

THEY JUST DIDN'T GET IT... ...DO WE!!!

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I was recently doing a teaching in the Gospel of Mark. I love to simply go through the Gospel accounts, as well as the Bible in general, to simply discuss from the scriptures within the context of how they were written. The timing and

teachings of everything in the Bible and especially the Gospel accounts is so very perfect. We need to spend the time to truly study and not just simply read through them.

What I would like us to take a look at is Mark 10. To get a little bit of an understanding of what Mark 10 is about, we see that it begins with Jesus leaving Capernaum for the last time. He was leaving Capernaum, located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, to make His way to Jerusalem where He would ultimately be crucified. Therefore, this was an important time for Jesus and His disciples. When we read these events that take place in Mark 10, we are many times, like the disciples were – clueless.

Yes, the disciples never really did get the full picture of Jesus' ministry and all that He was saying and doing until after He had resurrected and then spent 40 days with them. They were then given the Holy Spirit to teach them and prepare them to "change the world." Up until that time, they really never fully got all that Jesus was doing while He was with them for those 3½ years. And... sometimes we are the same. Let's see....

As we begin reading Mark 10, we see that Jesus had just left Capernaum. He was headed towards Jerusalem. It tells us that He and His disciples went to the region down through the Jordan Valley on the way to Judea. This road was by the Jordan River. Actually, this was the main road that was traveled by the people to get from the region of Galilee, in the north, to the areas of Judea and southward. It would ultimately take them to the Dead Sea and areas beyond. At the town of Jericho, they would either continue south on that road to the Dead Sea or they would turn left and take another road, the Jericho road, to go up to Jerusalem.

As we read Mark 10:2-12, as Jesus was leaving Capernaum, He was confronted by the Jewish leaders and was asked about marriage and the laws of marriage. Jesus makes a bold statement stating that it was Moses, because of "*the hardness of men's hearts*," who said that it would be alright to divorce if there was a "bill of divorcement."

If we truly read this, we see Jesus saying that this “law” was actually written **by Moses, not God**. It was written by Moses because of the “hardness of men’s hearts.” Jesus immediately, states that this particular “law” was not given to Moses, or to us, by God. Rather, it was given to us by Moses because of the “hardness of men’s hearts.” Moses was a man like you and I. We see, in this scripture that Moses was incorrect in making this “adjustment to the law.” It was something that Moses added for the people. He thought it would okay. God did not.

Jesus goes on to teach and remind them of what the scriptures actually tell us concerning marriage. He was referring to Genesis 2:21-24. Jesus reiterated this in Mark 10:7-9. We see that when Jesus was alone with His disciples He had to review this topic again with them. Why? It was because He had to “unteach” their incorrect teachings of the true Word of God that were being brought forth. He tells them that perpetrating divorce will lead to adultery. Which, by the way, is one of the Ten Commandments in which **God gave to us**. Hmmm.....

Next, we see in Mark 10, that they brought children to Jesus. He takes them and teaches us that we all must be just like a little child. Jesus blesses the children and states, “*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter in*” to the Kingdom of God. This was not a quaint little setting that Jesus had with the children. It was a teaching setting for the disciples, and for us. This is how anyone who is to be saved must come into the Kingdom. We must come as a “little child” with nothing but love towards our God.

That might seem like an easy thing for us to grasp but yet it is so very, very difficult for many of us. We have made it to be all about what we can bring to the table; what we give to God and His Kingdom. No. No. No. It is simply all about God loving us and accepting us for who we are – His child. Nothing more/nothing less. He was teaching His disciples this very same lesson. Did they get? I don’t think so as we will see as we continue in this chapter.

Next we read Mark 10:17-22 about the “rich young ruler” who had come to Jesus. This “young ruler” comes to Jesus and asks Him the most important question that anyone could ever ask of Jesus. He asks, “*What must I do to be saved.*” This young ruler comes “running to Jesus” and calls him “Good Master.” That is interesting. The young ruler does in deed recognize Jesus as a teacher of the Jewish ways. Jesus responds to this by asking the “young ruler” why do you call me good for there is none good but God.” Hmmm.... That is interesting.

Why does Jesus say this to the man? It wasn't that Jesus was really asking the man this question but rather it was to make the young man think about what he just said. Did this "rich young man" really believe that Jesus was the Son of God...or...was he just saying this to be nice? Either way, Jesus responded with the only truth that He could answer. Jesus told him that there was no one who was truly good...no one except God.

