LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 19 (Part 4) :23-30

Wealth and the Kingdom of God

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Where we left off in Matthew chapter 19 was you'll remember last week we dealt with the issue of the rich young ruler this young man who apparently was a man of some financial means who came to Jesus to ask what he ought to do what he in order to earn eternal life and Jesus had to speak to him about that issue about earning eternal life had to show him that it is not possible he's incapable of truly keeping the law to the point of meriting his own salvation and he and the man just wasn't getting it we talked about this last Sunday and eventually Jesus had to challenge him to take all of his money and give it to the poor and this was a challenge for the man to really see where his heart was at so that he might understand that he was truly incapable of keeping the the law and earning his own salvation it was a very very difficult lesson but it was one that Jesus needed to do with the man and as I'm kind of it picturing in my mind that as he's walking away and still visible to Jesus and the disciples Jesus begins to speak then about the wealthy by the way don't tune this out just because you may not consider yourself wealthy today there's some important stuff here but as as this man is walking away Jesus said to his disciples truly I say to you look at verse 23 only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven again I tell you 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 the disciples were obviously incredulous when they heard this because the Pharisees taught that wealth was the blessing of the Lord so they're saying ok you you you've tweaked this here you're telling we've been hearing all our lives on one hand that the blessing of God comes in the form of material wealth and now you're saying that material wealth is actually an impediment to someone entering the kingdom of God I don't get it so they they they were astonished and they said well if that's the case then who can be saved and I like how Jesus responds verse 26 Jesus looked at them and said with man this is impossible but with God all things are possible by the way that's one of those wonderful verses in the Bible that you can take out of context because with God all things are always possible even though they may be impossible for a man and G Peter speaks up usually in a way that he shouldn't but he does here again Peter said in reply you see we've left everything and followed you what then will we have and Jesus said to them truly I say to you in the new world or at the restoration of all things when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne you who

have followed me will sit on also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit life but many who are first will be last and the last first up there well it's the end of the chapter isn't it let's pray Jesus fill us with your grace fill us with understanding for we ask it in your name amen amen this this statement that Jesus makes here about it being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy man a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven is an interesting statement is it not there have been people over the years who have tried to redefine needle I don't know if you're aware of that but there are people who have tried to say well he's not talking about a sewing needle he's talking about this gate within a gate in the wall of Jerusalem during which if a camel being the largest animal basically known to the Jews if a camel wanted to pass through that area he'd have to get down on his knees and go go through that it wasn't impossible but they it was really really difficult do you know that there's absolutely zero evidence to believe in that that that idea Jesus is using a purposeful hyperbole to make a point that it's impossible that salvation and particularly is talking about for the wealthy here but will kind of adjust this here really for all people it is impossible apart from the Lord and you can tell that that was what the disciples I mean they understood him here they understood what he meant because they were there like well then who can even be saved if that's the case who can be saved Jesus makes that wonderful statement with man it ain't gonna happen but with God all things are possible so that raises the question for you and I what is it about money what is it about wealth that makes it so hard for people to come to God what is it about you know riches that causes people to just be so distant from the things of the Lord well I think there's a more than a hint given to us in a particular passage in the book of Proverbs that I'll show you up on the screen here from the 20 or excuse me the 30th chapter it comes in the form of a prayer and it says give me neither poverty nor riches God I don't you know I don't want to be too poor I don't want to be too rich but give me only my daily bread otherwise you see God if you make me too rich I may I may have too much and I may disown you and say who's the Lord you know that's remember that's the same question that Pharaoh asked of Moses remember who's the Lord who who's the Lord you might remember a few weeks back and and you I think you see what the writer here Proverbs is saying you know don't don't don't give me too much because I might just start thinking that I got life kind of dialed in and I I won't be reminded daily of my need to get on my knees and and recognize my utter dependence upon you do you guys remember when we talked about the heart of a child remember Jesus said unless you become like little children you can't even enter the kingdom of heaven and we talked about the attributes of a child you remember that and one of the attributes we covered was the attribute of dependence how children are just naturally completely dependent upon their parents or whoever their caregivers are you know and we can take advantage of them we you know a children a child

