CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Matthew Chapter 19 — Marriage, Children, Riches, and Eternal Rewards

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Matthew Chapter 18 ended with Jesus teaching about unlimited forgiveness.

Matthew Chapter 19 begins a new stage in Jesus' journey.

He leaves Galilee for the last time.

He begins traveling toward Jerusalem, where He will be crucified.

Along the way, people come to Him with questions.

The Pharisees ask about **divorce.**

Jesus takes them back to the beginning.

God created marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman.

“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Then people bring **little children** to Jesus.

The disciples try to send them away.

But Jesus welcomes them.

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Then a rich young man comes to Jesus.

He asks what good thing he must do to have eternal life.

He has kept the commandments.

But when Jesus tells him to sell his possessions and follow Him, he goes away sad.

He loved his wealth more than he loved Jesus.

Jesus then teaches about the danger of riches.

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 disciples are shocked.

“Who then can be saved?”

Jesus answers:

“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Finally, Peter asks what the disciples will receive for leaving everything.

Jesus promises great rewards.

But He also gives a warning:

“Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Matthew 19 therefore teaches two great truths:

God's design for life is good and must be honored.

And:

Nothing in this world — not wealth, not status, not even good works — can earn eternal life; it comes only through God's power and by following Jesus.

The central truth of Matthew 19 is:

Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, to come to Him with childlike faith, and to treasure Him above all riches, trusting that with God all things are possible and that every sacrifice for Him will be richly rewarded.

I. LEAVING GALILEE

Matthew 19:1 — Beyond the Jordan

“When Jesus had finished these teachings, He left Galilee and went into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.”

When Jesus had finished these teachings.

This phrase marks the end of the fourth of Jesus' five great teaching sections in Matthew.

Then **He left Galilee.**

This was the last time Jesus would minister in Galilee before His death.

He went **into the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.**

This area was east of the Jordan River, also called Perea.

Jesus was now on His way to Jerusalem.

Cross References

Mark 10:1

> Then Jesus left that place and went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River.

John 3:26

> So they came to John and said, “Teacher, remember the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River?”

John 1:28

> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing people.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus moved steadily toward the cross, according to the Father's plan.

II. LARGE CROWDS FOLLOWED

Matthew 19:2 — He Healed Them

“Large crowds followed Him, and He healed them there.”

Even on His way to the cross, Jesus kept caring for people.

Large crowds followed Him.

He healed them there.

Jesus never stopped showing compassion.

Cross References

Mark 10:1

> Again, crowds came to Him, and Jesus taught them as He usually did.

Matthew 4:23

> Jesus went everywhere in Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, telling the good news about the kingdom, and healing all the people's diseases and sicknesses.

Luke 6:17

> A large crowd of His followers was there, and many people came from all over Judea.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus' compassion never takes a break.

III. A TEST ABOUT DIVORCE

Matthew 19:3 — For Any Reason?

“Some Pharisees came to test Him. They asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?’”

The Pharisees came **to test Him.**

They were trying to trap Jesus.

They asked about **divorce.**

“Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

In that day, Jewish teachers were divided on this question.

They argued about Deuteronomy 24:1, which allowed divorce when a man found **something indecent** in his wife.

One group, following Rabbi Shammai, said this meant only serious sexual sin.

Another group, following Rabbi Hillel, said a man could divorce his wife for almost any reason, even burning his food.

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to pick a side.

They were also in the territory of Herod Antipas, who had put John the Baptist to death for speaking against his marriage.

Cross References

Mark 10:2

> Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick Him. They asked, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?”

Deuteronomy 24:1

> Suppose a man marries a woman, but later he finds something shameful about her and is not pleased with her. He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Malachi 2:16

> “I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel.

Spiritual Principle

The world's arguments must be answered with God's Word.

IV. MALE AND FEMALE

Matthew 19:4 — In the Beginning

“Jesus replied, ‘Haven't you read that in the beginning the Creator “made them male and female”?’”

Jesus did not start with Deuteronomy.

He went back further.

“In the beginning.”

He took them to the book of Genesis.

Before the fall.

Before sin.

Before divorce.

The Creator made them male and female.

God designed two different and complementary sexes.

Marriage was not a human invention.

It was God's design from the start.

Cross References

Genesis 1:27

> So God created human beings in His image. In the image of God He created them. He created them male and female.

Genesis 5:2

> He created them male and female, and on that day He blessed them and named them human.

Mark 10:6

> But when God made the world, “He made them male and female.”

