

**Speaker: Senior Pastor Prince Guneratnam**  
**Theme: God's Kingdom My Priority**  
**Title: THE DANGERS OF WEALTH**

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(Matthew 6:33)

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19:16-30 helps us understand the text.

- There are 3 parts to the teachings:
  - The rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22)
  - The dangers of wealth (Matthew 19:23-26)
  - The rewards of the believers (Matthew 19:27-30)

## PART 2: THE DANGERS OF WEALTH

(Matthew 19:23-26)

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”25 When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

## INTRODUCTION

- What was the response of the rich young ruler?

(Matthew 19:22)

“He went away sorrowful”.

- The rich young ruler's experience warns us of the dangers of wealth.
- The dangers are many and real and are entangling and enslaving.
- There are 4 truths taught:
  - Wealth pulls a person away from the Kingdom of God (Verse 23)
  - Wealth makes it difficult to obey God totally (Verse 24)
  - If wealth is not God's blessings of righteousness, who can be saved? (Verse 25)
  - The only hope of the wealthy (Verse 26)

## WEALTH PULLS A PERSON AWAY FROM THE KINGDOM Vs 23

(Matthew 19:23)

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Why will a rich man hardly enter heaven?

- Wealth creates the big "I"
  - The wealthy are usually esteemed, honored and envied
  - Wealth brings comfort, position, power and recognition
  - Wealth makes a person self-sufficient and independent
  - The wealthy live as though they need nothing and God is forgotten
  - God warned Israel not to forget Him when they enter into the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 6:10-18)
  - Wealth can lead into temptation and sinful desires.

(1 Timothy 6:9)

“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

- Wealth leads you astray from the faith and to many sorrows.

(1 Timothy 6:10)

“For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- It alienates you from God
- Wealth tends to make us selfish
  - The more we get or have, the more we want
  - This motivated by the fear of losing what we have.
  - Jesus said, “love your neighbor as yourself”
  - Paul said, “Let him labor ..... that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28)
- Wealth centers your attention on worldliness – the kingdom of this world

(1 John 2:15-17)15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- E.g. Jesus was tempted by Satan with the kingdom of this world.
  - Wealth will not buy you heaven or salvation
  - Wealth will not buy you God’s blessings
  - Wealth will not defeat sin, death and Satan.
- That is why wealth is dangerous if you don’t put first the Kingdom of God.

## WEALTH MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO OBEY GOD (Verse 24)

(Matthew 19:24)

“And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

- It is not a matter of difficulty. It is impossible as Jesus says in verse 26
- The Proverb that Jesus used speaks of the impossibility  
(Matthew 19:24)  
“it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”
  - The Greek word Jesus used is “**Kamilos**” translated – a ship’s rope or cable and not “**kamelos**” translated as camel. But camel was used as it was better understood.
  - How could anyone thread a needle with a ship’s rope?
  - It is an obstacle both to salvation and discipleship.
  - It deceives.

(Matthew 13:22)

“Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”

- The wealthy are usually self-centered and sufficient
  - They have big egos and independent,
  - Wealth demands the loyalty of our hearts

(Matthew 6:21)

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- Their possessions, positions and power keep them from following after the teachings of Christ.
- This was so with the rich young ruler.
- The Bible identifies greed and the pursuit of wealth with idolatry.

(Colossians 3:5 – “covetousness”)

“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

- Idolatry has demonic power

(1 Corinthians 10:19-20)

<sup>19</sup> What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? <sup>20</sup> Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.”

## IF WEALTH IS NOT GOD'D BLESSINGS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHO CAN BE SAVED?

(Matthew 19:25)

When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

- God blesses the righteous but God's blessings are not limited to the material.
- It can give a false sense of security.

(Luke 12:15)

And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

- God promised to meet all our needs and not our wants or greed
- We are not to worry about our lives

(Matthew 6:25)

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

- A prosperous (wealthy) man is not equal to a righteous man.
- You don't have to be righteous to be wealthy

(Matthew 6:19-21)

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- Jesus was saying that it is not being good or wealthy that qualifies one to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- One cannot save oneself by works or buy salvation with wealth.
- Wealth can come to the sinners as well as to the righteous.

## THE ONLY HOPE OF THE WEALTHY

(Matthew 19:26)

But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- The wealthy man's hope is God's provision for salvation and deliverance.
  - Only God can help man break the powers that entangle and enslave them.
  - Only God can change him to seek those things that are above.

(Colossians 3:1-2)

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

- No medicine, psychology, education, social or political will or can change him
- Jesus said, "you must be born-again".
  - This is the first step to make "God's Kingdom, our priority".
  - To follow and obey Jesus is not by might and power but by His Spirit
  - Not self-righteousness

(Matthew 19:2)

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."

- To receive eternal life, you must be totally surrendered to Jesus. He is Lord and Savior.
  - Some examples of wealthy people who followed Jesus:

James and John (Mark 1:19-20)

19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. 20 And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13)

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him. 10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"

Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2 Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." 8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; 10 for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."