could be even it can be hurt easily by someone if they chose to do so because they are utterly dependent upon their caregiver we talked about how that is the attitude or I should say the attribute of a child but do you see how money does the opposite do you see how money lulls a person into thinking that they are self-sufficient I can do this I can afford this I can buy this I can have this and we're no longer getting down on our knees we're no longer recognizing our dependence on God and so you know it's the opposite of that childlike heart is it not so is Jesus saying here that wealthy people can't be saved well he's saying that apart from God it's impossible he is saying that he says what is impossible for man is possible with God but but he's speaking of of money of wealth of prosperity and those sorts of things as a natural impediment to people coming to God and I'll even go as far as to say even after they've come to God money can continue to be an impediment they may come to God in the sense that they they come for salvation but they are going to find it difficult to run after both money and God you know you don't have to read very long frankly in the Bible to find this out to find this this this this constant string of warnings that are given to us in the scriptures about money I would imagine some people probably find the Bible a difficult book to read through because of that particularly those who like money who like earning it having it spending it and all the other things that go along with it you know you read through the Bible and I mean it's basically gonna rain on your parade as it relates to that whole issue of having acquiring money and so forth let me just kind of run through a little little quickie Bible study with you on this I'll put these up on the screen but you'll remember Luke chapter 16 no servant can serve two masters remember for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other and then this statement you cannot serve God and money isn't gonna work 1st Timothy chapter 6 says as for the rich in this present age charge them He's talking to Timothy here not to be haughty which means you know to kind of think that they're above others nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of Riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything we To enjoy notice that he richly provides us He says there to be good or to do good rather and to be rich in good works to be generous and ready to share Proverbs 11 28 says whoever trusts in his riches is ultimately going to fall But the righteous will flourish Like a green leaf why because they're putting their hope in God not in riches And then you might remember not that terribly long ago math in back in Matthew chapter 13 As For Jesus is telling the parable of the sower remember all those different seeds that fell in or actually it was the same seed that fell Into the different kinds of soil remember there was one soil that was thorny And he says as for that as for that seed that was sown among the thorns What is that? That's the person who hears God's Word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches Choke it out. They choke out the word Making it unfruitful, so you know I I think somebody could even be a born-again Christian obviously and Yet be have the Word of God choked out in their lives from that point forward just because they've turned their eyes Toward the world and the and the

things of wealth and so forth Paul also wrote to Timothy It's a little bit earlier from what we read before he talked about those who've been robbed of the truth and who basically believe that Coming to God or godliness is a means to financial gain in other words I'm gonna follow the Lord because there's wealth along that path he in Paul's talking about how ridiculous that is He says but godliness with contentment ah now that's great gain For we brought nothing into the world we can take nothing out of it But we brought nothing into the world we can take nothing out of it It's true you guys Can't take a red scent with you He says but if we have food and clothing We will be content with that Let me ask you a question will we be content with that? I mean Paul makes the statement, but you and I need to ask ourselves is he is this right? I mean is is he saying this is this truly right about how we feel about wealth will we be content with just food and clothing but He goes on to say People who run after money want to be rich want wealth man, he says they They they fall into to all kinds of temptation and all kinds of traps Including foolish and harmful desires that he says plunge money into ruin and destruction For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil and some people eager for money Have wandered from the faith even get that they've wandered from the faith in other words They were in the faith But they wandered because of the love of money and the desire for wealth and they have pierced themselves with many griefs You know It's a great passage, it's a great reminder I Also love this passage from Proverbs chapter 10 verse 22 where God's I love this It says the blessing of the Lord makes rich and he adds no sorrow to it you know you run after the the wealth of the world and You invite all kinds of trouble all kinds of sorrow into your life you Put your focus on God you allow him to give you what he knows you can handle The riches that God gives he gives riches no sorrow attached to it no Trouble along the way I like that God knows how much to give you and I we don't have a clue We just basically kind of have that that American mental picture You know that that that big is never big enough and and and enough is never enough, right?

