

## THE TRUE WAY TO HEAVEN

Lessons: *Mark 10*

The Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, is about the kingdom of heaven. It is about false ideas we sometimes have about what it means to be good. It is also about the Lord gently teaching His disciples about the true way to heaven.

From the reading in the Word, could you tell what some of our false ideas might be? Could you understand what the Lord was saying about heaven?

One thing the Lord was saying is that there are times when our hearts are not as ready as they could be to receive Him. There were people who wanted to bring young children to the Lord, so that He could touch them.

But the Lord's disciples tried to stop them, maybe thinking that the Lord's teachings were only for adults. Immediately the Lord helped the disciples to see a new truth about heaven:

**“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God.”**

He said that everyone should have a little child's innocent way of receiving the kingdom of God. “Innocence” means a willingness to be led by the Lord, so the innocence of children is very precious to the Lord. And then, as the disciples watched, the Lord lifted the children up in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them. The Lord's blessing is His wish, with real power in it, that good things should come to those He blesses. Does a picture come into your mind when you hear this story?

The next part of the story is another lesson about heaven. A man came running to the Lord, asking what he should do to receive everlasting life. The Lord's answer was to obey the Ten Commandments. The man replied that he had tried to keep these Commandments ever since he was young. And the Lord's first response to that was to look at the man and love him:

**“Then, Jesus, looking at him, loved him.”**

The Lord knew that even though the man was trying to be good, as is often true with us too, there is one big thing that gets in the way of our being good. For this man, it was that he was too fond of riches. So the

Lord helped the man to see his problem. He showed the man that riches and possessions are not the most important things of life. The man then went away, feeling the pain of having to give up his fondness for so many possessions. But the man went away with the Lord's love too. He knew that a hard struggle was ahead for him—to have to give up his precious possessions—but he also knew that with the Lord's help, he could do it.

At first, when the Lord spoke of the difficulties of a rich man trying to go to heaven, the disciples were astonished. But then the Lord spoke very clearly. He said:

**“Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!”**

**To trust in riches is to set your heart only on them, and to love yourself in them rather than to love the uses which may, through them, come to others (*Divine Providence* 217).**

It was, in a way, a day of hard lessons for the disciples. They had been rebuked for stopping children from coming to the Lord. And now when they heard the Lord talking of how hard it was for one who loves riches to go to heaven, they felt discouraged. They wondered whether anyone could get to heaven. “Who can be saved?” they asked.

Then Jesus looked at them. His look was one of understanding. He knew that His disciples were trying to grasp at truths not always easy to see. But He loved them, and looking at them with that understanding of His love and that love of His, He said something uplifting and true:

**“With God all things are possible.”**

He said that by ourselves, we are not strong enough or powerful enough to go to heaven. None of us can get to heaven on our own. But His words can uplift us, like the rich man and the disciples. They can make us feel powerful and strong and full of hope. For the Lord says:

**“Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”**