

Summary

This sermon examines the story of the rich young ruler from Mark 10:17-31, focusing on Jesus' encounter with a wealthy, influential young man who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. The pastor explores the concept of 'toxic positivity' - saying nice things instead of true things - and contrasts this with Jesus' approach of speaking truth in love. The rich young ruler had everything except the one thing he lacked: surrender. Jesus asked him to sell everything and follow Him, not because wealth is evil, but because this man's wealth had become an idol that prevented him from fully trusting God. The sermon emphasizes that salvation cannot be earned through good works or wealth, but comes only through God's grace. It concludes with practical applications about stewardship, generosity, and recognizing that everything belongs to God.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be receptive to Your truth, even when it challenges us or makes us uncomfortable. We pray that You would speak to each person here according to their specific needs and circumstances. Give us the courage to examine our own hearts honestly and the wisdom to apply Your Word to our lives. Holy Spirit, guide our discussion and help us to encourage one another as we grow in our faith. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one possession or item that you own that you would have the hardest time giving up, and why is it so meaningful to you?

Key Verses

1. Mark 10:17-22
2. Mark 10:23-27
3. Psalm 24:1
4. Galatians 3:24
5. 2 Corinthians 8:9

Questions

1. The pastor mentioned 'toxic positivity' - saying nice things instead of true things. How can we balance being encouraging while also speaking truth in love to those around us?
2. Jesus asked the rich young ruler about the commandments and included 'do not defraud' which isn't in the Ten Commandments. Why do you think Jesus specifically mentioned this command to this particular man?

3. The text says 'Jesus looked at him and loved him' before giving him the difficult instruction. How does knowing that Jesus speaks hard truths out of love change how we receive correction or challenging words?
4. The rich young ruler couldn't see his need for grace because of his self-righteousness. What are some ways we can guard against spiritual blindness in our own lives?
5. Jesus said it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God's kingdom. What do you think makes wealth particularly dangerous to our spiritual lives?
6. The pastor asked, 'Is there one thing in your life that's holding you back from fully following Jesus?' How would you answer that question, and what would it look like to surrender that area to God?
7. The sermon emphasized that we are stewards, not owners, of what God has given us. How does this perspective change the way we think about our possessions, talents, and resources?
8. Peter pointed out that the disciples had 'left everything' to follow Jesus. What are some things you've had to leave behind or sacrifice in your journey of following Christ, and how has God been faithful in those areas?

Life Application

This week, take an honest inventory of your heart and identify one area where you might be holding too tightly to something (possessions, plans, relationships, reputation, etc.). Spend time in prayer asking God to help you surrender this area to Him. Consider taking one practical step toward generosity - whether through tithing, giving to someone in need, or volunteering your time - as a way of practicing open-handed living and trusting God as your provider.

Key Takeaways

1. Jesus speaks truth in love, not toxic positivity - He says what our hearts need to hear, not necessarily what we want to hear
2. Salvation cannot be earned through good works, wealth, or moral behavior - it comes only through God's grace
3. The 'one thing' we lack is often surrender and trust in God rather than in our possessions, achievements, or status
4. Everything belongs to God and we are stewards, not owners, of what He has entrusted to us
5. Faithful, consistent, joyful giving is God's antidote to greed and helps shape our hearts toward generosity

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for this time of discussion and reflection on Your Word. We're grateful that You look at each of us with love, just as You looked at the rich young ruler with love. Help us to trust You with the 'one thing' that we struggle to surrender. Give us the courage to live with open hands and open hearts, recognizing that everything we have comes from You. Transform our hearts to be generous and grateful stewards of all You've entrusted to us. May we find our identity, security, and worth in You alone, not in the things of this world. Continue to work in our lives throughout this week, and help us to encourage one another in our journey of following You. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.