

The Importance of a Question *Mark 10:13-22*

Good morning.

Harvard Business Review magazine had an article on the “**Surprising power of questions**”; part of the article read...

“Much of an executive’s workday is spent asking others for information—requesting status updates from a team leader, for example, or questioning a counterpart in a tense negotiation.

*...few executives **think of questioning** as a skill that can be honed—or consider how their own answers to questions could make conversations more productive.*

That’s a missed opportunity. Questioning is a uniquely powerful tool for unlocking value in organizations:

Questioning spurs learning and the exchange of ideas, it fuels innovation and performance improvement, and it builds rapport and trust among team members.

Questioning can mitigate business risk by uncovering unforeseen pitfalls and hazards.”

Please open your Bibles to **Mark 10** as we continue in a verse-by-verse study of that Gospel.

Last week in **Mark**, Jesus set His face towards the cross, but on the way, crowds approach Him and He made time to teach them.

The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a tough question in *Mark 10:2*, "*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?*" testing Him.

If Jesus said a man can divorce for any reason, He would go against God's Word; if He was truthful, it would be **unpopular**.

Considering all of Scripture, we can say divorce is permitted, but not required. We learned some **violations** of the marriage covenant are adultery, serious neglect, abandonment and abuse.

Jesus mentioned adultery in the passage in *Mark* and Paul said:

In *1 Corinthians* said that spouses are not to deny each other's physical needs (*7:2-5*); they are not to abandon or **neglect** each other (*7:10-16*); and they are to provide for each other (*7:32-35*)

Marriage is two self-centered people, having to consider each other's needs as more important than their own, while constantly working out differences within the relationship.

In today's passage, we will learn that immediately after the testing from these religious leaders, some people bring children to Jesus to have Him, bless them.

And then, we will meet a man who comes to Jesus with life's most important question.

I. A child dedication.

Read *Mark 10:13-16*

Immediately after the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus; notice *Mark 10:13* starts out by giving us a timeline, it says, "**Then**".

Then part of the *multitude* from *vs. 1*, *brought* children to Jesus.

F.F. Bruce said, “*The word (brought) is commonly used of sacrifices and suggests here the idea of dedication.*” (Bruce)

In the Jewish culture at that time, it was customary for parents to bring their children to the rabbis for a blessing. Here we see these parents, bringing children to the rabbi Jesus, for a blessing.

What a great lesson for all parents, bring your kids to Jesus.

As parents, we must realize that it is not the Sunday school workers or Youth pastors’ job alone, to bring them to Jesus.

If we want our children to grow up and know Jesus, we should bring them to Jesus. We pray with them, teach them scripture, and bring them to Church, as we ourselves live for Jesus.

As parents, we need to understand our children can very quickly pick up on all the things we talk about.

We also need to understand that we speak about those things which we are passionate about.

So, as followers of Christ, we must give priority to the things that *Mark 10:13* matter. Jesus Christ must be first and foremost in our lives.

The Lord is calling us to be passionate for Him first in our life.
Deuteronomy 6:5 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

First *love the Lord your God with all your heart...*

True love is an act of the will, it is not an emotion; so, Christ followers are to place our **affections** on Him above all else.

Then *Deuteronomy 6:5* says we are to ***“Love the Lord your God with all of our soul.”*** Our soul represents our whole life.

The way of the flesh is to live for me, a life unto me, and to serve me; as we love the Lord with all our souls, we love Him with our **whole** life, for Him, unto Him, serving Him!

We cannot have the abundant life if we do not have Jesus as King on throne of our lives, directing us.

Then we are to ***Love the Lord your God with all of our strength***

This is a life whose energy is fully devoted to Christ; we cannot compartmentalize our lives and think we are pleasing the Lord.

We are incapable of living this way in our own strength; it must be the Lord working in us, to choose to ***love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.***

Philippians 2:13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. NKJV

Our children need to see our worship is given to the Lord God alone. He is the source of our love for Him and others as well.

Notice in *Mark 10:13b*, ***“but the disciples rebuked those who brought them.”***

What a scary truth, that Jesus’ closest followers were preventing people from coming to Jesus.

What would Jesus' followers preventing others from coming to Him, look like in a modern context?

I read one article that gave a list of 6 things that keep people from coming to Jesus; I am sure we could come up with more:

Gossip, disrespect, dishonesty, unkindness, rejection of someone because they are different, or a holier-than-thou attitude.

Notice, when Jesus saw *the disciples rebuked those*, He was *greatly displeased*.

The word “*displeased*” in Koiné Greek means to be **indignant**, moved with indignation, or to be very displeased.

Re-read *Mark 10:15*

We studied before how Jesus' disciples were concerned who was the greatest in His kingdom. Jesus told them they should be as little children, not in their behavior, but within their faith.

A child is completely dependent on adults for safety, sustenance, and knowledge; and for a Christian to have child-like faith, we need to be absolutely dependent upon the Lord.

