

Having it All But Missing Everything

Mark 10:13-22

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Many things can keep you from the one thing.

In what has been called the most shocking moment in the history of the Academy Awards, the Oscar for “best picture” was inadvertently awarded to the wrong movie. It turns out that the presenters, Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, were given the wrong envelope.

This got pretty awkward when the filmmakers for the wrong movie began their acceptance speech for an award they had not won. The mistake wasn’t fixed for two and half minutes before the correct winner was called to the stage to receive the award.

Apparently, the head guy with PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the longtime accounting firm for the Oscars, was so struck by all the celebrities surrounding him that he was tweeting pictures of himself with various stars just minutes before the mix-up. *Many things kept him from the one thing.* He has since lost his gig at the Oscars and is now receiving death threats. Something’s out of whack there, isn’t it?

In our passage today, we’re going to see two awkward moments in which those who look to be the least are celebrated as the winners and then we’ll focus on a celebrity who ends up losing everything because *many things kept him from the one thing.*

Last weekend we learned that marriage matters to the Master as we drilled down into the importance of *leaving, cleaving, and weaving* so that we don’t cause *grieving*.

It’s no accident that the very next passage deals with children. Malachi 2:15 links the importance of marital unity and the raising of godly children: ***“Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.”***

Turn to Mark 10:13-16 where we see Jesus demonstrating four attitudes and actions towards children.

1. Bring your children to Jesus. Look at verse 13: ***“And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them...”*** The idea here is that parents were continuously bringing their kids to Jesus, wanting Jesus to connect with them in a very personal way. We know from Luke 18:15 that this included infants. Parents and grandparents, do all you can to bring your children and grandchildren to Jesus. Pray for them every day. Read the Bible to them. Bring them to church and to AWANA and to Super Saturdays.

Sheila and her team have put together a very moving Easter experience called, “The Road to Resurrection.” Kids 5 years through 6th grade will travel the path Jesus journeyed during the days of His death, burial, and resurrection. They’ll taste the Passover meal, visit Barabbas in his jail cell, listen to a Roman soldier’s remorse, and hear an account of seeing the risen Savior from one of the men on the road to Emmaus. There will be music, drama, puppets, and an Easter gift bag for each child. 3-and 4-year-olds will have an Easter program and there will also be a nursery for all five services. It would be great if you could worship in one service with your guest and work in another. You can sign up through the digital bulletin on your app or stop by the child check-in desk.

The best way for you to bring children to Jesus is to make sure you’re growing yourself by plugging into a Growth Group and that you’re gathering with God’s people on a regular basis. If you’re a mom, consider attending Hearts at Home April 21-22. If you’re a dad or grandpa, join us at the Iron Sharpens Iron conference on April 1st.

2. Beware of attitudes that hinder children. Let’s pick up the last part of verse 13 and verse 14: ***“...and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.’”*** This is remarkable since the disciples had already been told to receive children in His name. The word for “**rebuke**” is quite strong. It refers to “*sharply punishing.*”

The disciples didn’t want Jesus to be bothered by kids but Jesus was more bothered by the disciples! In fact, He was “**indignant**” with them, which means “*sorely vexed with great anger.*”

D.L. Moody once returned from a preaching opportunity and reported two and a half conversions. His host asked, *“Two adults and a child, I suppose?”* Moody replied, *“No, two children and an adult. The children gave their whole lives. The adult had only half of his left to give.”* Children matter to Jesus! One Gallup study reports that 19 out of 20 people are saved before the age of 25. In God’s Oscars, it’s children who win the top prize.

3. Become like children to receive the kingdom of God. Once again, Jesus uses children to teach us adults about spiritual truth in verse 15: ***“Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”*** Children have a lot to teach us about faith, don’t they? They are dependent, powerless, curious and trusting. We must be the same.

4. Bless children warmly. Jesus was asked by parents to touch their children but He does a lot more in verse 16: ***“And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.”*** Jesus picked them up or literally, *“folded them in His arms”* with a bear hug. And then He verbally blessed them, using touch and words. The word for ***“blessed”*** is a strong compound phrase used only here and means that He *“fervently blessed repeatedly.”* Jesus is warm and affectionate toward children.

We believe children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3). As a church family, we are committed to partner with parents in the evangelizing and discipling of sons and daughters to be difference-makers for Christ. One of the ways we demonstrate this commitment is by giving parents an opportunity to publically dedicate their child to Christ. We have brochures available that explain more or you can jump on our website.

