

PREPARING AT HOME

October 8-14, 2018

Focus reading: Mark 10:17–31 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=404366527>)

Other lectionary readings: Job 23:1–9, 16–17; Psalm 22:1–15; Hebrews 4:12–16

Theme: Finding Our Way

If you have ever regretted asking someone a question because you were unprepared for the answer, you will be able to identify with the character in this week's story. A wealthy man asks Jesus an important question that many have had. How can he gain God's favor? How can he live in God's new reality? While we sometimes hear in that question a reference to heaven, Jews of Jesus' time were awaiting God's realm on earth. This man of means knows the Scriptures, but something is evidently lacking. The answer that Jesus gives is hard to hear: "sell what you own, and give the money to the poor" (verse 21). Really?! The man is familiar with biblical commands to care for the poor, but is such extreme action required? Evidently the rich man is not the only one who winces at Jesus' advice, because scholars and others have tried to find reasonable explanations for Jesus' metaphor about a camel going through the eye of a needle, but those interpretations may be distracting us from what we do not want to hear. Jesus says it is just as ludicrous to think that a wealthy person can enter the realm of God as it is to think that a camel can get through the eye of a needle! It is not that God rejects the wealthy, but rather that those who are concerned with acquiring wealth for themselves cannot be concerned with the poor, who are God's concern. Are we willing to invest everything we have and are in God's Kingdom? Jesus is asking something that seems impossible, but he extends love to the man. He tells the disciples that God makes things possible. It is the love of God that empowers us to do what we could not otherwise imagine.

TREASURES

Answer the following with your child: "What two things do you own that you would have a hard time giving away?" "How can you use those things in ways that would please God and bring God's love to others?" Invite children to demonstrate or draw their responses.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

Say aloud, "I wonder what happened next?" If you were writing "Part 2" to this story, what would you say? Does the man regret his decision? Does he change his mind? Encourage your child to consider the fact that we have many opportunities to make choices.

PRAYER

Loving God,
We want to follow Jesus and
do what pleases you,
but it sometimes seems impossible.
Help us to remember that you make things possible.
Help us to share with others
and show your love to all.
Amen.

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