I mean, we're just that's just that's just the way we've been raised and that's kind of our American way of Of thinking you know and and you know, what's incredible to me is not that the Word of God is laced with so many Statements about the dangers of wealth. That's not what's surprising to me What's surprising to me is that there are so many Christians who read the Bible and ignore what it says About money and about the dangers that go along with possessing it You would think that if we were really truly believers in the Word of God, we would avoid it like the plague I mean we would avoid the acquisition of wealth and and the running after wealth and that sort of thing, but it is so Alluring is it not I? Mean you know, I'm old enough to have been raised back with that TV show lifestyles of the rich and famous some of you might have seen Some of that that show way back I mentioned it like in first service like it was a current thing and all the young people kind of looked at me and just shook their heads like No, pastor Paul, that's not on the air anymore You do you know, well, it may not be on in that particular form, but let me tell you

something. It's still on It's still on television. I mean they are still highlighting the lifestyles of the rich and famous and it's so powerfully alluring and we admire Wealth and we admire the acquisition of wealth and we tell me you tell I mean don't speak out and say it But but just tell me that it's not tempting to drive by on the freeway and see that lottery Number, you know counting its way up to the to the triple digits and you know what happens don't you when it hits triple digits?

Then it really starts shooting up It's skyrockets because the more people See that it's there's more money to be had the more people now want to cash in on the potential of having it and it's just And and it's crazy this and you know, I hey I've driven by You know on my way home I we'd actually take the freeway from the Walmart exit over to the the park exit and and I see that lottery sign every time You know, I'm just kind of like yeah No, I wouldn't mind having a cool 20 mil or something like that sitting around, you know, I Mean that's the flesh talking right? What does the Bible say? The Bible gives a warning The Bible says be careful trouble comes with that In fact, I could have quoted so many more passages about money. There's also a passage in the Proverbs It says that wealth gained quickly leads to destruction That's the lottery guys just in case you were wondering oh But you know, it's not that That doesn't really apply to me that's for that's for my weak-willed friend over here who just can't seem to deal You know with the issues of wealth and I think they would probably corrupt him but not me Sort of a thing, you know So we feel We look at the warnings of God's Word and while we ought to be saying, you know, that's a Red alert right there. That's a danger.

We basically pass it off and figure that that's just for somebody else Now some of you might be hearing all this about wealth and the the warnings that go along with being wealthy and The statement that Jesus says that you know, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle Than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven and so forth. You might be thinking, you know Pastor Paul, this is all mildly interesting But it really doesn't apply to me because I am NOT wealthy now, nor do I ever expect to be I Mean short of a true miracle. I kind of expect that life is probably just gonna go on the way it's been going For me and it's it's you know, pretty much going to be the same thing and I am NOT a rich person and So what that does you see is that you and I we read passages that are that speak to people Who have money who have wealth and we we read them and we think well, that's interesting, but we don't apply it to ourselves and It's really interesting about us Americans If you ask someone to define Wealthy what is? Wealthy to you It's always just a little bit more than I make You know I'm not wealthy but You know if I had this much money I Would be wealthy But you if you went to go find somebody that made that much money and you asked him. Are you wealthy?

Most of them would say oh, no, I'm not wealthy. Well then define wealth for me Well, it's that much money and on it goes you go to that person and wealthy is always a little bit more We don't think that we're rich we don't think that we're wealthy it's always something more than what we have And so these are interesting verses, but they really don't apply Have you ever seen any chart I don't have one to show you but have you ever seen any charts on the distribution of global wealth It's pretty eye-opening still got a real First-hand view of this going to India here in October and seeing just how poor Poverty is in a country like that where people their house consists of blankets draped over a Rope hanging from a tree. That's house. That's that's that's home and And You and I have just come off Thanksgiving and all the things that go along with it and the trappings and the food and and we all Put on weight and and we all you know this and that and we all enjoyed you know The the abundance of of the provisions I wonder how many of us looked at what was on our table and said oh god You're amazing Or if we just said you know I passed the stuffing Compared to the rest of the world You my friend are Filthy rich Okay They like to talk about the 1% well That's because we're just comparing ourselves with our closest neighbors And we like to try to kind of throw it all off that way, but listen There are so many people in this world Who have only the clothes on their back and They're living in what you and I would consider well we hardly consider to be a fort that our kids would build in the backyard and play in and That's home that you and I Comparatively speaking are flat-out filthy rich Well So you see maybe Jesus when he talked about the wealthy wasn't Comparing it. It wasn't speaking of American wealth he was speaking of global wealth.

