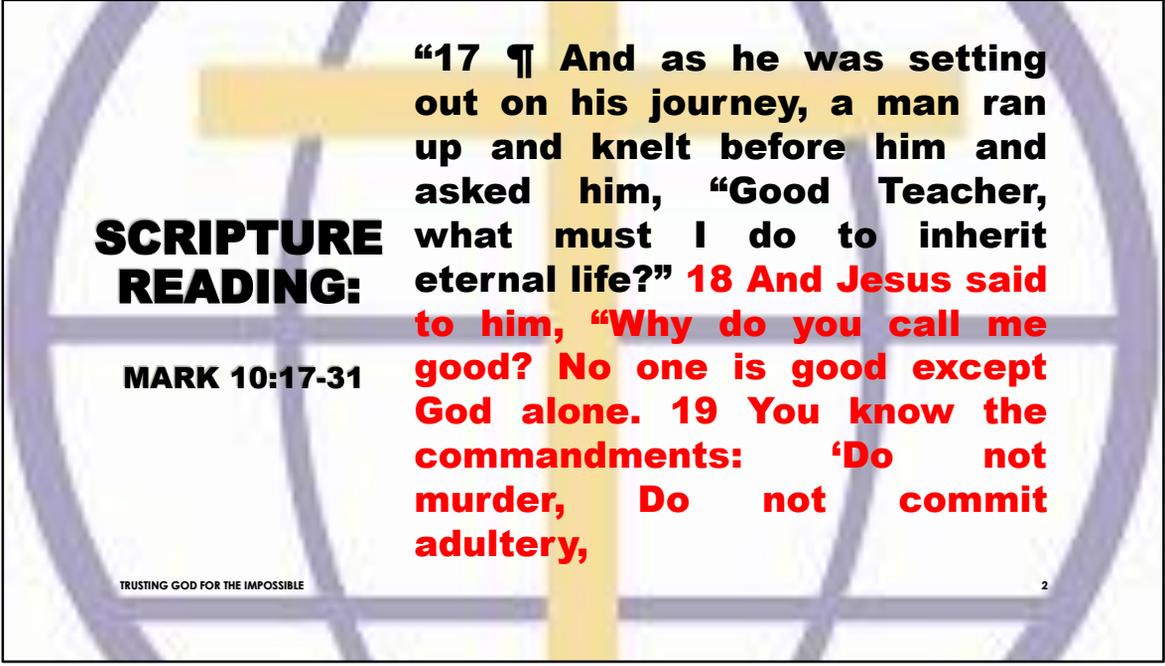




TRUSTING GOD FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

**Grace Communion International
Minister: Eric Vautour
Date: October 14, 2018**

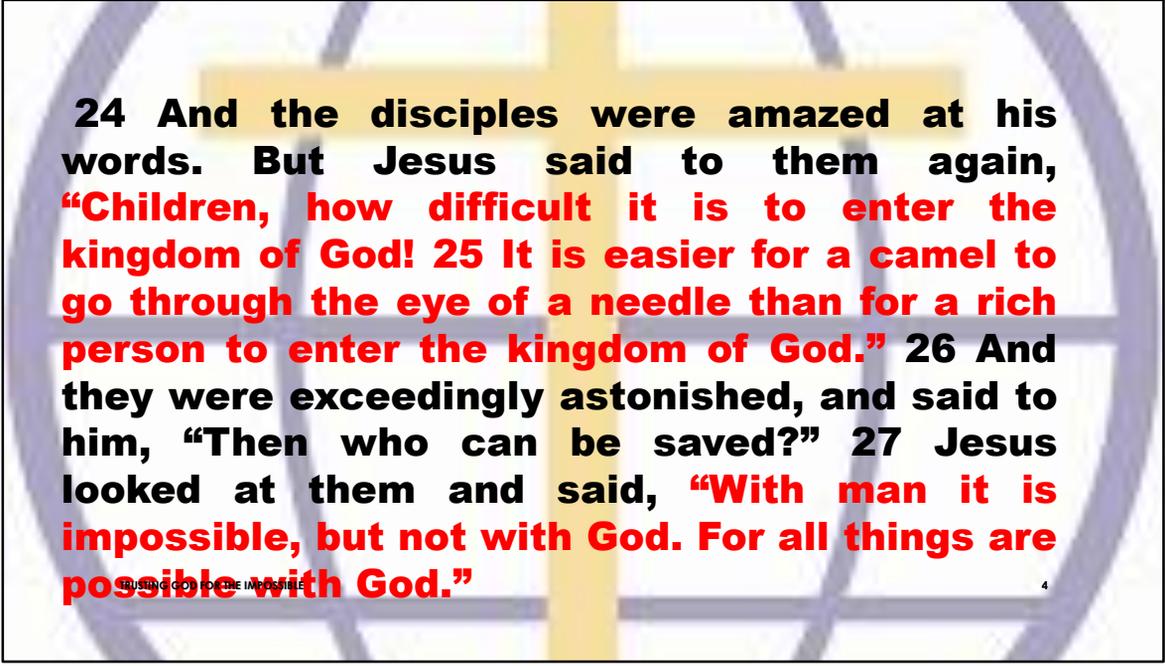


**SCRIPTURE
READING:**

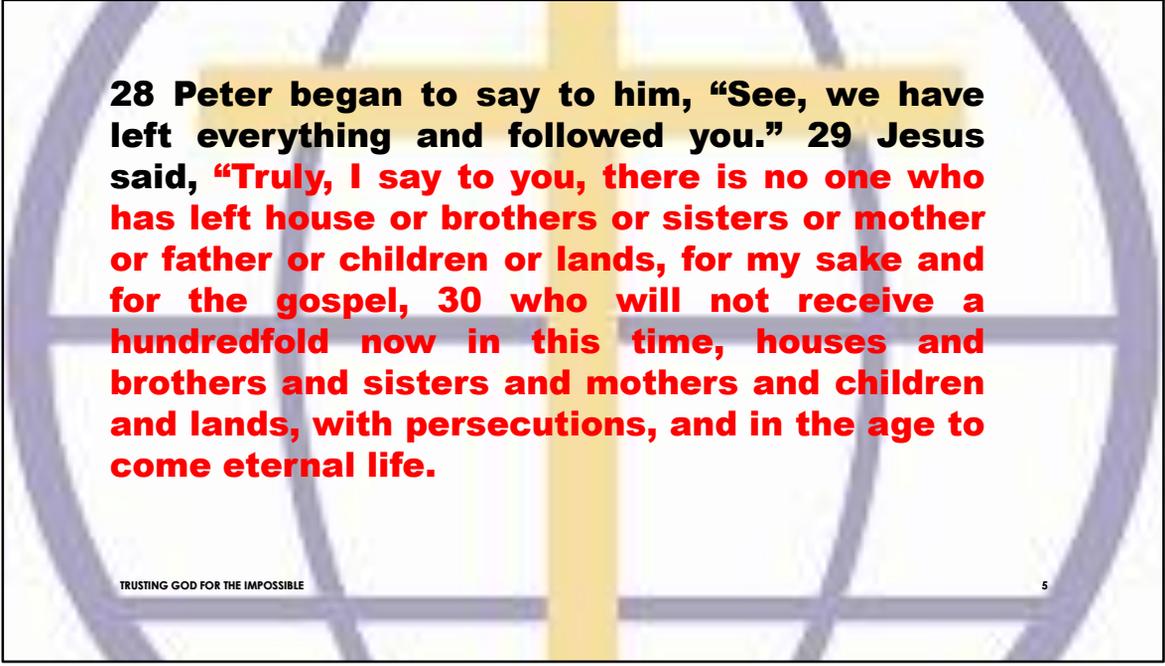
MARK 10:17-31

“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?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery,

• **DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, DO NOT DEFRAUD, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.” 20 AND HE SAID TO HIM, “TEACHER, ALL THESE I HAVE KEPT FROM MY YOUTH.” 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.” 22 DISHEARTENED BY THE SAYING, HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL, FOR HE HAD GREAT POSSESSIONS. 23 AND JESUS LOOKED AROUND AND SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, “HOW DIFFICULT IT WILL BE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE WEALTH TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD!”**



24 And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” 26 And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “Then who can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”



28 Peter began to say to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you.” 29 Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

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Prayer is a very important part of our Christian life. As we look at this passage of Scripture today, we need to be cognizant of God's role in our prayer life.

