

Session 2

October 25, 2020

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

Mark 10:13-22

Last time, we saw how Christ committed Himself to us “while we were yet sinners.” Our commitment to Him (while shaky and weak compared to His), is still required. In this week’s lesson, The Lord Jesus describes three simple expectations He has for His children when it comes to our commitment to Him.

Childlike faith (vv. 13-16). First, our commitment to Christ begins with *simple faith*. So popular was Jesus, and so impressed with Him were the crowds, that many brought their children to meet Jesus and to be blessed by His touch. This age-old tradition was meant to honor the parents by making a fuss over their little ones, but also as a memorable moment to be brought up over and over as the children grew up. His disciples—no doubt assuming that Jesus had better things to do—rebuked the parents, discouraging them from bothering the Lord (v. 13). Jesus, however, used the occasion as a teaching moment. First, His reaction taught the *disciples* that they had overstepped their boundaries and misrepresented Him. The word *indignant* (v. 14) means “greatly angered,” or “painfully afflicted.” Second, He taught the *parents* the importance and significance of their children. Third, He taught the *children* that He loved them. Finally, returning to the disciples, He taught them that a simple, innocent, and pure faith—like that of a child—is the kind of faith required to be saved (v. 15). For reflection: *What impression do parents get when they bring their children to your church? Are the children swept-up and loved? Or instead, hushed-up and pushed aside?*

Honest evaluation (vv. 17-20). Second, our commitment to Christ is built on *honest evaluation*; that is, understanding clearly who *we* are, and who *He* is. In this story, the “Rich Young Ruler” failed on both counts. At first, he showed some potential. He treated Jesus with respect, kneeling before Him and giving Him the title, “Good Teacher” (v. 17). Jesus was not chiding him when He said that only God was good (v. 18). Rather, He was likely inquiring if this man really knew who he was talking to. Did he legitimately think this teacher was God incarnate? Nevertheless, the young man’s theology was all wrong. “What must I *do* to inherit eternal life?” demonstrates the belief that one must *do* something to *earn* salvation. Following the young man’s reasoning, Jesus paraphrased and recited several of the Ten Commandments (v. 19). The young man’s prideful answer in verse 20 indicates his state of self-deception. The Law does not highlight one’s righteousness, but rather exposes one’s shortcomings! (see Rom. 3:20). In the end, he demonstrates just how wrong he is. He (1) does not admit the truth of just how sinful he really is; (2) does not understand the true goodness that stands before him as God incarnate; and (3) makes the blunder that he can somehow earn entrance to heaven by his own efforts. For reflection: *Do you see how common these same misunderstandings are in our world today? What Bible verses can you find to counter the false assumptions that this man brings to Jesus?*

Selfless submission (vv. 21-22). Third, our commitment to Christ means *dying to self*. To help this young man see the errors in his thinking, the Lord confronted him directly, but with compassion (v. 21). If the young man was true to his word, then the First Commandment would be honored as well: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3). Those who desire

eternal life must be willing to “die” to the present life, including one’s claim to material wealth (see Matt. 16:24 ff). The word *stunned* in verse 22 indicates a sudden sorrow, or disappointment. Obviously, the young man was far too committed to his earthly possessions than to the Lord and His offer of “treasure in heaven” (v. 22). For reflection: *How often do we find ourselves stuck between two worlds: the material and the spiritual? Short of selling all we have, what can we do to “die to self” and live for Christ in the here-and-now?*