Spiritual Principle

To understand God's design, we must go back to the beginning.

V. ONE FLESH

Matthew 19:5 — Leave and Be United

“And said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?”

Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24.

Marriage has three parts.

Leave — a man leaves his father and mother.

The marriage becomes the most important human relationship.

Be united — he is joined to his wife.

The word means **to cling** or **to be glued.**

Become one flesh — the two become one.

This includes physical union.

But it is also a joining of their whole lives.

Cross References

Genesis 2:24

> So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.

Mark 10:7

> So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife.

Ephesians 5:31

> The Scripture says, “So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body.”

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a deep union designed by God.

Application

Building a strong marriage includes:

- Leaving — putting your spouse before your parents.
- Cleaving — staying committed through hard times.
- Becoming one — sharing your whole life together.
- Keeping God at the center.

VI. WHAT GOD HAS JOINED TOGETHER

Matthew 19:6 — Let No One Separate

“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Jesus drew the conclusion.

They are no longer two, but one flesh.

Then He gave a command.

What God has joined together, let no one separate.

Notice who joins a couple together.

God.

Marriage is not just a human agreement.

It is a covenant made before God.

And what God joins, people should not tear apart.

Cross References

Mark 10:8

> And the two will become one body. So there are not two, but one.

1 Corinthians 6:16

> The Scripture says, “The two will become one body.”

Malachi 2:15

> God made husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit for His purpose... So be careful, and do not break your promise to the wife you married when you were young.

Spiritual Principle

Marriage is a covenant God makes, not just a contract people sign.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God is the One who joins a husband and wife, and He does not intend for them to be separated.

VII. WHY DID MOSES COMMAND IT?

Matthew 19:7 — A Certificate of Divorce

“They asked Him, ‘Why then did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?’”

The Pharisees pushed back.

“Why then did Moses command...?”

They said Moses **commanded** divorce.

But that is not what Deuteronomy says.

Moses did not command divorce.

He **regulated** it.

The certificate of divorce protected the woman.

It gave her legal proof that she was free to remarry.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 24:1

> He may write her divorce papers, give them to her, and send her away from his house.

Mark 10:4

> They said, “Moses allowed a man to write divorce papers and send his wife away.”

Jeremiah 3:8

> I gave unfaithful Israel a divorce letter and sent her away because of her adultery.

Spiritual Principle

God's permission because of sin is not the same as God's command.

VIII. HARD HEARTS

Matthew 19:8 — Not from the Beginning

“Jesus answered, ‘Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.’”

Jesus corrected them.

Moses permitted divorce.

Not commanded.

Permitted.

Why?

Because your hearts were hard.

Divorce was allowed because of human sin and stubbornness.

It was a way to limit the damage sin caused.

But it was not this way from the beginning.

God's original design was lifelong marriage.

Divorce was never part of His perfect plan.

Cross References

Mark 10:5

> Jesus said, “Moses wrote that command for you because you were stubborn.”

Deuteronomy 10:16

> Give yourselves completely to serving the LORD, and don't be stubborn any longer.

Ezekiel 36:26

> I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will take out the stubborn heart of stone from your bodies, and I will give you a new, obedient heart of flesh.

Spiritual Principle

Hard hearts lead to broken relationships; God offers new hearts.

IX. EXCEPT FOR SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Matthew 19:9 — Commits Adultery

“I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.”

Jesus gave His own teaching.

Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman, commits adultery.

This was stricter than either of the rabbis.

Jesus gave one exception here:

Sexual immorality.

Unfaithfulness breaks the marriage covenant.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not required.

Forgiveness and restoration are always better when possible.

This is a sensitive subject.

Many people have been hurt by divorce.

Some were sinned against.

Some have sinned.

God's grace is available to all who come to Him.

The goal of Jesus' teaching is not to crush the broken but to protect marriage as God designed it.

Cross References

Matthew 5:32

> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual sin, is causing her to commit adultery.

Mark 10:11

> Jesus answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her.”

Luke 16:18

> If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is guilty of adultery.

Spiritual Principle

God's standard for marriage is high, and His grace for the broken is deep.

Key Truth

Jesus raised the standard to protect marriage, not to condemn those who are hurting.

X. BETTER NOT TO MARRY?

Matthew 19:10 — The Disciples' Reaction

“The disciples said to Him, ‘If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.’”

The disciples were shocked.

They had probably grown up thinking divorce was easy.

Now Jesus said marriage was for life.

So they said:

“It is better not to marry.”

