

Upcoming Events...
Galatians Class: Every Thursday at 1:00 p.m.
Business Meeting: May 7
Ladies Bible Class: May 21
Barnabas Group Meeting: May 29

What the Bible says about True Riches

“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” 1 Timothy 6:17-19

May Birthdays

2 Peggy Woodruff 15 Kena Brown

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The Rich Man, the Eye of a Needle and Heaven

By Dan Jenkins

As far back as I can remember I’ve heard Christians say, *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven.”* In fact, in past years, this is what I said that Jesus said about this topic. I was wrong when I taught this. Let’s take a moment to carefully examine what our Lord said. Let’s take time to learn the importance of reading the Bible more carefully.

So, let me ask you, is the following statement true? “The Bible teaches that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven.” True or false? Suppose I were to say that this is not what the Bible says. There is a context in which these words were said. However, we far too often fail to read the verses before and after a single favorite verse. Matthew, Mark and Luke record the words of Jesus in this way. *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”* How then could I have said, “This is not what the Bible says”?

Take time to study the matter more deeply. Mark adds another aspect of the rich man which so many have overlooked. Just before Jesus spoke of the rich man and the needle, Jesus said, “How hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mark 10:24). The kind of rich man Jesus had in mind when he spoke of the eye of the needle was the rich man who trusts in his riches. It was not the possession of the riches which was the problem, it was the trust rich men foolishly place in their riches.

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher:
Mike McKnight

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Think about it for just a moment. How rich was David? How rich was young Solomon? How rich was Job? Have you not known Christians who were rich, yet their riches did not destroy their spirituality? We have failed to see precisely what Jesus was saying. The dangers of riches is that because of them men begin to trust in their riches more than in God.

There's one other thing we need to see about rich men and the eye of a needle. The passage is not discussing entering heaven but entering the kingdom of heaven. What is that kingdom? The Bible clearly shows that the kingdom of heaven is the church! Jesus was not saying that rich men have problems entering into heaven, but they have problems entering into the church. Those who trust in riches rarely become Christians, but if they truly die to self in their repentance, they become tremendous assets to the cause of Christ. When they die to self, their riches no longer control them. They control their riches!

Let me encourage all of us to read the Bible more carefully. Read it more slowly. We may be overlooking great truths!

Son, Remember

By Dan Jenkins

“And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame’” (Lk. 16:23-24).

It is likely that when you read these words you can recall the details of the entire story. However, these words were far more than a captivating story when they were spoken and heard by that rich man. This is not a parable of an imaginary man who never lived. Jesus said, *“There was a certain rich man.”*

Death brought changes to the rich man. He now knew that gold has no value in hell. He knew that those who make gold the focus of their lives will someday recognize this truth, but it will be too late. The rich man's dwelling, his clothing, all the excesses of living and his riches brought to him had no advantage.

Death brought changes to the beggar Lazarus. He no longer was hungry. He no longer was begging for crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. He no longer had sores, nor dogs to lick them. Instantaneously, it all changed. He was changed from being an unwanted member of earthly society and had become the honored guest of heavenly beings who escorted him to the other side. Death changed almost everything around these two men and us.

One thing which did not change was the remembrance of one's earthly life before death. In two brief words Abraham brought profound truth to the forefront. The two words were, *“Son, remember.”* The rich man remembered and recognized Lazarus. He recalled the crumbs which fell from his table and were evidently never given to Lazarus. He remembered his five brothers and their ungodliness and begged that something might be done to bring about their salvation.

Now, think of how all this impacts our life. How will we feel when we remember that we never did anything to help the least in the kingdom? How will we feel about our selfishly spending almost all we were prospered on our own pleasures when the church struggled to make its proposed budget? How will we feel when we recall the sermons we heard pleading with us to get involved in His work and to grow spiritually? Wasted money, wasted time and wasted opportunities will be part of the agony in the torment of fire.

It doesn't have to be that way. Think of what great memories the rich man could have had if he had changed his behavior. On the other side we will remember. The real question is whether the memories will bring regret or joy!