When Jesus announces that children are the winners, those listening might have thought He made a mistake. To show that there’s no mix-up, we’re introduced to a man who no doubt would have been nominated for many awards. He makes a grand appearance but ends up experiencing great disappointment at the end.

We’ll see that *many things can keep you from the one thing.*

We’re introduced to this celebrity in verse 17: ***“And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’”*** Matthew uses the word, ***“Behold,”*** to get

our attention. If we add what the other gospels tell us, there are at least ten things we can say about him to put a composite picture together.

1. **Wealthy.** We know from verse 22 that he “*had great possessions.*” Luke 18:23 tells us that he had “*great wealth,*” meaning he was extremely affluent with an abundance of possessions.
2. **Healthy.** When he sees Jesus leaving town, he’s in good enough shape to sprint over to the Savior. By the way, we have a ministry called, “Run for God” that meets on Monday nights.
3. **Young.** Matthew 19:22 adds that he was a “*young man.*” This word was used of a man in his 20s or 30s.
4. **Powerful.** Luke 18:18 tells us that he is a “*ruler.*” This word was used of synagogue leaders and for members of the Sanhedrin, which was like the Jewish Supreme Court.
5. **Humble.** It was uncommon for someone with such prestige and power to run and now he drops to his knees in front of Jesus.
6. **Earnest.** He sought Jesus out to ask him a question. The tense has the idea of “*was asking,*” meaning he was persistent.
7. **Respectful.** He referred to Jesus as the “*Good Teacher.*”
8. **Unsatisfied.** Even though he was a celebrity with a long resume and great reviews, he knew he was missing something. He was not happy with his legalistic, performance oriented, graceless religion. He was moral but knew he was missing something.
9. **Determined.** He was willing to do whatever he needed to do to have eternal life. The tense of the original indicates that he expected Jesus to assign him a great deed that he was ready to do on the spot.
10. **Eternity-focused.** He understood that this life is not all there is.

It’s really quite a picture, isn’t it? This loaded leader comes running up to the peasant preacher from Galilee. He’s wearing the finest of robes and is no doubt immaculately groomed. But as he’s kneeling in the dirt on the edge of town, he has a burning question that he must get answered. All his life he had been taught that he had to do good things in order to be saved, but something was bothering him deep inside.

He starts out by calling Jesus “*good.*” Maybe he’s hoping for a reciprocal greeting back from Jesus. After all, he had just complimented Him. It would be expected for Jesus to repay the compliment, right? Enter another awkward moment. Look

at verse 18: “*And Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.’*” Talk about a conversation killer.

His answer must have surprised the man because at first glance it had no connection with his question. Instead of answering his inquiry, Jesus makes the man realize the essence of goodness comes only from God. 1 Chronicles 16:34 puts it succinctly: “*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!*”

I like the statement of faith that is shouted out on a regular basis at Celebrate Recovery:

Leader: *God is good...*

People: *ALL THE TIME!*

Leader: *All the time...*

People: *GOD IS GREAT!*

In the definitive sense of that word, Jesus could not be ‘good’ if He was a mere mortal man. Only God is good and that could only mean one thing. Jesus could not be good unless He was also God. Some liberal commentators have suggested that this is one clear occasion when Jesus denies his deity. Actually, Jesus is equating himself with God, “*If you know what good really means, you’ll understand that only God is good. Therefore if you call me good, then you’re calling me God. Are you prepared to acknowledge who I really am?*”

We Are Not Good

Jesus was also making the point that this young man was not good. Only God is. His concept of ‘good’ was mistaken. It clouded his perception of Jesus and it clouded his understanding of himself. Until he could see that Jesus was God incarnate who demanded his complete allegiance, and until he recognized his own sinfulness, he could not truly find the eternal life he was searching for. In short, he thought too little of Jesus and too much of himself. *He overestimated his own goodness and grossly underestimated how great Jesus was.*

In order to bring this man face-to-face with his sin, Jesus takes him to the second half of the 10 Commandments in verse 19. These commandments deal with our horizontal relationships with people: “*You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder [#7], Do not commit adultery [#6], Do not steal [#8], Do not bear false*

witness [9], Do not defraud [this could be an implication of #10], Honor your father and mother [#5].”