If you cannot get out of marriage easily, maybe it is better to stay single.

Their reaction shows how seriously Jesus' teaching struck them.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 7:1

> Now I will discuss the things you wrote me about. It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.

1 Corinthians 7:27

> If you are married, do not try to become free from your wife. If you are not married, do not look for a wife.

Genesis 2:18

> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is right for him.”

Spiritual Principle

God's standards may surprise us, but they are always for our good.

XI. NOT EVERYONE CAN ACCEPT THIS

Matthew 19:11 — Only Those to Whom It Is Given

“Jesus replied, ‘Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it has been given.’”

Jesus answered their comment about not marrying.

Not everyone can accept this teaching.

Staying single is not for everyone.

Only those to whom it has been given.

Some people are given the ability by God to live a single life with contentment.

Paul later called this a gift.

Marriage is good.

Singleness can also be good.

Both are gifts from God.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 7:7

> I wish everyone were like me, but each person has his own gift from God. One has one gift, another has another gift.

Matthew 13:11

> Jesus answered, “You have been chosen to know the secrets about the kingdom of heaven, but others cannot know these secrets.”

John 6:65

> Jesus said, “That is the reason I said, ‘If the Father does not bring a person to Me, that one cannot come.’”

Spiritual Principle

Both marriage and singleness can be gifts from God.

XII. FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM

Matthew 19:12 — Eunuchs

“For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have chosen to live like this for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”

A **eunuch** was a man who could not have children or a normal married life.

Jesus described three kinds.

Some were born that way.

Some were made that way by men.

In the ancient world, some servants in royal courts were made eunuchs.

Others have chosen to live like this for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

This does not mean harming the body.

It means choosing to remain single and devoted to God's work.

Paul is an example.

He stayed single so he could serve the Lord without distraction.

Isaiah promised that God would welcome eunuchs who love Him and give them a place in His house.

In the book of Acts, an Ethiopian eunuch was one of the first Gentiles to believe.

Cross References

Isaiah 56:4

> This is what the LORD says: “The eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, who choose to do what pleases Me and keep My covenant... I will give them a place in My house.”

Acts 8:27

> So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch. He was an important officer in the service of the queen of the Ethiopians.

1 Corinthians 7:32

> I want you to be free from worry. A man who is not married is busy with the Lord's work, trying to please the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

A single life devoted to God is honorable and valuable.

Key Truth

Singleness is not second-class in God's kingdom.

XIII. LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO JESUS

Matthew 19:13 — The Disciples Rebuked Them

“Then people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.”

People **brought little children to Jesus.**

They wanted Him to **place His hands on them and pray for them.**

Jewish parents often brought their children to rabbis for a blessing.

But **the disciples rebuked them.**

They thought Jesus was too busy and too important for children.

They had forgotten what Jesus taught them only a short time before.

In Matthew 18, He placed a child in the middle of them as an example.

Cross References

Mark 10:13

> Some people brought their little children to Jesus so He could touch them, but His followers told them to stop.

Luke 18:15

> Some people brought even their babies to Jesus so He could touch them. When the followers saw this, they told the people to stop.

Matthew 18:3

> I tell you the truth, you must change and become like little children. Otherwise, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Spiritual Warning

It is easy to forget what Jesus has taught us when we are busy.

XIV. LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME

Matthew 19:14 — Do Not Stop Them

“Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.’”

Jesus corrected His disciples.

“Let the little children come to Me.”

“Do not stop them.”

Mark tells us Jesus was **indignant** — He was upset with the disciples.

Then He gave the reason.

“The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Children were not too small for Jesus.

They were exactly the kind of people He welcomed.

Their trust and dependence picture what it means to enter God's kingdom.

Cross References

Mark 10:14

> When Jesus saw this, He was upset and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children.”

Luke 18:16

> But Jesus called for the children, saying, “Let the little children come to Me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these children.”

Matthew 18:4

> The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus welcomes children, and He wants us to bring them to Him.

Application

Bringing children to Jesus includes:

- Praying for them.
- Teaching them God's Word.

- Taking them to church.
- Showing them Jesus' love.
- Never treating them as unimportant.

XV. HE PLACED HIS HANDS ON THEM

Matthew 19:15 — Then He Went On

“He placed His hands on them and then went on His way.”

Jesus **placed His hands on them.**

He blessed them.

Mark tells us He **took them in His arms.**

In the Old Testament, placing hands on someone was a way of giving a blessing.

Jacob blessed his grandsons this way.

