows divorce only in the case of sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9).
- Jesus acknowledges that not everyone is called to marriage; some remain single for the sake of God's kingdom.

2. Jesus Blesses the Children (Matthew 19:13-15)

- People bring children to Jesus for Him to bless them, but the disciples try to turn them away.
- Jesus rebukes them and says, *"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 19:14, KJV).
- This emphasizes childlike faith as the key to entering God's kingdom.

3. The Rich Young Ruler (Matthew 19:16-26)

- A wealthy young man asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life.
- Jesus tells him to obey the commandments, and when the man claims to have done so, Jesus challenges him to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Him.
- The young man leaves sorrowful, as he is unwilling to part with his wealth.
- Jesus warns, *"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God"* (Matthew 19:24, KJV).
- His disciples are astonished, but Jesus reassures them that *"With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible"* (Matthew 19:26, KJV).

4. The Reward for Following Christ (Matthew 19:27-30)

- Peter asks Jesus what reward awaits those who have left everything to follow Him.
- Jesus promises them seats of authority in His kingdom and eternal life for all who sacrifice for His sake.

- He concludes with the statement: *“But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first”* (Matthew 19:30, KJV), emphasizing God's kingdom operates differently from the world's standards.
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Important Verses and Their Meaning

1. **Matthew 19:6** – *“Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”*
 - Marriage is a sacred covenant, not merely a contract, and should not be broken by human decision.
 2. **Matthew 19:9** – *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.”*
 - Jesus upholds the sanctity of marriage, only allowing divorce in cases of sexual immorality.
 3. **Matthew 19:14** – *“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”*
 - Childlike humility and faith are essential for entering God’s kingdom.
 4. **Matthew 19:24** – *“And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”*
 - Wealth can become an obstacle to spiritual dependence on God.
 5. **Matthew 19:26** – *“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”*
 - Salvation and transformation are possible only through God’s power.
 6. **Matthew 19:30** – *“But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.”*
 - God’s kingdom reverses earthly expectations—humility and sacrifice lead to greatness in His eyes.
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Spiritual Influence and Lessons from Matthew 19

1. **God’s Design for Marriage**
 - Marriage is a lifelong covenant reflecting God's love and faithfulness.
 - It requires commitment, sacrifice, and dependence on God's grace.
2. **Childlike Faith**
 - Jesus teaches that humility and trust are required to enter God's kingdom.
 - We should approach Him with simplicity, dependence, and openness.
3. **Detachment from Earthly Riches**

- The rich young ruler's story warns against making wealth an idol.
- True fulfillment comes from following Christ, not possessions.

4. **God's Power in Salvation**

- Human effort alone cannot achieve salvation—it is God's work in us.
- Even the most difficult spiritual struggles can be overcome with God's help.

5. **The Reward of Sacrifice**

- Those who forsake worldly security for Christ will receive eternal blessings.
- God's kingdom operates on a different standard—humility and service lead to greatness.

Conclusion

Matthew 19 is a profound chapter that challenges us to align our lives with God's will. It teaches about the permanence of marriage, the importance of humility, the dangers of wealth, and the rewards of wholehearted devotion to Christ. It reminds us that with God, all things are possible, and those who put Him first will receive eternal blessings.