

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 19:

vs. 1-12:

After teaching in Galilee, Jesus left for Perea, on the east side of the Jordan river, down by the region of Southern Samaria and Northern Judea. There he healed large numbers of people.

Some Pharisees came and asked Him a controversial question, hoping to get Him to take a stand that would cause people to want to cease following Him. They ask about divorce and if it was legal. The Jewish religious leaders differed on which grounds were allowable for divorce. Some said, "strictly for unfaithfulness" others were as lenient as "for spoiling her husbands supper". The Jewish leaders were not prohibiting or discouraging divorce at all.

Jesus reminded the people that God deemed for a couple to be one, and that this union was never to be severed. The Pharisees asked why Moses would have allowed it then. Jesus replied that it was because they were so sinful, but not because that it was what God wanted! Jesus explains that if a divorced person remarries, they are committing adultery for they are breaking their special union; the only exception would be if the divorce had taken place because of adultery, where the union had already been broken.

Rather than taking such chances, the disciples suggested that it might be better never to get married in the first place, then to have to later consider divorce. Jesus suggests that this is possible for some, but is not practical for all.

vs. 13-15:

The little children were brought to Jesus who received them and prayed for them. The disciples felt the children were not significant enough, to bother Jesus about and tried to discourage people from bringing the children. Jesus rebuked them, reminding them that it is those who are like children, to whom the Kingdom belongs.

vs. 16-30:

A man now approaches Jesus and asks how to get eternal life. Jesus begins by asking why He is considered good, was the man really implying that Jesus was as God? Then Jesus moves on, taking the approach of that era, obeying the law. The man claims to have followed the commandments cited by Jesus. Jesus then shows the mans shortcoming by telling him to rid himself of his riches and to give to the poor; then the man could come and follow him. The man left sorrowfully, for he did not want to part with his wealth.

Jesus states that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven. Some teach that Jesus meant that the eye of the needle was a special doorway in the city wall, that camels could enter through, with much effort. This would then imply that man can get to heaven on his own efforts, if he tries hard enough. Jesus was teaching that it is impossible and can only be done by God's miraculous intervention.

Jesus tells His disciples that they will be rewarded for their faithfulness by having the privilege to sit on 12 thrones, judging Israel. Other faithful followers will also be richly rewarded for their sacrifices on His behalf, and will inherit eternal life. He then states that the ones entering first and last will be equal, according to their faithfulness.

STUDY GUIDE

MATTHEW 19:

1. Where did Jesus go, when He left Galilee?
2. What question, did some of the Pharisees ask?
3. What should man not separate?
4. Why did Moses permit divorce?
5. What does Jesus say, constitutes adultery?
6. Who were brought to Jesus and why?
7. How did Jesus respond, in verse 14?
8. What did the man ask Jesus?
9. What commandments did Jesus mention?
10. How did Jesus tell the man, he could be perfect?
11. What is easier than, for a rich man to enter heaven?
12. What did Jesus reply to the question asked in verse 25?

BONUS:

1. How does Jesus' teaching about divorce, compare with the Church's attitude today?
2. Are you wrong if you have riches? Explain.
3. What is Jesus saying about salvation?