Child-like faith is humble, teachable, and trusting, like a child.

Then notice how Jesus responds in *vs. 16, He took them up in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them*.

The Greek verb used here for “*blessed*” is emphatic, and literally means that Jesus fervently blessed the children.

Before moving on to the next point, allow me to tell you some of the most asked questions from people about life.

Who am I? Why am I here? Why did God create us? All these questions have to do with someone's **purpose** in life.

When a person no longer feels that they have a **purpose**, they will begin to lose hope and they can lose the will to live.

II. The question about eternity.

Read *Mark 10:17-20*

Here a specific person came to Jesus with this question. Though the Lord is big enough to forgive the whole world; the relationship He desires with us is a **personal relationship**.

This specific man watched as the children were brought to Jesus and heard Jesus say, "*For of such is the kingdom of heaven.*"

If we were to read *Matthew* and *Luke*, we would discover a few more things about this man...

1. This person was a **young** man. (*Matthew 19:20*)
2. This young man was self-righteous. (*Matthew 19:20*)
3. This young man was **rich**. (*Matthew 19:22*)
4. This young man was a ruler (most commentators say he was a ruler of the synagogue). (*Luke 18:18*)

This young man is known as the rich young ruler and he watched the scene unfold with the children being blessed and said, "*I have all things I need, except the kingdom of heaven.*"

This young, wealthy man had a tremendous amount of influence with his people, and as a ruler of the Synagogue.

But, once this man recognized his need, he asked the question, *“What shall **I do** that I may inherit eternal life?”*

Matthew 19:16 tells us the man asked, *“What **good thing** shall **I do** that I may have eternal life?”*

He believed eternal life was something to earn or achieve; like most people, he believed *if you want something, you work for it.*

True Discipleship comes at a price. No one can truly follow Christ unless they pick up their cross and deny themselves.

But there is a huge difference between Kingdom principles for living as a follower, versus the way someone obtains Salvation.

Salvation is offered one way; as a true gift of God’s **unmerited** Grace, not from any works we can do whatsoever.

Jesus clearly taught in *John 14:6*, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. NKJV*

Someone at Church gave me a bookmark that read, *“Salvation is not a goal to be achieved, it’s a gift to be received.”*

Paul said in *Ephesians 2:8*, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*

Ephesians 2:9 *not of works, lest anyone should boast.” NKJV*

The rich young ruler did not ask Jesus to do anything for him...

This man wanted to know what **he had** to do for **himself**.

This man may have seemed desperate by coming to Jesus, but true desperation recognizes the true need for Jesus to save us.

This man had all that the world holds dear, yet he did not have salvation. He thought he could work and fix his eternal destiny, like he had worked and fixed everything else in his life.

Verse 18 has been misinterpreted so many times because people believe Jesus was telling the man that He was not God.

But when Jesus asked this rich young ruler, “*Why do you call Me good*”, Jesus did not deny His own **goodness or His deity**.

Jesus was asking “*Do you understand what you are saying when you call Me good?*”

Charles Spurgeon said, “*It was as if Jesus said, “You come to Me asking about what good thing you can do to inherit eternal life. But what do you really know about goodness?”*”

“*The argument is clear: either Jesus was good, or He ought not to have called Him good; but as there is none good but God, Jesus who is good must be God.*” (C. H. Spurgeon)

Norm Geisler, in *When Critics Ask* said, “*Jesus was asking this man to examine the implications of what he was saying.*”

“*Do you realize what you are saying when you call Me good? Are you saying I am God? Either Jesus was good and God, or else He was bad and a man.*”

Psalm 53:2 God looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

Psalm 53:3 Every one of them has turned aside; They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one. NKJV

So, Jesus challenges this man with this question, but then tells him if he wants to enter life, to keep the commandments.

The Lord gave Moses the 10 Commandments, beginning in ***Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before Me. NKJV***

If you study the Ten Commandments in ***Exodus 20*** you will discover the first four guide us in our relationship with God.

1st Commandment ***"You shall have no other gods before me."***

2nd. ***"You shall not make unto you any graven image.***

3rd ***"shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.***

4th. ***"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.***

The last six of the Ten Commandments deal with our relationships with people, family, neighbors and our co-workers.

5th. ***"Honor your father and your mother."*** 6th. ***"You shall not kill."***

7th. ***"You shall not commit adultery."*** 8th. ***"You shall not steal."***

9th. ***"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."***

The 10th is "*You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, servants, ox, donkey, nor any thing that is your neighbor's.*"

When the man asked Jesus which laws He was talking about keeping, Jesus spoke about the Commandments that deal with relationships with other **people**.

The man replied that he had kept those laws his whole life.

Keeping the law was impossible because as Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount; the Lord is concerned with the internal motivation of the heart, not externally keeping the Law.

So, this self-righteous, rich, young ruler, thinks he satisfied Jesus with his answer...*vs. 20 "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth."*

Chuck Smith said, "*It is better to keep your mouth shut and let people think you are a fool; rather than opening it and removing all doubt!*"

When the Lord is speaking to you, it is better to listen, than to try to justify yourself to Him.