While Jesus was on the earth and became incarnate in our human flesh, he always prayed to God the Father. In fact, he came to the earth to do the Father's will as the perfect man in our place to redeem us from the terrible consequences of sin which are not only physical death but also eternal death.



31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”” (Mr 10:17-31 ESV)



We can imagine the scene of the rich young man approaching Jesus. Obviously, this was a man committed to doing the will of God. He desired eternal life. To ask such a question, he had obviously listened to Jesus before.

Jesus responded to the rich young man by telling him that no one was good except God himself.

Jesus went on to enumerate some of the commandments. When he heard Jesus's answer, he obviously felt very reassured because he said, **“Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.”**

Jesus knew that this young man was rich. He basically told him that all his doing would not qualify him for the kingdom of God. Jesus saw that he had one big problem which is common to man. He trusted in his riches and was not willing to give them up to follow Jesus. Earthly possessions were more important to him than eternal life in God's kingdom.

It is so very easy to fall into this trap of thinking our security lies in our material possessions.

Jesus told him that he lacked the one thing. He had to go sell all that he had and give it to the poor. The rich young man was not willing to do this to follow Jesus.

In other words, Jesus was telling him that his heart had to be turned to him rather than put his trust in earthly things.

What Jesus asked this man is very paradoxical.

We have to ask ourselves, what is easier—to live in grace or to live under the law?

The law is very definite. It told the Israelites what to do behaviourally. The law told them exactly how much to give whether it be to God or neighbor. They felt secure in this.

Living in grace, entering the kingdom of God, has much higher standards. We are asked to give generously from the heart. as the apostle Paul told the Corinthians. To give sacrificially is much more difficult than being told exactly how much to give.

The problem of the rich young man affects everyone. We may not see ourselves as rich but humanly speaking, it is easy to place our trust in material things. This is common to man.

We pray for the people who lost everything, even their clothing, because of the storm of hurricane Michael which hit the panhandle of Florida with winds of up to her 250 km/hr. Some are coming back home and to their businesses which are now complete destroyed. He had absolutely nothing left.

Being in that situation, would our relationship with God stand?



This young girl was staying with her grandparents. Her parents nor her grandparents could ever have foreseen what happened to her. Hurricane Michael's powerful wind lifted a portable structure high into the air and slammed it back on their house. One of the legs of this carport hit Amber in the head and killed her.

How would that affected our relationship with God if such a thing happened to us? Would we see God as loving or would we see him otherwise?

This young rich man had many possessions. He felt reassured at first that he was doing all the right things to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him basically that his doings were not sufficient, as good as they were. From a human of view, this young rich man was living a very good life. He was exemplary.

Jesus was basically telling this young man that none of his behaviours would qualify him for the kingdom of God.

What he needed to do was to commit his whole life to Jesus and trust him with everything. This young man became disheartened. The sacrifice Jesus asked was too much for him. He walked away.

Jesus loved this young man

At that point, Jesus' disciples were puzzled. Jesus told his disciples that it would be very difficult for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

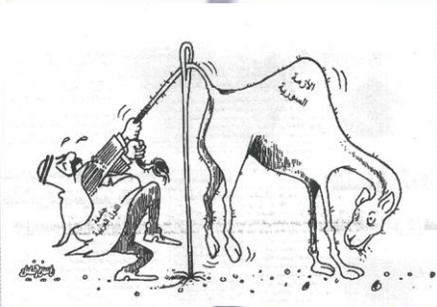
The disciples had heard Jesus' answer to this young man that he needed to observe all the commandments. In the Old Testament, it was very clear how much to give to the poor.

We just need to think about the first, second and third tithe. The first tithe was for God, the second tithe was to go to the feast of Tabernacles every year and the third tithe was to be given to the poor every third year. No question how much to give to please God.

Jesus told him this young man to go way beyond that. Give everything up to follow me, Jesus said.

Jesus told them about the camel and the needle.

THE CAMEL AND THE NEEDLE



From: Arab League and Syrian Crisis |
SyriO
<https://goo.gl/images/dkDmpZ>

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It is very easy to pacify and appease our conscience and apply the sayings of Jesus to other people rather than to us. Rather than taking these verses personally, we have an imaginary definition of what it is to be rich. We usually think of someone who is richer than we are.

It is easy for us to think that we do not trust in riches, in our material belongings.