He was just talking about people who have and That is you that's you you got more than one set of clothes. Oh, you're wealthy Wow, you eat more than once a day Really you're wealthy You Take a bath Every day Unheard of in some countries Unheard of and It goes on and I could sit here and cite all of the things that that Define us as set apart on a wealth scale from the rest of the globe The bottom line is this you're rich and This word is for you and I What that means to you and I is that our salvation is a miracle and apart from God It can't happen People please understand these statements that Jesus is making here come right on the heels of the rich young ruler Who came to say I want to know what it takes to earn my way to heaven and Jesus told him There is no earning it and now he's told the rest of us. There is no earning it. It is a miracle It is impossible for you. It is possible.

Thank God with him Who gives you and I the faith who draws our hearts to a knowledge of salvation Who makes us to know the way of truth and who enables us to believe? You are a miracle Living breathing right here right now. Is that exciting? Yeah, you and me right now. So Meanwhile back at the ranch What are we how are we supposed to think about wealth what's our attitude supposed to be Well, the Bible says that rather than seeking wealth were to actually do the opposite.

I love this passage from Ecclesiastes Let me show you this one It says cast your bread upon the waters for you will find it after many days It's poetic language. It doesn't literally mean to go out and take you know, a loaf of bread and throw it in the Snake River It means what the writer of Proverbs 19 says in the next passage If Laura if we can go on to that one, it says whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord and He will repay him For his deed. That's what it means to cast your bread upon the water cast your bread upon the water Send it out It's kind of that picture of the flow of the stream, you know, where's your money going? Is it just is it just is it yours to enhance your life? Or are you willing to take the money that God has given you?

Yes I said that God has given you and cast it upon the waters and allow it to bless others to be a blessing to other people I I Love the promise that goes along with that, but there's also an important warning that has given us in Proverbs chapter 24 Which says do not wear yourself out to get rich This is for you and I you guys have the wisdom to show restraint. It is wisdom to be restrained Related to money cast but a glance at riches and they are Gone for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle obviously again poetic language to describe things like Stock crashes And that's that's the way you and I would define it. I suppose today in today's kind of financial world where we're into investments and and all this other stuff and you know Some some some of you might have been involved in some kind of investment that that just was like an eagle It just sprouted wings and it flew away So what are we supposed to do? Matthew 633 says that you and I are to seek first as a matter of ultimate priority our lives are to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then what what is the promise that comes from this verse all these other things that we've been? All these other things that we've been we've been running after we'll have what we need as we seek God first Are you are you living for what you can make?

Are you you know, can you kind of tell that that getting the paycheck or what or making money? Probably means a little bit more to you than it should are you aware of that? You know, it's it's an okay thing to be aware of that But it's important thing as a believer to say, you know what that's not what I'm here for That's not why God put me on this earth he didn't put me here just to make money and to have things I am here to seek God above everything else to seek him to seek his righteousness to seek his kingdom and then I Will find that as I do that all these other things are just going to Come along Along the way God's gonna take care of you Do you believe that do you believe that God is going to take care of you We say that But you know, there's a there's a great passage and let me show you this one in Hebrews chapter 13 He says keep yourself free from the love of money And be content with what you have why because God promised you I will never leave you nor forsake you Do you know that God said that he said I'll never leave you nor forsake you God said I will never leave you nor forsake you so Knowing that what

should our attitude should be about wealth? Well, I don't need to worry about that. I Don't need to run after that.