As Jesus lists the commandments, the man mentally checks them off and then declares in verse 20: ***“And he said to Him, ‘Teacher [notice that he’s dropped the adjective “good”], all these I have kept from my youth.’”*** Unbelievably, he declares that he’s kept all of them, without fail. The word ***“kept”*** means, *“to continue to keep a law from being broken.”* When Jewish men used the phrase, ***“from my youth,”*** they were referring to the time they “came of age” at their *bar mitzvah*, which literally means, *“son of the Law.”*

Let me point out that there’s no way he could perfectly keep all these, especially in light of what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:21-22 and 27-28: ***“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment...you have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*** Listen. Even if he did a pretty good job with the commandments, he still wasn’t satisfied, was he? He had no assurance that he would inherit eternal life.

By the way, this is where most people are today. They think they’re intrinsically good, or at least better than others. But here’s the problem. If you don’t admit that you’re a sinner, you’ll never see your need for the Savior. And if you break just one commandment just one time, James 2:10 says: ***“For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”***

I didn’t watch the Oscars because Beth and I were here last Sunday night to hear from Karen Kolb, one of our Go Team partners (actually, I don’t think I’ve ever watched them). Karen ministers in Guatemala and while she didn’t walk out on the red carpet, there are a number of rewards waiting for her in heaven. I sent her an email this week and asked her a question that she addressed when she was here: *“How does the concept of being ‘good’ actually keep people in Guatemala away from the gospel?”*

Here’s her answer: *“There are a lot of ‘good’ people in Guatemala. And while we might think that ‘good’ is a quality trait worth having, it can be the very thing that keeps a Guatemalan (or any person) from coming to Christ. Traditionally, the Guatemalans believe that everyone is going to Heaven, unless however, you do*

something very bad like killing someone. Because they are 'good,' they don't really see themselves as 'spiritually bad' or as a sinner. They are blinded to their spiritual condition and their need for a Savior. They think they're 'good,' so why would they need to be saved?"

Like a good accountant, this man tabulated his spirituality scores and he thinks he's won but then Jesus opens the envelope of his soul and says, ***"One thing you still lack..."*** Jesus drives home the truth that he has actually broken the 10th Commandment that forbids coveting. In addition, he's busted by the very 1st Commandment from Exodus 20:3: ***"You shall have no other gods before me"*** because he had made money his master. His goods had become his god and he thought he was good enough to not even need God.

BTW, a very effective evangelism method is to use the 10 Commandments to help a person see their own sinfulness. If someone believes he or she is inherently good, the gospel won't be attractive to them. Without knowing the bad news, people won't respond to the good news.

Look at verse 21: ***"And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, '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.'"*** Let's unpack this verse to see how many things kept him from the one thing.

- **The compassion of Jesus.** Jesus looks at the man and loves him, in spite of his sins and superficial spirituality. The word for love here means, *"strong affection."* Jesus lovingly beheld this man, and as far as I can determine, this is the only time we read of Jesus loving a specific individual. This man loved his money more than anything else and yet Jesus still lavished him with love. I'm grateful for Romans 5:8: ***"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."***
- **The confrontation by Jesus.** He looks, He loves and He tells us what we lack. Jesus is both tender *and* tough, filled with grace *and* truth. The word ***"lack"*** means, *"to fall short, to be late, to be behind."* This man fell short in ***"one thing."*** What was that one thing? He had not put God before all his goods. It's easy to keep external rules while hiding a heart filled with sin.
- **The commandment of Jesus.** Jesus then commands this celebrity to go, sell and give to the poor in order to ***"have treasure in heaven."*** This

doesn't mean that each of us have to sell everything we have if we want to be a disciple. Jesus was addressing a very specific sin that this guy had, and in so doing, exposed his heart. He personalized the message for him. Because he was rich, he told him to liquidate his estate and give the money to the poor.

- **The calling of Jesus to come and commit.** As we've been learning in our study of Mark's gospel, Jesus is all about finding faithful followers when He says, "***Come and follow me.***" This could be translated like this: "*Here, come here, come!*" We must come to Him *and* commit to Him, going where He goes and doing those things that He wants us to do. Jesus is Savior *and* He is Lord! The word "***follow***" is used figuratively for a disciple.

Listen. Jesus looks at you and loves you. And because He loves you, He lets you know what you're lacking. The ultimate thing we lack is the Lord, right? The man was looking for something he could do that would make him OK spiritually. He wanted salvation on his own terms.

But ultimately he didn't understand the depth of his depravity. He didn't really want to be saved because He wasn't convinced he was a sinner.