Moses passed authority to Joshua this way.

Jesus took time for the children.

Then **He went on His way** toward Jerusalem.

Cross References

Mark 10:16

> Then Jesus took the children in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them.

Genesis 48:14

> But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on the head of Ephraim, the younger son. He put his left hand on Manasseh's head.

Numbers 27:18

> So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun. My Spirit is in him. Put your hand on him.”

Spiritual Principle

Jesus is never too busy to bless a child.

XVI. WHAT GOOD THING MUST I DO?

Matthew 19:16 — A Man Came Up to Jesus

“A man came up to Jesus and asked, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?’”

A man came up to Jesus.

Matthew tells us he was **young** and **rich.**

Luke tells us he was a **ruler.**

He had youth, wealth, and position.

Everything the world values.

Yet he knew something was missing.

He asked:

“What good thing must I do to have eternal life?”

Notice the words **“good thing”** and **“do.”**

He thought eternal life was something he could earn.

If he just did the right good deed, he would have it.

Cross References

Mark 10:17

> As Jesus started to leave, a man ran to Him and fell on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, “Good teacher, what must I do to have life forever?”

Luke 18:18

> A certain leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have life forever?”

Luke 10:25

> Then an expert on the law stood up to test Jesus, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?”

Spiritual Principle

Many people think eternal life is something they can earn.

XVII. ONLY ONE WHO IS GOOD

Matthew 19:17 — Keep the Commandments

“Jesus replied, ‘Why do you ask Me about what is good? There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.’”

Jesus answered with a question.

“Why do you ask Me about what is good?”

“There is only One who is good.”

Only God is truly good.

Jesus was pushing the young man to think.

If only God is good, then no human being can be good enough on their own.

Then Jesus said:

“If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.”

Jesus was not teaching that we are saved by keeping the law.

He was showing the man that he could not keep the law perfectly.

The law reveals our need for a Savior.

Cross References

Mark 10:18

> Jesus answered, “Why do you call Me good? Only God is good.”

Luke 18:19

> Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? Only God is good.”

Leviticus 18:5

> Obey My laws and rules. A person who obeys them will live because of them. I am the LORD.

Spiritual Principle

Only God is truly good, and no one can be good enough to earn eternal life.

XVIII. WHICH ONES?

Matthew 19:18 — The Commandments About Others

“‘Which ones?’ he asked. Jesus replied, ‘“You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,”’”

The young man asked:

“Which ones?”

Perhaps he wanted to find the most important ones.

Jesus listed several of the Ten Commandments.

Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not give false testimony.

Notice that Jesus listed the commandments about how we treat other people.

Cross References

Exodus 20:13

> You must not murder anyone.

Deuteronomy 5:17

> You must not murder anyone.

Romans 13:9

> The law says, “You must not be guilty of adultery. You must not murder anyone. You must not steal. You must not want to take your neighbor's things.” All these commands are really only one rule: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Spiritual Principle

God's commands show us how to love others.

XIX. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Matthew 19:19 — Honor Your Father and Mother

“honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus added two more.

Honor your father and mother.

Love your neighbor as yourself.

The last one sums up all the others.

Loving your neighbor as yourself means caring about others' needs as much as your own.

This would be the test.

Did this young man truly love his neighbor as himself?

Cross References

Exodus 20:12

> Honor your father and your mother so that you will live a long time in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you.

Leviticus 19:18

> Love your neighbor as you love yourself. I am the LORD.

Ephesians 6:2

> The command says, “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first command that has a promise with it.

Spiritual Principle

Love for others is the heart of God's law.

XX. WHAT DO I STILL LACK?

Matthew 19:20 — I Have Kept All These

“The young man said, ‘I have kept all these since I was young. What do I still lack?’”

The young man was confident.

“I have kept all these since I was young.”

Outwardly, he probably had.

He had not murdered.

He had not committed adultery.

He had not stolen.

But then he asked an honest question.

“What do I still lack?”

Deep down, he knew something was missing.

Keeping the rules had not given him peace.

Mark tells us that Jesus looked at him and **loved him.**

Cross References

Mark 10:20

> The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these things since I was a boy.”

Luke 18:21

> But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

Philippians 3:6

> If anyone could be made right with God by following the law, I could. I obeyed the law perfectly.

Spiritual Principle

Outward obedience cannot fill the emptiness of a heart that is not fully given to God.

XXI. SELL, GIVE, FOLLOW

Matthew 19:21 — Treasure in Heaven

“Jesus answered, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me.’”