Jesus then goes on to "answer" the young man. Jesus tells him, "*Thou know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.*" Notice, that Jesus, I think, deliberately, left off the first four of the Commandments. The young ruler never makes any remarks to the "Good Teacher" that He left out the first four Commandments.

That is exactly what Jesus was trying to tell the young man and to all of us today. Remember, that the ones mentioned were actually those commands that made up the "second greatest commandment." The "first commandment" was of course that we are to love the Lord our God with all that is within us-with all our heart, our soul, our mind and our strength. The second was just like the first but it was still the second commandment. We must first, love the Lord our God. The rich young ruler totally missed this and so do we at times.

Yes, it is important to love others but the first commandment is that we are to love the LORD our God. We cannot truly love others correctly unless we first love the Lord. When we love our God we can then love others and when we love others we are truly loving our God. We must truly get the concept that Jesus was trying to present to this young man and to His disciples and to all of us, today.

Jesus tried to get the man to see this. He tells the man, "*one thing you lack...*" He then told the young man to go and sell everything he had and give it all away and choose to follow Him. We know the story. The young man did not even respond to Jesus but rather, he just walked away. The "one thing" the rich young man lacked was that he truly did not love God with all his heart and soul. Oh, he did love others – to a point. However, his biggest problem was that he did not love God with his **whole** heart. It tells us that the man "*went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*" Actually, his possessions had him. Hmmm.....

Jesus tells His disciples that it would be easier for *“a camel to go through the eye of the needle”* than for a person who loves their riches more than God to enter into heaven. The *“eye of the needle”* was actually a doorway within a larger doorway found throughout the city of Jerusalem. People would be able to go through the smaller door but for a camel to go through they would have needed to open the larger door to let the camel through.

When Jesus expressed this, we hear Peter and the other disciples say, *“Who then can be saved?”* Jesus was getting down to the nitty-gritty. Why? Again, it was because it was getting nearer to the time when He would be crucified. He was trying to get through to the disciples.

We see in Mark 10:28, Peter states that, *“...we have left all, and have followed you.”* Peter was implying that therefore they, the disciples, must be saved because he tells Jesus that they had left all to “follow Him.” Peter’s statement was actually a bit boastful. What he was implying was that he and the other disciples, were a “shoe-in” to get into heaven and become leaders in the coming kingdom. The disciples again were just not getting it!!!!

In Mark 10:30-31, we see that Jesus tells them *“But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.”* What Jesus was trying to teach them was that a person may be considered “first” in this life with honor or wealth, however, that does not hold true in God’s kingdom. Salvation or eternal life is not earned by one’s possessions or status in this life. It is a free gift given by God to those who would believe in all that Jesus did for them. Salvation is simply believing.

We must remember that heaven’s value system is far different from earth’s value system. Those who are esteemed and respected in this world (like the rich young ruler) may not know the full story of true salvation and therefore not be saved. The opposite is also true, those who are despised and rejected in this world but who are saved through their faith in Jesus and then do the works of the Kingdom of God, will be rewarded by God with eternal life. It is about having total faith in God and God alone and through the sacrifice and belief in that sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that allows an individual to have true salvation.

Next we read Mark 10:32-34. They were getting nearer to Jerusalem. Jesus was continually preparing the disciples. He tells them that He will be crucified. BUT...notice, He also tells them

that He will rise again. He was declaring what would happen to Him but He was also trying to prepare them for something that they were totally oblivious to. The disciples were still not getting it!!!

As mentioned, they were on their way to Jerusalem. The disciples thought that because of what Jesus had told them, this was going to be the pivotal moment and that quite possibly this was going to be the time when, they thought, Jesus would come to Jerusalem and some way, some how, lead the people in overthrowing the Roman rule and get the land back to the Jewish people. We see this by the next encounter that Jesus had to deal with His disciples.

Mark 10:35-45 reveals to us that this is what the disciples were actually thinking. Why else would they be “discussing” the concepts of “power” and “authority.” They were discussing among themselves, at least what they thought was “power and authority” in this new “Jewish kingdom” that Jesus would now establish. They still did not grasp what Jesus and God meant.

They just could not wrap their heads around the concept that the Kingdom of God **would not be upon this earth but rather it is of the “spirit realm.”** Jesus, and then ultimately His disciples, were to bring forth the understanding of this truth. It is not about one’s own power and authority – it is about getting people to come into the Kingdom of God!!!