We have probably all heard various explanations of what is the eye of the needle. Many times the explanations are to make the sayings of Jesus more palatable, more acceptable.

A camel can get through the needle's eye if it throws off its burden and gets down on its knees. The lesson becomes practical: Rich persons need not worry if they just are humble. This tradition has no historical basis and looks like the invention of a wealthy church searching for loopholes. Garland, David E.. Mark (The NIV Application Commentary Book 2) (p. 401). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

If we were to bring this to a modern saying, we might say something like it is easier for a Rolls Royce or a new Jaguar to fit into the slot of a banking machine than to enter the

kingdom of God. It is impossible to enter the Kingdom of God on our own strength.

As Mark Twain said: "It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." We do better if we confess that we are too weak to follow Jesus on his terms than if we try to find loopholes that allow us to continue in our complacency. Garland, David E.. Mark (The NIV Application Commentary Book 2) (p. 402). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Jesus was talking to this young man's particular situation. Jesus is not asking that we sell all our possessions. For example, Paul writes the following, **"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."** (1 Ti 5:8 ESV).

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was a very rich man. Abraham followed God's direction not knowing where he was going. **("Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Ge 12:1 ESV)**

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, and he was rich, as we read in Luke 19. This man was short. To be able to see and hear Jesus, he climbed up a sycamore tree. Zacchaeus voluntarily gave half of all his possessions to the poor. Jesus did not tell him to sell all he had.

Jesus gave another parable in Luke 12 about a very rich man who trusted in his wealth. **"16 And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, 17 and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" 18 And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." 20 But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" 21 So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.' 22 ¶ And he said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing.' (Lu 12:16–23 ESV)**

This man trusted in his wealth rather than in God. Earthly possessions and self-righteous acts will not save anyone.

The disciples were amazed at the words of Jesus and wondered who can enter the kingdom of God.

It is interesting that Jesus called his disciples children in Mark 10:24.

Just as a camel cannot go through the eye of a needle neither can we enter the kingdom of God without trusting in Jesus.

The Story of a Son

author unknown (from From http://www.jaredstory.com/story_of_a_son.html)

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.

When the Viet Nam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier.

The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands.

He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art. The young man held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son.

The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?"

There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted, "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one."

But the auctioneer persisted, "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting. We came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids! "But still the auctioneer continued, "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of

the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford.

"We have \$10, who will bid \$20?" "Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters." "\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel. "Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted, "Now let's get on with the collection!" The auctioneer laid down his gavel, "I'm sorry, the auction is over."

"What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his Son 2,000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The Son, the Son, who'll take the Son?" Because you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.

When we trust in God's eternal Son with the help of the Holy Spirit, we have access to God through the Son and all that he has reserved for us now and in the fullness of the kingdom.

The big question is one of loyalty to the Son, to Jesus.

Where is our heart? Where do we place our trust? In the material or in Jesus.

The lesson we must learn is that we cannot qualify for the kingdom of God on our own.

Materialism is a god in our culture. It would be very easy to identify with the rich man and say to ourselves, and maybe not mention it out loud, "Why should I give away what I have worked so hard to get?" We all agree that religion involves sacrifice but the human tendency is to say, "But not that much".

In our society, as in every other society, money buys recognition, admiration, status, respect, etc. Wealth is very alluring indeed.

There are things that wealth and material possessions cannot buy. It certainly cannot buy our way into the kingdom of God. It does not provide us with the purpose of life

beyond the life. Material wealth is never enough. Those who have it usually want more. Wealth in itself does not satisfy the longing of the heart.

At the end of our physical life, we cannot bring wealth and belonging with us. As someone said, "**There are never any U-Hauls behind the hearse**".

What we see in this young man is that he was not ready to place radical trust in Jesus Christ. He wanted to obey God but there he had a line in the sand. Jesus recognized this and in love, he confronted him.

