

Readings: Matthew 19:13-30

Ecclesiastes 5:8-20

Jesus brings hope.

What a weird thing to say. Firstly it sounds a bit airy fairy, a bit of a spiritual cliché on old 70's church poster.

Doesn't it seem to you to make much more sense to say that it is money, wealth that brings hope.

Doesn't it sound more logical and just makes sense of the world?

It's quaint to say almighty Jesus brings hope but most people know or at least in their actions show, it is The almighty (dollar) that really brings hope.

Money brings hope.

Money and wealth bring so many answers to our problems.

Better finances means better outcomes. Right?

There is a reason the poor countries like Tanzania are the ones struggling.

With more money they could have better health care and we probably wouldn't have an ebola crisis.

With more money they would have been able to respond quickly and appropriately to the outbreak.

With more money and resources we wouldn't have millions of people dying of starvation.

We are wealthy.

We have clean water, we have safe comfortable transport, we have decent housing, are able to provide a good education for our children, so that they can speak another language, and swim safely and get into Uni and have a good career.

Having more money means more hope – being confident that things will work out better for us if we have more money.

Money and wealth seems like great things to put our hope in.

But today we are confronted by Jesus' counter intuitive message, we are confronted by Jesus counter cultural message.

Jesus declares that being well off is dangerous!!!!

Not only is it dangerous – instead of wealth being a safe haven- Jesus says if you are wealthy- there is practically **no chance** of you **ever** getting into heaven.

Matthew recorded the occasion when Jesus met a man looking for true hope.

1. My hope is found in....

It seems like this guy Jesus met has put his hope in 2 things. Lets have a look.

My hope is found in What I do v16-21

¹⁶ Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what **good** thing must I do to get eternal life?”

Why did he ask Jesus that? Didn't he know the answer? Did he just want Jesus' confirmation that he is on the right track...or did he have an inkling that maybe he wasn't?

¹⁷ “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “**There is only One who is good.** If you want to **enter life, keep the commandments.**”

Jesus is saying if you want to get to heaven by doing good things- then all you have to do is keep the commandments.

¹⁸ “Which ones?” he inquired.

Sounds good Jesus- but obviously you don't expect me to obey all of them all of the time?!

His response gives us an inkling that he is pretty clear that no one can live 100% perfectly for God, no one can do everything good.

Nobody's perfect right? He just wants to know where the bar is...“I've been living a pretty good life, if I'm being honest....relatively speaking, compared to most people”.

Which ones?

Jesus replied, ““You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, ¹⁹ honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.””

²⁰ “All these I have kept,” the young man said....but sensing there was something still missing he asks “What do I still lack?”

This guy is pretty sure he is on the right track.

His hope is built on the good stuff he has done (and the bad stuff he has kept away from). He probably looks a like half the people in your street.

His hope is built on what he has done.

He is relatively confident that will be enough for God.

I've met lots of people like this. I have friends and family who think like this guy who met Jesus.

Do you have friends like that?

Were you once like that?

Do you still think like that? I'm pretty good. My hope before God is my goodness (and my lack of badness).

But Jesus said to him (you can see in v17) **There is only One who is good.**

²¹ Jesus answered, “If you **want to be perfect**, go, sell your possessions and **give to the poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” (not about being relatively good- its about being perfectly good!)

Suddenly this man realises Jesus has the bar **so much higher** than he ever realised. If you want to be PERFECT- I think he was shooting for pretty good. He felt like he was most of the way there!

Jesus shows him, Jesus shows **us** to enter eternal life, t to eneter perect heaven to be with the one and only perfect God, to enter perfection you must be perfect.

Impossible!

Perfection...not just pretty good. Not even great.

That is a massive hurdle. In fact it’s an impossible hurdle.

My hope is found in what I have- v22-25

It’s clear that Jesus

²¹ Jesus answered, “If you **want to be perfect**, go, sell your possessions and **give to the poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

²² When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

What hope would this guy have if he gave away all his money? If he gave it away he would have no security, no means, no nest egg for his retirement years, no back up if anything went wrong with his health or his home, no hope at all.

That doesn’t sound very wise at all. In fact it sounds a little bit lunatic.

But Jesus nailed the huge gaping hole in this man’s broken relationship with God. He was an idolator.

IDOLATORY – his hope & trust in something else first rather than trusting in the one true God.