Jesus put His finger on the problem.

“If you want to be perfect.”

Perfect means complete or whole.

Then Jesus gave four commands.

Go.

Sell your possessions.

Give to the poor.

Follow Me.

Jesus does not ask every person to sell everything they own.

But He knew this young man's heart.

His wealth was his god.

He did not truly love his neighbor as himself, because he would not share with the poor.

He had kept the second part of the law outwardly.

But he had broken the first commandment.

He had another god before the true God.

And the most important command was the last one.

“Then come, follow Me.”

Eternal life is not about doing one more good thing.

It is about following Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 10:21

> Jesus looked at the man and loved him. Jesus said, “There is one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

Luke 18:22

> When Jesus heard this, He said to him, “There is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow Me.”

Luke 12:33

> Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Get for yourselves purses that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never run out.

Spiritual Principle

Jesus asks us to give up whatever takes His place in our hearts.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The young man asked what good thing he could do; Jesus told him what god he needed to give up.

XXII. HE WENT AWAY SAD

Matthew 19:22 — He Had Great Wealth

“When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.”

This is one of the saddest verses in the Bible.

He went away.

He walked away from Jesus.

Sad.

He was not happy with his choice.

But he made it anyway.

Because he had great wealth.

He did not own his wealth.

His wealth owned him.

He came to Jesus asking about eternal life.

He left with his money and without eternal life.

Cross References

Mark 10:22

> When the man heard this, he became very sad and left, because he was rich.

Luke 18:23

> But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.

1 Timothy 6:9

> Those who want to become rich bring temptation to themselves and are caught in a trap.

Spiritual Warning

Anything we love more than Jesus will keep us from Him.

Key Truth

He kept his riches and lost the true treasure.

XXIII. HARD FOR THE RICH

Matthew 19:23 — To Enter the Kingdom

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

Jesus turned to His disciples.

“It is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Why?

Riches make people feel secure.

They make people feel they do not need God.

They pull the heart toward this world.

They make it hard to give up everything to follow Jesus.

Cross References

Mark 10:23

> Then Jesus looked at His followers and said, “How hard it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

Luke 18:24

> Jesus looked at him and said, “It is very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.”

Proverbs 11:28

> Those who trust in their riches will be ruined, but a good person will be healthy like a green leaf.

Spiritual Principle

Riches can make it harder to see our need for God.

XXIV. A CAMEL AND A NEEDLE

Matthew 19:24 — Easier for a Camel

“Again I tell 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.”

Jesus used a striking picture.

A **camel** was the largest animal in Israel.

The **eye of a needle** was one of the smallest openings.

Jesus was saying something that is humanly impossible.

Some people have said there was a small gate in Jerusalem called the Needle's Eye.

But there is no evidence such a gate existed in Jesus' day.

Jesus meant exactly what He said.

It is impossible.

Cross References

Mark 10:25

> 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.

Luke 18:25

> 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.

Jeremiah 9:23

> This is what the LORD says: “Wise people must not brag about their wisdom. Strong people must not brag about their strength. Rich people must not brag about their money.”

Spiritual Principle

No one can save themselves — not by money, power, or effort.

XXV. WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

Matthew 19:25 — The Disciples Were Astonished

“When the disciples heard this, they were astonished and asked, ‘Who then can be saved?’”

The disciples were **astonished.**

In their culture, people thought wealth was a sign of God's blessing.

If the rich, who seemed blessed by God, could not be saved, then who could?

“Who then can be saved?”

This was exactly the right question.

Cross References

Mark 10:26

> The followers were even more surprised and said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

Luke 18:26

> When the people heard this, they asked, “Then who can be saved?”

Luke 13:23

> Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will only a few people be saved?”

Spiritual Principle

When we see how impossible salvation is for us, we are ready to see how possible it is for God.

XXVI. WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Matthew 19:26 — Impossible with Man

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

Jesus looked at them.

Then He gave one of the most important answers in the Bible.

“With man this is impossible.”

No one can save themselves.

Not the rich.

Not the poor.

Not the religious.

Not anyone.

“But with God all things are possible.”

Salvation is a work of God.

He can do what we cannot.

He can change even a heart that loves money.

He can save anyone.

Cross References

Luke 1:37

> God can do anything!

Genesis 18:14

> Is anything too hard for the LORD?

Job 42:2

> I know that You can do all things. No plan of Yours can be ruined.

Spiritual Principle

Salvation is impossible for us and possible for God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The camel cannot squeeze itself through the needle, but God can do the impossible.