Jesus tells them what a true leader really is to be in the coming Body of Christ. He tells them, “...whosoever will be great among you, **shall be your minister**: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, **shall be servant of all**.” It is all about being a servant. It is being so much of a servant that you are willing to give of your life for that very truth and to bring someone into the Kingdom of God. Jesus was and is our example and our role model of this.

The disciples still did not get it!!!

Lastly, in Mark 10:46-52, we have the account of the giving of sight to “*Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus*.” We also see, as mentioned previously that they were just leaving Jericho. They would be now turning and taking the road called the “Jericho road” that would lead them into Jerusalem. To Jerusalem where Jesus would ultimately be crucified.

As they were leaving Jericho we see that there was a blind man whose name was Bartimaeus. This “name” is very important to everything that Jesus had taught to His disciples up to this point. Would they get it? I don’t think they did. However, the real question is for us today- do we get it?

The first part of Bartimaeus’ name, “*bar*,” is from the Hebrew which means “son.” As stated, he was the “son” of Timaeus. However, the word “*timaeus*” is vital to this whole account. It literally comes from the Aramaic word which meant, “unclean, defiled, to be ceremonially and religiously unclean.”

There is no coincidence that Jesus came upon this man at this time. Yes, he would be healed of his blindness, but there is so very much more to why this happened right now, at this very point in time.

If we notice, we see that the man’s name came from the aspect that he was not simply blind and could not physically see but we must realize that he represented **all men** who were also “religiously” blind and more importantly, “spiritually unclean.” This was not just by coincidence. This was all planned by God to show the world that Jesus was going to Jerusalem and be crucified for the “blind” and “unclean person,” both religious and spiritually. In other words – for everyone!!!

It was a spiritual message for the disciples, and to the world, to ask God to open their eyes and see what God was doing and what He was going to do through Jesus during this last time in Jerusalem. It would be a precursor to what Jesus would do for all mankind. Why? It was because “*God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son*” to die on a cross for them. But... He would also rise from the grave and give all those who would believe on Him eternal life. Praise God!!!

This man’s eyes were physically blinded. However, everyone’s eyes were “blinded” to truth of God and who He really is. The disciples were “blind” concerning who Jesus actually was. Just like Jesus would open this man’s eyes to see, Jesus would allow for the “spiritually blinded” to now have their “spiritual eyes” opened and see the truth of who Jesus was and why He came – to bring us back into relationship with the Father.

Notice, what Jesus asked the man, *“What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?”* The blind man said unto him, *“Lord, that I might receive my sight.”* That is key for every person. Do you truly want to spiritually see. It seemed obvious what the man would want. Yet, Jesus asked him. Yes, it is always the decision of the individual person to come and ask Jesus to “give them their spiritual sight.”

It is always up to every person. Do they truly want to see the truth of God’s love? Do they truly want to be spiritually washed and cleansed so that they can then truly see and become a part of God’s Kingdom?

We see that it was this man’s **faith in Jesus** that allowed him to see. It would be the disciples’ and every person’s faith in Jesus that would allow them to see who He really was and what He was truly doing – dying on the cross for them and the world. This was vital!!! Would the disciples truly see? Would the world see? **Do you truly see** who Jesus really is and what He desires - to give to everyone, including us, eternal life and relationship back with the Father.

If we look at the scriptures we get a clear picture of who our God truly is and how much He truly loves all of His creation. We see in just these few scriptures, as found in Mark 10, what Jesus did as He was on His way to Jerusalem where He knew what was ahead of Him – the cross. His disciples did not truly understand it all. They just didn’t get it at that time.

They knew that Jesus was a “special” person. However, they never thought that He was going to willingly die on a cross for their spiritual salvation and for everyone else who would believe in Him. As stated previously, Jesus died and rose again. He then spent 40 days with them to teach and train them – again. God then, 10 days later, gave them the Holy Spirit so that they could finally see and take what they learned and go and change the world and turn people to the one and only true living God.

Jesus tried to explain it to them but they were just like us – a little thick headed and have our own ideas of how things should happen. No matter what they thought and no matter what we may think, God’s ways and His Word SHALL come to pass and they SHALL come to pass HIS WAY!!! Oh, He may be long suffering with us but it will come...and it will come HIS WAY!!! Hopefully, we get it!!!