

The title for today's message is: **It's All About Christ!**

Jesus said: ***"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."***

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Some of you have probably been in the mall and seen those small sales carts set up in the middle of the walkways. My favorite is T-shirt stands.

I really like to stop and look at the different sayings on T-shirts. Some are cute and amusing, and others are good commentary on life.

I remember seeing one that read "It's all about me" of course in large letters. And there 's the one that says "The one who dies with the most toys wins."

When you think about it, our 21st century American lifestyle really revolves around these two t-shirts, right?

We're exposed to this line of thinking all over the place, on TV, in the movies, and in the news media.

We're even told by many organizations that what ever we want we can have because we live at the center of our own universe?

In fact, anyone who would tell you that the world does not revolve around your wants and desires, would be labeled politically incorrect.

So even in this world of "me first" or "me too" we hear the following words of Jesus:

***“It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”***

For many people today what Jesus said here is hard to understand. In fact this verse is one of the most misinterpreted verse's in the bible.

People have claimed that this verse has lead them into despair. So we have to ask; why did Jesus say this?

What was and what is Jesus trying to tell us today? Well that's what were going to unpack today. First today's text begins where last Sunday's text left off.

Remember, a rich young man approached Jesus, and asked Him ***“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”***

Jesus responded by quoting some of the commandments and asking him if he had kept all them all.

And when the young man indicated ***“All of these I have kept from my youth.”***

To that, Jesus said; ***“You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me.”***

Sadly that wasn't going to happen. That was more than the man was willing to do.

So the young man simply walked away disheartened and sorrowful because he had many possessions.

Now, after the man left, Jesus turns to his disciples and began to explain to them what just happened.

For our benefit today we need to understand that the Jewish people believed if someone was blessed with great wealth.

It was an indication of God's favor on that person. Showing to all that this man has been found to be a very good person.

It was an indication of God's favor, or blessing, upon that individual. That they must be a really good person, since God is blessing them so much.

So when Jesus asks this young man to sell all he had and give to the poor in order to inherit eternal life, it went against the man's very belief system.

How does this make you feel? Especially if you have great wealth. Does this make you reconsider your belief? Are you going to inherit eternal life?

Back to our text Jesus say's to his disciples: ***"How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God."***

Jesus continues saying: ***"Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God!"***

Then Jesus adds the confusing part of the text, He said: ***It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."***

Now, this is an interesting word picture. Look, a camel would have been the largest land animal in Jesus' day.

Where the eye of a needle would have been one of the smallest opening. But is this where Jesus wanted people to focus on. No! it isn't.

It's a huge exaggeration, but Jesus wanted to drive home His point. That's why the disciples asked Jesus: ***"Then who can be saved?"***

Again, hard words to be sure, words that fly right in the face of our modern beliefs of "Me First or Me Too".

However these words are simple to understand. Here Jesus is saying it is impossible for anyone to inherit the Kingdom of God.

There is no way for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, impossible. It's impossible for a rich man to inherit the Kingdom of God.

So the question is; If it is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of God, then how can there be any hope. What good is it to be a Christian?

Now this opens up an opportunity to see how this passage is abused. Because of this verse many folks believe that wealth, in of itself, is evil.

However, that's not the case. Again let's look back at the rich young man. The sin he was guilty of wasn't that he was rich.

The problem with the rich young man was that he had turned his riches into his god.

They were most important. He wasn't willing to give them up not even for eternal life.

And so it is with us and our "it's all about me" attitude on the t-shirt. That is when we put the focus on ourselves, and what were doing.

Look, if we put our trust in climbing the corporate ladder, having a position of authority in the church or community, or in anything that we own.

We have broken the very first commandment. Making wealth our god.  
.Just as the young rich man last Sunday

For those of us who live by; “the one who dies with the most toys wins”, the temptation is greater to trust in our stuff rather than in God.

And even if we give up everything we have, there’s the temptation to not only take pride in our act of giving. But also to show our pride for all to see

Here in our text, Peter shows a hint of that when he says; “**See, we have left everything and followed you.**” Another words Look at what we did.

Now this warning about trusting in worldly riches isn’t just for the wealthy. No! The poor are also vulnerable to this sin too.

You see, those who are lacking in worldly goods will often look at those who have more, and be tempted to covet those things their neighbor has.

They might put all of their time and energy into getting more stuff. And in doing so, it might lead them to forget about what God has given them.

Causing them to fall into the sin of trusting in material things to make their lives better.

Indeed, if left on our own, and our “me first” or “me too” mindset, we’d have no hope at all.

There’s no hope in that because if we go with the other t-shirt slogan “He who dies with the most toys wins”.

We then realize that whatever accomplishments or stuff we have in this world, there will come a day when we will lose it all.

Now I have yet to officiate at a funeral where the procession to the cemetery has a U-Haul truck behind the hearse.

Your stuff is left to someone else, you don't get to "take it with you." In the end your "stuff," can't keep you alive.

Indeed, it would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

Whether that person be rich with material things, family, friends, happiness, anything in this world that they trust more than they trust in God.

Is why Jesus responds to the objection of ***"who then can be saved"*** by saying ***"with man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God."***

There's one person who can pay the enormous debt of our sin, Jesus. If anyone who knows what riches are, it is Jesus Christ, God in the flesh.

As we go about our work this week, and as we go about our ministry as a congregation, let us repent of the times where we have tried to follow the world's cry of "It's all about me."

Instead, let us center everything we do on Christ. Let our motto be "It's all about Christ, it's all about what Christ has done for me, and is doing for me today."

Thanks be to God that indeed, when it comes to salvation, it's not about me, but it's all about Christ.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.