XXVII. WE HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING

Matthew 19:27 — What Then Will There Be for Us?

“Peter answered Him, ‘We have left everything to follow You! What then will there be for us?’”

Peter spoke up.

“We have left everything to follow You!”

The rich young man would not leave his wealth.

But the disciples had left their boats, their nets, their homes, and their jobs.

“What then will there be for us?”

This was an honest question.

Peter wanted to know if their sacrifice was worth it.

Cross References

Mark 10:28

Peter said to Jesus, “Look, we have left everything to follow You.”

Luke 18:28

Peter said, “Look, we have left everything we had and followed You.”

Luke 5:11

They brought their boats to the shore, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Spiritual Principle

God sees every sacrifice made for Jesus.

XXVIII. TWELVE THRONES

Matthew 19:28 — The Renewal of All Things

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

Jesus gave a wonderful promise.

At the renewal of all things.

This is a picture of the new creation.

The day when God makes everything new.

When the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne.

Jesus will reign as King.

You who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones.

The disciples would share in His rule.

Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

They would have a place of honor and authority in His kingdom.

The fishermen who gave up their boats would sit on thrones.

Cross References

Luke 22:30

> You will eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21:5

> The One who was sitting on the throne said, “Look! I am making everything new!”

Acts 3:21

> Jesus must stay in heaven until the time comes when all things will be made right again, as God promised long ago through His holy prophets.

Spiritual Principle

What we give up for Jesus is small compared to what He will give us.

XXIX. A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH

Matthew 19:29 — Eternal Life

“And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, or lands for My name's sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.”

The promise was not only for the twelve.

Everyone who has left things **for My name's sake.**

Houses.

Family.

Lands.

They **will receive a hundred times as much.**

Mark adds that this includes receiving it **in this life**, along with persecutions.

Believers gain a new family in the church.

Brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers in the faith.

Homes open to them everywhere.

And will inherit eternal life.

The very thing the rich young man wanted but would not give up his wealth for.

Cross References

Mark 10:29

> Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farms for Me and for the good news will get a hundred times more in this life.”

Luke 18:29

> Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, all those who have left houses, wives, brothers, parents, or children for the kingdom of God will get much more in this life. And in the age that is coming, they will have life forever.”

Job 42:10

> After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD gave him success again. The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had owned before.

Spiritual Principle

No one ever loses by giving to Jesus.

Key Truth

The rich young man kept his possessions and lost eternal life; the disciples gave up their possessions and gained eternal life.

XXX. FIRST WILL BE LAST

Matthew 19:30 — Last Will Be First

“But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Jesus ended with a warning.

Many who are first will be last.

Many who are last will be first.

God's kingdom turns the world's values upside down.

The rich young man was first in the world's eyes.

Young.

Rich.

Powerful.

But he was last in God's kingdom.

The disciples were last in the world's eyes.

Poor fishermen and a tax collector.

But they would be first in God's kingdom.

This was also a warning to the disciples.

They must not become proud of their sacrifice.

In the next chapter, Jesus tells a parable to explain this saying.

Cross References

Matthew 20:16

> So those who are last now will be first in the future, and those who are first now will be last in the future.

Mark 10:31

> Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And many who have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future.

Luke 13:30

> There are those who are last now who will be first in the future. And there are those who are first now who will be last in the future.

Spiritual Principle

God's kingdom reverses the world's ranking.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Do not judge who is first by this world's standards — God's ranking will surprise everyone.

XXXI. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM MATTHEW 19

1. Marriage Is God's Design

From the beginning, God created marriage as a permanent union of one man and one woman.

Principle:

Marriage is God's idea, so it should be lived God's way.

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2. Divorce Is Not God's Ideal

Though permitted because of human hardness, God's will is lifelong faithfulness.

Principle:

Hard hearts break marriages; God offers new hearts.

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3. The Kingdom Belongs to the Humble

Children represent the childlike faith required to enter heaven.

Principle:

Come to Jesus with simple, trusting faith.

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4. Eternal Life Is Not Earned by Works

The rich young ruler kept commandments but lacked surrender.

Eternal life comes through following Christ.

Principle:

We cannot earn eternal life; we receive it by following Jesus.

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5. Wealth Can Hinder Faith

Riches easily bind the heart, but with God, salvation is possible for anyone.

Principle:

Hold your possessions loosely and Jesus tightly.

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6. God Rewards Sacrifice

Those who give up everything for Christ will receive eternal treasures far greater than what was lost.