It was a common belief during that time that someone had to *do* something to earn eternal life. That's still pretty popular today. Many believe that God will add up their good works and their bad works; and if the good outweighs the bad, then they will get into heaven. Friends, we can't truly find eternal life until we see that we fall far short of God's standards of goodness *and* until we recognize that Jesus is God Himself, sent to redeem us from our sins by dying as our substitute on the cross.

Many things can keep you from the one thing. Friend, what's keeping you from faith in Christ? What's keeping you from full surrender? What is that you're holding on to right now that is getting in the way of you following Christ? Is it money? A relationship? Is it your time? Could it be a bad habit that you secretly enjoy? Just as Jesus pinpointed the root problem for this man, He looks at you with love and says, "*This one thing you lack. Let it go, come and follow me.*"

I understand that hunters used to catch monkeys with a simple, yet extremely effective trap. They would take a hollowed out gourd and drill a hole in it, just big enough to put an orange inside. The monkey would come along and reach inside

to get the orange but once he had the orange in his hand he couldn't get it out of the hole. He had a choice to make. He could let go of the orange and pull his hand out and be free or hold on to the orange and be caught. Many today are holding on to that which has trapped them. Here's the principle: *What you own, owns you. And you cannot own Christ unless you let go of all else that owns you.*

This man turned down the gift of eternal life because his fist was so clenched around his money that he couldn't imagine devoting his life to anything else. When faced with the choice of loving God and others or protecting his possessions, he chose the selfish route.

Mark 10:22 vividly describes an individual who is more in love with himself than with God and others: ***“Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”*** The word translated ***“disheartened”*** gives the picture of storm clouds gathering. It's translated as *“overcast, gloomy, somber, confounded and bewildered.”* The man, who had run up to Jesus, now shuffles away while an internal storm ravages his soul with deep grief in his gut.

Actually, this man did not have great possessions; great possessions *had him!* What has you today? Ray Ortlund writes: *“Accepting Jesus is not just adding Jesus. It is also subtracting the idols.”*

This passage has always messed with me. I wonder how I would respond if someone like Bill Gates pulled up under the portico right now in his limo and got out and ran through the lobby, down the aisle and dropped to his knees and asked, *“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”* Would I take him to the 10 Commandments to expose his sin or would I first tell him about the digital giving option on the Edgewood app? Would I water down the message? If he shook his head and started to walk away would I chase him down and try to get him to say a simple prayer or would I let him go?

It's interesting that Jesus did not go chasing after him nor did he water down the cost of following Him. The man was caught in the web of trying to serve both God and money as he realized the truth of Matthew 6:24: ***“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”***

Money is a marvelous servant but a terrible master. It's good to have the things money can buy, provided you don't lose the things that money cannot buy. Of all

the people who came to the feet of Jesus, this man is the only one who went away worse than he came. We don't know what happens later but if he never followed Christ, he went to hell with heaven on his mind.

People do this all the time. They recognize that Jesus can satisfy all that they need, and yet they don't want to fully follow Him by giving up that which they are serving. I can't think of anything much sadder than that. Are you going to walk away sad or are you going to follow the Savior?

The man was looking for a "do" religion. Jesus offers a relationship that is based on "done." In John 6:28 a question is posed in the plural to Jesus: "***What must we do, to be doing the works of God?***" They're asking for a list of things to do but Jesus answers in the singular in verse 29: "***This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.***"

One Thing You Lack

Jesus looks at you right now and He loves you and He says, "***One thing you lack.***" [demonstrate]

If you have never been born again by receiving Jesus Christ into your life, this is the "one thing you lack." If you have never repented of your sins and put your faith in Christ alone, you still lack one thing.

I came across this quote by Marshall Segal this week: "*Some live for God, die to self, and live forever. Others live for self, enjoy the world for awhile, and die forever.*"

This man had many things but because he lacked the one thing he missed everything!

Jesus knows the name of every child and he knows the name of every celebrity...and He knows your name. He looks at you with love and says, "***One thing you lack.***"

This young man was right about eternal life being something that is inherited. It's a gift. It's not earned. You get it through relationship.

- Will you come helpless like a child or will you leave thinking you're already holy?
- Will you come in a spirit of dependence or will leave depending on your own goodness?

When the books are opened, there will be no mistake. No wrong names will be called. Only those names written in the book of life through the new birth will inherit eternal life. The good news is that heaven is available for children and for adults who become like children.

Response of Silence

Song Reprise

*Praise belongs to you
Let every kingdom bow*