



10-16 October 2021 • Faith 24/7

A wise heart

 **Mark 10.17-31**

When a rich man asks Jesus what will guarantee him access to eternal life, he is hoping that he will be reassured that his lifelong obedience to the law is enough. But Jesus knows the man's heart and how attached he is to his wealth. He challenges him to take the one step that will give him the assurance he seeks. Jesus points out that this is a challenge for everyone.

Now read **Mark 10.17-31** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

The man is so sure of his worthiness that he runs to Jesus. He has found it easy to please God in his comfortable life. But how will he fare if he has nothing but the offer of treasure in heaven? What is comfortable about your life? What challenge might Jesus give to you about what you need to let go of?

WORK IT OUT

How good are you at following instructions? Are you helped or baffled by a recipe, or by a manual for a piece of equipment? There are laws which protect us, such as all driving on the same side of the road, and 'social rules' which enable us to interact with people without causing offence. During the Covid-19 crisis, did you keep two metres from others because the government told you to or to keep everyone safe? When the rich man in the Gospel reading suggested that following rules made him a 'good person', Jesus suggested a different way of measuring his behaviour. How do you feel about his advice?

HAGGLE!

Play a game based on an auction. Gather the family or a group of friends. Give each person a pile of golden autumn leaves (to represent 'wealth'). Show everyday household objects and ask for 'bids' (use larger and smaller items for variety). Discuss together why some things are more valuable than others. The value of some things cannot be expressed in money terms – can you think of any? Don't forget to put all the items back afterwards.



It is easy to lose an hour or two on emails, social media, games or TV. Keep a note of how much time you spend on such things in a day. The next day, exchange at least half of that time for a time of reading, praying, being quiet. How do you think God might feel that you have shared some time with him, that your focus has shifted?



At the end of each day, think back over all you have done. Were there moments when you may have hurt God, others, or the planet? If not, then thank God for being with you and leading you in his path. If so, offer those things to God in prayer, and ask him to help you change your priorities and be aware of making choices that reflect your relationship with him.



Ask yourself: What do you make of this image – its title is 'With God all things are possible'?



Is it easier to give a little or a lot? Either on your own or with others, use your imagination. If you were given £1, how would you spend it? £10? £100,000? Does your way of thinking change as the number gets bigger? Would you start by spending it all on yourself first when it was a small or a large sum? What is the balance between generosity and greed? What informs your choices?



| Daily Readings for week commencing 11 th October 2021 | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Monday | 2 Chronicles 26: 1-21 | John 13: 1-11 |
| Tuesday | 2 Chronicles 28 | John 13: 12-20 |
| Wednesday | 2 Chronicles 29: 1-19 | John 13: 21-30 |
| Thursday | 2 Chronicles 29: 20-end | John 13: 31-end |
| Friday | 2 Chronicles 30 | John 14: 1-14 |
| Saturday | 2 Chronicles 32: 1-22 | John 14: 15-end |

Pray for those in need...Sally, Tristan, Mark, Katie-Louise, Pam, Sue, Bryn, Evelyn, Shane, Pat, Heather, Dorothy, Mandy, Joyce, Pete and family, Ian, Juliette and Nicki. ***Please remember those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time...***Lynda

Who is John's Jesus?

The bridge between earth and heaven.

As with Mark, John's Gospel also invites us to understand Jesus as the one who brings the kingdom of heaven among us. John's imagery, however, is much more precise about how this happens. At the end of the first chapter, Jesus meets Nathanael, 'an Israelite in whom there is no deceit' (1.47), and astounds him simply by knowing who he is.



Then Jesus sets this small moment of revelation alongside the promise of a much greater one: 'you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man' (1.51). The ending of this story is a crucial moment in John's narrative – this is what Jesus is about. Heaven is no longer cut off by a barrier between God and humanity; the door is now open. The life of heaven is accessible to earthbound men, women and children, if they are in Christ. Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus takes up the same theme: 'you must be born from above', says Jesus (3.7), reflecting a worldview where heaven was always understood as 'up there'. This is a profoundly radical claim. Throughout the Old Testament, we encounter images of the gap between God and the world, between Creator and creation. God is the potter; we are the clay (Jeremiah 18.5). The barrier between God and creation is as solid as a sapphire pavement (Exodus 24.10), and it is breached only in dreams (Genesis 28.12). But now, Jesus asserts, heaven is open and accessible to his followers. John chapter 6 is an extended reflection on this amazing claim.

What does it mean for us, if heaven is open? Can we share in the life of heaven? Jesus' exposition of the bread of life makes it clear that we can. When we eat the bread and drink the cup of the Eucharist, we are eating food that bridges earth and heaven.