WILLINGNESS TO FORGO EVERYTHING FOR JESUS

- **“29 JESUS SAID, “TRULY, I SAY TO YOU, THERE IS NO ONE WHO HAS LEFT HOUSE OR BROTHERS OR SISTERS OR MOTHER OR FATHER OR CHILDREN OR LANDS, FOR MY SAKE AND FOR THE GOSPEL, 30 WHO WILL NOT RECEIVE A HUNDREDFOLD NOW IN THIS TIME, HOUSES AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND MOTHERS AND CHILDREN AND LANDS, WITH PERSECUTIONS, AND IN THE AGE TO COME ETERNAL LIFE. 31 BUT MANY WHO ARE FIRST WILL BE LAST, AND THE LAST FIRST.”” (MR 10:29-31 ESV)**

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It is easy for all of us to make idols of our families, of those we love. It is easy to idolize our physical possessions, our home, etc. Anything can become an idol. Anything can take precedence over our relationship with Jesus.

The apostles were willing to leave everything to follow Jesus. Except for the apostle John, they all died because of Jesus and the good news he brought to this earth.

It is very easy for us to compromise fearing that we will lose the love of our parents, brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren if we submit in obedience to Jesus.

If you have not been confronted with this choice yet, You may very well be. It is so easy to please our families rather than following Jesus when the crunch comes. It is so very easy to go along with society's values which many in our families adopt and participate in their sinful way of life using all kinds of rationale.

Jesus spent times with sinners but he never participated in their sins.

We do not belong to ourselves anymore. We have been bought with a price. God the father was willing to give up his Son for us. Jesus gave up his life for us. He gave himself

for us.

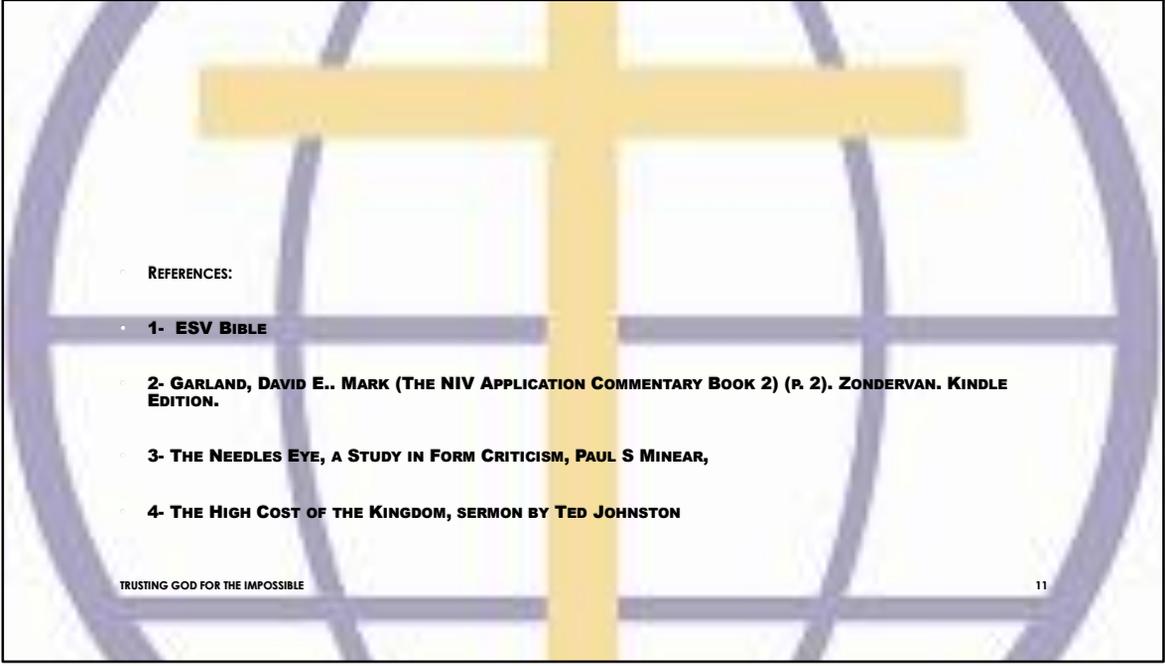
We are to give our imperfect self to Jesus to receive eternal life with the hope of its full manifestation at his return.

Jesus never met this to be the guilt trip. All things are possible with God. What we are to take away from this passage of Scripture is our need to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, to grow in humility because God is the one who brings us to the fullness of his kingdom and will give us eternal life, not we.

In Jesus, the kingdom has come near to the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth. With the help of the Holy Spirit we trust God for the impossible!

This is the cost of discipleship – trusting God for the impossible!

Let us pray.



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