Principle:

What you give up for Jesus is never lost.

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7. The Kingdom Inverts Human Status

The first will be last, and the last will be first.

Principle:

God's measure of greatness is not the world's measure.

XXXII. GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19 gives a clear picture of marriage.

Marriage Was Created by God

“The Creator made them.”

Marriage Is Between a Man and a Woman

“Male and female.”

Marriage Involves Leaving

“A man will leave his father and mother.”

Marriage Involves Cleaving

“Be united to his wife.”

Marriage Creates Oneness

“The two will become one flesh.”

Marriage Is Joined by God

“What God has joined together.”

Marriage Is Meant to Last

“Let no one separate.”

Key Truth

Marriage is not a human contract that can be broken at will; it is a covenant God creates and intends to last for life.

XXXIII. THE RICH YOUNG MAN AND THE DISCIPLES

Matthew 19 shows two very different responses to Jesus' call.

The Rich Young Man

- Young, rich, and powerful.
- Kept the commandments outwardly.
- Asked what good thing he could do.
- Was told to sell everything and follow.
- Went away sad.
- Kept his wealth and lost eternal life.

The Disciples

- Ordinary, poor, and unimportant.
- Made many mistakes.
- Asked what they would receive.
- Had left everything to follow.
- Were promised thrones and rewards.
- Gave up their possessions and gained eternal life.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The question is not how much you have, but whether you are willing to let it go to follow Jesus.

XXXIV. WHAT MATTHEW 19 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

Matthew 19 presents Jesus as:

The One Moving Toward the Cross

He left Galilee for Jerusalem.

The Compassionate Healer

He healed the crowds along the way.

The Authority on Marriage

He took people back to God's original design.

The Friend of Children

He welcomed and blessed them.

The Loving Teacher

He looked at the rich young man and loved him.

The One Worth Everything

He called people to leave all and follow Him.

The God of the Impossible

With God all things are possible.

The Coming King

He will sit on His glorious throne.

The Rewarder

He will repay a hundred times over.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The Jesus who welcomed the children and loved the rich young man still invites everyone to come and follow Him.

XXXV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce?

They wanted to test Him and trap Him.

Jewish teachers were divided on the question, and they wanted Jesus to pick a side.

Question 2

Where did Jesus go to answer the question about divorce?

He went back to the beginning, to Genesis.

He showed that God created marriage as a lifelong union of one man and one woman.

Question 3

What does it mean for two to become one flesh?

It means a deep union of their whole lives, including physical, emotional, and spiritual oneness.

Question 4

Did Moses command divorce?

No.

He permitted it and regulated it because of the hardness of people's hearts.

It was never God's original design.

Question 5

What exception did Jesus give for divorce?

Sexual immorality.

But even then, divorce is permitted, not required, and forgiveness and restoration are better when possible.

Question 6

What did Jesus say about staying single?

He said some are given the ability to stay single for the sake of the kingdom.

Both marriage and singleness can be gifts from God.

Question 7

Why did the disciples try to stop the children from coming to Jesus?

They thought Jesus was too busy or too important for children.

Question 8

What did Jesus say about the children?

He said to let them come, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Question 9

What was wrong with the rich young man's question?

He thought eternal life was something he could earn by doing a good thing.

Question 10

Why did Jesus tell him to keep the commandments?

To show him that he could not keep them perfectly and that he needed more than rule-keeping.

Question 11

Why did Jesus tell him to sell his possessions?

Because his wealth was his god.

He loved his money more than he loved God or his neighbor.

Question 12

What does the camel and the eye of a needle mean?

It means that salvation is humanly impossible, especially for those who trust in riches.

Question 13

Who can be saved?

No one can save themselves.

But with God, all things are possible.

He can save anyone.

Question 14

What did Jesus promise to those who leave everything for Him?

He promised a hundred times as much and eternal life.

The twelve disciples would sit on thrones in His kingdom.

Question 15

What does “the first will be last, and the last will be first” mean?

God's kingdom reverses the world's values.

Those who seem great now may be last, and those who seem unimportant may be first.

Question 16

What should Matthew 19 change about the way Christians live today?

Matthew 19 should cause believers to live:

- Honoring God's design for marriage.
- Protecting and strengthening their marriages.
- Showing grace to those hurt by divorce.
- Valuing both marriage and singleness.
- Bringing children to Jesus.
- Not trying to earn eternal life.
- Holding possessions loosely.
- Trusting God for the impossible.
- Giving up whatever takes Jesus' place.
- Trusting that every sacrifice for Jesus will be rewarded.