III. Jesus clarifies His answer.

Read *Mark 10:21-22*

Jesus looked at him, loved him. Like last week, Jesus was filled with loving compassion. Sometimes, people are so afraid of offending others and won't be honest with people. **However...**

Real love challenges us with truth. This man's life was **empty**, even though he was a rich, young, ruler of the Synagogue.

Remember, most scholars believe *Mark's Gospel* was Peter's account of the life of Jesus written by Mark.

So, think of the story of Peter, after he denied the Lord 3 times.

Luke 22:60 Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. NKJV

Luke 22:61 Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

Luke 22:62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly. NKJV

Peter knew the look of love from the Lord and when Jesus looked at him during the third denial, it broke Peter's heart.

Jesus also said to the rich, young, ruler, "***One thing you lack.***" Jesus did not argue the fact that this man did not keep the Law, even though he said he had kept those commandments perfectly.

Instead of arguing, Jesus tells the man his real need of finding fulfillment and salvation, which do not come from doing.

Matthew 19:21, "Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." NKJV

Ironside has said, *“If men would seek to gain eternal life by doing good, the Law challenges them to perfect obedience.*

Romans 3:23 says, ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*** Because all have sinned, it is impossible for anyone to be justified by the deeds of the Law.

Self-Righteousness is one of the most dangerous sins in life; we think we have some good within us, apart from God’s Grace and we start to believe we are worthy to be saved, but others are not.

Jesus tells this man to go and sell off all he has, and in doing so, Jesus points him back to the first commandment in ***Exodus 20:3*** ***“You shall have no other gods before me.”***

God will not be one, in the line of many gods. He wasn’t saying ***you shall have no other gods before me***, meaning **ahead of me**.

“Before me” in ***Exodus 20:3*** means ***“in my presence”***.

Guzik said, *“People make **two mistakes** with this story. The **first mistake is to believe this story of the rich man selling everything applies to everyone.** But Jesus never made selling off everything as a general command to all who would follow Him.”*

This rich man’s wealth was an obstacle and an **idol** in his life, which was getting in the way of following the Lord.

But God has allowed many wealthy followers of Christ to do things in the world while **remaining** wealthy. This saying by Jesus is a matter of first place within the heart of the follower.

The **2nd** mistake is to believe this **applies to no one but this man.**

Many followers today need to radically forsake the materialism ruling their lives, because it has first place instead of Jesus.

Jesus has previously said, anyone who loves someone or anything else, more than they love Me, is not worthy of Me.

The command from Jesus really instructs this rich young ruler to do three things: ***Go and sell; Come; and then Follow Me.***

The word “***follow***” means to continually ***follow*** a specific person in a specific **direction**.

In ***Mark 10:22***, we see this man ***went away sorrowful***; Alan Cole said this is the only time someone ***went away sorrowful*** from Jesus; because he loved **money** more than he loved Jesus.

The Lord has said you will have no other gods in my presence, but the cost to follow Jesus was too high of a price for this man.

Henry Ironside said, “*His great possessions stood between him and the salvation of his soul.*”

Whatever admiration this man had for the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever inward yearning there was after the spiritual life, all were weaker than his love for his wealth and the place it gave him in the social circles of his day.”

IV. Practical Application.

This man went away from Jesus sorrowful, instead of trading in his idol for eternal life.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. NKJV

I mentioned in the sermon that certain questions have been asked by many people such as: *Who am I? Why am I here? Why did God create us?*

All these questions have to do with someone's **purpose** in life. When a person no longer feels that they have a **purpose**, they will begin to lose hope and they can lose the will to live.

So why are we here on earth? Ultimately, God created us for His glory; our purpose is to glorify Him and to make Him known.

Solomon said in ***Ecclesiastes 12:13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. NKJV***

We are to be reconciled to God and tell others. ***2 Corinthians 5:17 if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***

2 Corinthians 5:18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. NKJV

Jesus died in our place, taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself and by His resurrection, He conquered sin and death and made it possible for us to have a relationship with God.

When you were dead in sin, you followed the ways of the world and Christ has made us free so we can **Follow Him!**

Following Him is the only way to find Abundant Life.

We must personally and fully rely on the death of Christ as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

God **gives** us salvation when we place our trust in who Jesus is and what He accomplished on Calvary's cross on our behalf.

When we realize the extravagance of His love it will change our hearts. ***1 John 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.***

Jesus wants His followers to pursue Him with the same passion we would pursue someone romantically; a pursuit that can easily consume our **thoughts**, our resources, and our energy.

Salvation is so costly because Jesus hung on a tree that the richest of men in this world cannot buy it; but the poorest of souls who accepts Jesus as their Savior **receives** it for free!

So, a true follower of Jesus is someone who has pursued Jesus, coming after Him and then they go in the direction He leads.