

Threading the Needle

Scripture Reading — Matthew 19:16-26

Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven." — Matthew 19:21

A rich young man met Jesus. When Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor, the man could not do it. He just went away sad. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Many people would like to be able to serve both God and money, even though Jesus makes clear that our allegiance must be to God alone (see Matthew 6:24). So people have come up with ways to try to soften this hard calling in Matthew 19. For example, some have said that "the eye of the needle" refers to a small gate in Jerusalem that camels couldn't pass through.

But Jesus meant to describe something impossible. That's why he adds later, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." It is impossible for us to seek and live for God with a pure heart if we are always desiring other things, like money.

When Jesus says, "With God all things are possible," he means that his grace will welcome even people like the rich young man to follow him. His grace will welcome *us* to follow him, to be generous with whatever we have, and to give our allegiance to God alone.

Prayer

Lord, we confess that we love money and we usually seek after earthly possessions and comforts more than we seek after you. Show us your grace and help us to turn to you. Amen.

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