God promised. He was gonna take care of me Yeah, but you see there's a disconnect sometimes between what God has given as a promise and what we have believed by faith And the reason that we have not always kept ourselves free from the love of money is because we don't Believe the promise all the time. We don't always believe the promise. Let's admit it I don't always believe the promises of God He says them and I just don't believe it and you know how I can tell my actions betray me Rather than just kind of this attitude of well, I don't have to worry about that. God's gonna take care of us.

I Don't have to worry Bible says don't let your heart be anxious for anything, right? Yeah, I can believe that because it says that as I as I as I trust in God as I I'm quoting loosely Philippians now as I trust in God as I bring all my petitions to him with Thanksgiving, you know He's his peace is gonna guard my heart and and and so I don't need to worry about this this stuff But what do we do instead? We fret and worry ourselves, you know into it a tailspin Because the Word of God is Here, but it hasn't made that longest 18-inch travel Between from the head to to the heart This passage or this chapter ends with Peter's rather ungracious question to Jesus He says listen, he says Jesus. We've left everything. So what are we going to get?

And I I say ungracious because The question itself betrays an attitude that basically says we've given what do we get back? It's a it's a it's an I did this and I deserve something for it attitude with God and we've given What do we get back? It's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a it's a The reason I point this out is because it's so popular, it's so common, popular is not the right word, common is a better word, so common. And you know how you find out that people are living, kind of having that relationship with God that is based on what they deserve, is because when things go bad, often they will come to me and they will say, well, Pastor Paul, I don't know why this is happening in my life. I'll say, well, what do you mean?

Well, I don't know, I've been coming to church regularly, I've been reading my Bible, I've been trying to live a life that honors and pleases God, and then this happens. Oh, you thought that you were building up points with God and you were earning special favor, and now he owes you. That's what you're saying. No, no, no, no, listen, I understand grace, I know what grace is, I know that God, you know, saved by grace through faith, this not of ourselves, I understand that, I just don't understand why I'm getting what I'm getting in life, because I don't think I deserve it. That's another way of saying you've earned something better.

Yeah, it's funny, it's crazy just how it just seeps into our minds. When people say that, I often will ask them a question. So let me ask you, what does God owe you? And they know theologically how to answer the question. He doesn't owe me anything.

Well, but I think you can say that from a theological standpoint, but from a heart condition, you're not so convinced. The reason is because you're kind of wondering what you did to deserve this. Did you really think that when things were going well, you deserved that too? Did you think when God was blessing you that you deserved that? You and I, what do we deserve?

The hottest corner of hell, right? That's what we deserve. What do we get? The Bible says he does not treat us as our sins deserve. That's what the Bible says.

And praise God for it, that he doesn't treat us and give us what we deserve. So Jesus responds to this ungracious question by Peter with an equally gracious response. And he basically promises and says, listen, he doesn't rebuke him. But he says, truly, I say to you that in the new world or in the restoration of all things, when the son of man is sitting on his glorious throne, listen, you guys, you guys are going to sit on 12 thrones too. You're kidding.

Think about what Jesus just said. He just told the disciples they would be sitting on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. He's not done yet. He goes on to say that anybody who has left the things of this life, houses, parents, you know, siblings, children, whatever, for the kingdom of God, he says, will be given 100 fold. Are you kidding?

Really? Don't you think God that that is a little out of whack with the, I mean, I made a sacrifice, sure, I made a sacrifice, sure, but you're going to give me those things for eternity. I mean, isn't that a little out of balance? Yeah, exactly. That's the point.

You see, it's not an earned thing. You're not earning these things. I'm just blessing you because I'm a God of grace and mercy, and I love to bless. And see, I'm trying to get you guys, and this is what Jesus is saying. I'm trying to get you to stop thinking about what you've merited, what you've earned, and what I owe you.

God is no man's debtor. God doesn't owe you anything. But you know, in this passage, he goes on and he says, but I will give you everything. And then Jesus ends with these words, but many who are first will be last, and the last will be first. That's kind of a little teaser line for you and I, because what he's doing is he's saying something that he's going to comment on in the next chapter.

So we'll see what that means. We'll find out what that's all about when we get into the next chapter. So we'll see what that's all about when we get into the next chapter. So we'll see what that's all about when we get into the next chapter.