Some people’s idols are false gods are the you seen in the Thai restaurant SLIDE or Buddah in a Chinese store.

I drive on the freeway a lot & see the Winnebago with the car trailer on the back.

The most-toys-wins camping holiday. This is the ultimate example of that...

SLIDE

But some people’s god is Money and what money buys.

Jesus says -If you want to enter heaven there are 2 ways about it- the first one is by following the commandments and live a perfect life.

Notice it is by **following** the commandments- not **trying** to follow the commandments. And Jesus tells this man that the big hurdle to him living a perfect life (as it it was possible) is his money.

Ans as this man walked away from Jesus back to his idol, back to his portfolio.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The bit that bites here is that **it is Hard** for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God. Not hard like trying to solve the Rubix cube SLIDE which is hard...

Getting into heaven for someone who is rich, like you and me is **hard**.

And HARD, hard like trying to fit a smelly hairy spitting camel through one of these.

1000kg animal like this through one of these. GET NEEDLE OUT

And that’s hard- that’s **hard** like raising someone who is already dead back to life is hard.

HARD- but not impossible for God.

²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”

They think like most people - Surely the rich and well off are blessed by God.

Surely we are well-off are there because God is blessing their business?

Surely it is God’s favour upon them?

Aren’t all good things from God? Doesn’t God give good things to those who love him?

But with great wealth comes great danger. And the Bible warns us over and over

1 Tim 6:17-¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

Because when it comes down to it- Money is no REAL hope. Wealth is no eternal hope. It can so easily become our idol. The thing we put our trust in. Jesus brings hope.

2. All other ground is sinking sand

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

²⁷ Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

²⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, **you who have followed me** will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields **for my sake** will receive a hundred times as much and **will inherit eternal life.** ³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

The disciples have given up their idols, the things that **used** to be of ultimate importance to worship and instead followed Jesus.

They have seen the **foolishness** of trying to find their hope on to the things of this world.

Instead they put their whole lot in with Jesus. Jesus brings hope.

Jesus reassures the disciples that those who hope and trust in Him will

1. **Followed me** (not done the commandments, not the good, not the perfect).
2. Those who instead of putting their hope in the treasures of this world **put their hope in Jesus**, for Jesus sake Those who put their hope in **Jesus** instead their family or their fields or their finances. Those who gave up their first priority for the sake of Jesus.
3. Those who give up these things to follow Jesus’ will **inherit eternal life**. And 100x more as you are welcomed into a family of believers who love care and provide for each other.

3. Short & self-sacrificing role models

God has a reverse economy

We’re Interested in the opinions of Richard Branson or Bill Gates or James Packer – those who seem to winning in the game of life.

But Jesus says the complete reverse to what we expect.

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³ Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴ Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Kids What do they contribute? They make lots of noise, run around hurting themselves and eat all the biscuits from m/tea before the adults get some.

Why is it little kids and those like them who will inherit the kingdom of heaven?

1. Children just trust Jesus. They don't have anything to bring, no great good works to brag about, no wealth to rely upon. Not about what they bring or what they have done (contra next guy)
2. The People brought kids to Jesus – that's great ! Keep bringing your kids to Jesus. He is what we should want for our kids, not a stellar career and great retirement. And that's what we want for the kids sponsored with Compassion- to come to Jesus, to trust in Jesus- because we want them to belong to the kingdom of heaven.
3. And what about you? Come to Jesus in trust in him alone. I

So what do we need-

Trust in Jesus. Jesus brings Hope. The cross of Christ will set you free from sin and death, the death and resurrection of Jesus will release you from the burden of relying on what you do and what you have to be right with God. When you trust in the cross of Jesus and give your life to Him you will immediately be right with God for ever. And that will include wanting to get rid of whatever it is that is stopping you putting God first.

The Bible is clear that wealth and the trust in money is most likely the greatest danger for many of us, because we are rich. What do you need to make sure your money doesn't become your god? Jesus had clear instruction for the rich guy he met- give it away to the poor and trust in me instead.

If you follow Jesus, if like the disciple you turn your back on the gods of this world, you will inherit eternal life. If you come to him like a child with nothing to bring except to trust in him.

Only Jesus brings hope.

Pray.

Church Brings Hope Video - <https://vimeo.com/95914796>