XXXVI. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Matthew 19 asks several important questions.

Do I Honor God's Design for Marriage?

If I Am Married, Am I Leaving, Cleaving, and Becoming One with My Spouse?

Do I Show Grace to Those Hurt by Divorce?

Do I See Singleness as a Gift and Not a Failure?

Am I Bringing Children to Jesus, or Getting in the Way?

Am I Trying to Earn Eternal Life?

What Do I Still Lack?

Is There Anything I Love More Than Jesus?

Do My Possessions Own Me?

Do I Believe That With God All Things Are Possible?

What Have I Given Up for Jesus, and Do I Trust Him to Reward It?

Am I Measuring Greatness by the World's Standards or God's?

XXXVII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The One Thing You Lack”

The rich young man had almost everything.

He was young.

He was rich.

He was powerful.

He was moral.

He had kept the commandments.

And yet he asked:

“What do I still lack?”

Jesus told him.

He lacked one thing.

A heart fully surrendered to God.

His wealth was in the way.

He could not follow Jesus while holding on to his riches.

So he walked away.

This creates a powerful principle.

The thing we refuse to give up is often the very thing keeping us from Jesus.

For the rich young man, it was money.

For others, it may be a relationship, a habit, a dream, or their own pride.

Jesus loves us too much to let us keep a rival god.

Principle:

The one thing we will not give up for Jesus is the one thing that will keep us from Him.

XXXVIII. FINAL APPLICATION

Matthew Chapter 19 takes place on the road to Jerusalem.

Jesus is heading toward the cross.

And along the way, He meets people with questions.

The Pharisees ask about divorce.

Jesus takes them back to the beginning, where God created marriage to last.

Parents bring little children.

The disciples try to stop them.

Jesus welcomes them and blesses them.

A rich young man asks how to have eternal life.

Jesus tells him to sell everything and follow Him.

And the young man walks away sad.

The disciples are shocked.

“Who then can be saved?”

And Jesus answers:

“With God all things are possible.”

Then Jesus promises that everyone who leaves anything for Him will receive far more.

Matthew 19 therefore reminds us:

God's design for marriage is good.

Children matter to Jesus.

Eternal life cannot be earned.

Riches can keep us from Jesus.

Salvation is impossible for us but possible for God.

And every sacrifice for Jesus will be richly rewarded.

The story of Matthew 19 does not end with:

A trap from the Pharisees.

A sad young man walking away.

Or shocked disciples.

It ends with:

A promise of thrones.

A hundred times more.

And eternal life for all who follow Him.

The same call still stands:

Honor God's design.

Bring the children to Him.

Stop trying to earn eternal life.

Let go of whatever takes His place.

Trust the God of the impossible.

Follow Jesus.

And until He returns:

Keep honoring His design.

Keep holding possessions loosely.

Keep following Him.

Keep trusting His reward.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your good design for life.

Thank You for creating marriage from the beginning.

Strengthen marriages in our homes and churches.

Help husbands and wives leave, cleave, and become one.

Protect what You have joined together.

Soften hard hearts, and give new hearts where there has been pain.

Give grace and healing to those who have been hurt by divorce.

Help us honor both marriage and singleness as gifts from You.

Lord Jesus, thank You for welcoming the little children.

Help us bring children to You and never stand in their way.

Give us childlike faith.

Forgive us for the times we have tried to earn eternal life.

Show us what we still lack.

Reveal anything in our hearts that we love more than You.

Loosen our grip on our possessions.

Help us hold everything loosely and hold You tightly.

Thank You that what is impossible for us is possible for You.

Thank You that You can save anyone, even those who seem far away.

Thank You for the promise that nothing we give up for You is ever lost.

Help us live by Your standards, not the world's.

Keep us humble, remembering that the first will be last and the last will be first.

Give us grace to follow You, whatever it costs.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“Jesus looked at them and said, ‘With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” — Matthew 19:26

Central Truth

Jesus calls His followers to honor God's design for marriage, to come to Him with childlike faith, and to treasure Him above all riches, trusting that with God all things are possible and that every sacrifice for Him will be richly rewarded.

Matthew 19 in One Sentence

On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus teaches that marriage is God's lifelong design, welcomes and blesses little children, calls a rich young man to give up his wealth and follow Him, teaches that salvation is impossible for man but possible with God, and promises great rewards to all who leave everything to follow Him.