

The Gospel of the Kingdom: The Joy of Following Jesus
Matthew 19:1-30

Grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life.... Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Three Invitations to Joy

- The Joy of Lasting Marriage (vv. 1-12):
 - Lifelong marriage is God's intention, whereas divorce is God's concession.

When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce... (Deuteronomy 24:1)
 - Jesus understood marriage as complementary ("male and female"), permanent ("hold fast"), exclusive ("his wife"), and utterly sacred ("what God has joined together").

"One flesh" is the biblical definition of marriage in two brief but freighted words. This expression names marriage as one mortal life fully shared. The word one bespeaks a life fully shared, and the word flesh suggests the transient mortality of this life. So in the one-flesh union of marriage, all the boundaries between a man and woman fall away, and the married couple comes together completely, as long as they both shall live. In real terms, two selfish me's start learning to thinking like one unified us, building a new life together with one total everything: one story, one purpose, one reputation, one bed, one suffering, one budget, one family, and so forth. (Ray Ortlund, Jr.)
 - Application:
 - Recognize sin's power and Christ's greater power in marriage.
 - See the seriousness of marriage in God's sight.
 - Be a community that honors marriage and loves the broken.

It is not light thing to tear asunder what God joined together. It is no small mistake to pursue an adulterous second marriage. But God's grace is not light and it is not small. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. There is mercy yet for you. A broken heart and a contrite spirit the Lord will never deny. Run to God. Plead with God. Know his adopting love. Experience again his justifying free grace. There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins. And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. (Kevin DeYoung)

- The Joy of Loving Children (vv. 13-15):
 - The disciples are rebuking the parents for bothering Jesus and Jesus rebukes the disciples for being blind to children.

Let us learn from these verses, that the Lord Jesus cares tenderly for the souls of little children. It is probable that Satan specially hates them. It is certain that Jesus specially loves them. (J.C. Ryle)

- Application:
 - Learn from children the nature of the kingdom.
 - Learn from Jesus the heirs of the kingdom.

Let us begin from their very earliest years to deal with them as having souls to be lost, or saved, and strive to bring them to Christ. Let us make them acquainted with the Bible, as soon as they can understand anything. Let us pray with them, and pray for them, and teach them to pray for themselves. We may rest assured that Jesus looks with pleasure on such endeavors, and is ready to bless them. We may rest assured that such endeavors are not in vain. The seed sown in infancy is often found after many days. Happy is that church whose infant members are cared for as much as the oldest communicants! (J.C. Ryle)

- The Joy of Leaving Everything (vv. 16-30):
 - Eternal life is not found in what we might do but in what Jesus has done.
 - Application:
 - Beware the allure and emptiness of great wealth.
 - Lay hold of the promise of eternal life.