The Tragedy of Idolatry, part 2

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us.!

We hope that you'll make plans to be here and to be inviting other people to come and join with you. It's been just amazing to see these last four or five years we've been doing these, how the Lord has allowed our church to be a part of equipping ladies from all across our state.
Then many from our church, many from other churches, to go back and just serve in their own home church. And so we're thankful the Lord has allowed us to do that. Make plans, if you can, to be here a week from Tuesday.
I think next Sunday is time change, isn't that right? Time change. Don't worry about it. It's the one that if you forget it, you're just early, all right? You'll know it because it gets dark at like noon starting next Sunday.
But that just means that we are officially getting late in the year. Mark chapter 10. We are continuing our study through the Gospel of Mark and we are in part two of this encounter of Jesus with a man known as the rich young ruler.
[1:41] Mark tells us that he owned much property. Luke tells us he was extremely wealthy. That's why we call him rich. Matthew 19 describes him as young.

Luke 18 calls him a ruler. So when you put Matthew, Mark, and Luke all together, you get the idea this man is a rich, young ruler.
And he comes to Jesus and he asks a fair question. What must I do to inherit eternal life?
As we looked at last week, he comes humbly. He ran, which is something a distinguished man in that culture would not do.
He comes and he kneels down before Jesus and humbly and eagerly asks him this question. He is by all measurable means an honorable man.
[2:44] He's somebody that people would have liked and respected and looked up to. And so the first thing we saw last week was a question from a curious heart.

There's something in his heart that's not at peace, that's not all right. And the first thing we saw is a question from a curious heart.
And that question was, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus then gives this man, though brief, a very rich theology lesson.
He says, you call me good teacher and you would understand that only God is uniquely, intrinsically, completely, purely good.
If you don't believe I'm God, why do you call me good? No one is good but God. If you do believe that I am who I say that I am, that I am the very son of God, then you should follow me no matter the cost.
[3:49] What do you really believe about me? Jesus, with just a brief reply, is helping this man to think through what does he really believe about God?

What does he believe about who Jesus Christ is? And what does this man really believe about his own heart? And that led last week to a second thing that we looked at, and that was a response from a misled heart.
A response from a misled heart as Jesus begins to walk him through the commandments. And in verse 20, the rich young ruler said, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.
Now, I take him at his word that he really did try to keep the law. I take him at his word that he really did want to obey what he had been told to do.
But his heart is misled if he believes he has kept all of the law perfectly as Jesus is about to show him. He was, as we looked at last week in a term that has been coined years ago, lost in his

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niceness.
[5:01] He was a nice man. He was a hard worker. He was a successful person. And he was lost right in the midst of his niceness.

Amidst his law keeping and his striving to do what he wanted and felt he should do, and most likely in some kind of a comparison of how well he kept the law versus other people, he was lost in his own niceness.
But Jesus had compassion on him. And that led to a third thing we saw last week, and that was a look from a pure heart. It comes from verse 21.
Jesus, looking at him, loved him. Though this man was wrong, and though this man had greatly overestimated his own ability to keep the law, Jesus loved him.
He looked at him with love. He looked at him with compassion. And just that short description of verse 21 should remind us a lot about our own personal evangelism.
[6:16] That we should be loving and that we must be honest. And those two things absolutely coexist together.

To be loving to someone is to be honest with them about the gospel. It would be wrong for us to conclude that we should not be loving and compassionate to those who don't know Christ.
In fact, one of the things we should pray more is that the Lord would give us a greater burden for those who don't know Jesus. The Lord would give us a greater sense of compassion for those who need to know Christ.
But don't ever confuse that being compassionate and being loving is also being honest with them about their situation.
In a day in which people want to try to tell you that true love is just accepting them as they are and not speaking against their sin.
[7:20] Remember, that would be the most unloving thing you could do. Would be to pretend that someone's sin is not a dangerous thing. Jesus confronts this man and he corrects this man.

He's about to expose this man for his sinfulness. But at the same time, he loved him. He talks to him. He engages with him. He's compassionate with him.
And we too, with a pure heart, should look with love on those who need to know the gospel. So we have a question from a curious heart, a response from a misled heart, a look from a pure heart.
And that brings us, fourthly, to an offer from a forgiving heart. An offer from a forgiving heart.
Let's go back to verse 17 and remind ourselves of all the details. And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?
[8:33] And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.
And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, You lack one thing.
Go, sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. This is an offer from a forgiving heart.
The Lord Jesus willing to forgive this man of his sin, something only God can do. And so when Jesus offers to forgive someone, he is absolutely claiming to be God himself, gives him that response.
[9:42] Now, why does Jesus say that? This is, admittedly, an unusual response.

This is not the way that you have been trained in whatever evangelism training you've been through in your life. This is not the way you were told to respond to somebody saying, How can I be saved? If somebody came up to you today and said, What do I do to go to heaven? None of you would say, Here's the answer. Go sell everything you've got. It's a bit of a strange answer.
If your little child or your teenager today, parents, came up to you this afternoon and said, How does a person go to heaven? You're not going to say, Well, you've got to sell everything you've got. It's a bit of an unusual answer. And this is the response to his question in verse 17, What must I do to inherit eternal life?
[10:51] That's the question. What do I do that I can inherit eternal life? What do I do that I can be saved? What can I do that I would be forgiven?

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What can I do that I would have peace with God? All the same idea. Lord Jesus telling him, answering him, responding to him from the question, What do I do to be saved?
What do I do to be saved? Says to him, you lack one thing. Go and sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.
I've had a lot of gospel conversations in my life. Some with very religious people. Some with people who are just kind of on the edge of the church, and others with people who don't go to church at all. I've had some gospel conversations in my life with people who have never heard of the name of Jesus. And I've never told any of them that the way to heaven is to go sell everything you've got.
[12:06] What's happening here? Well, what's happening with Jesus is he knows the human heart.

And not just at the macro level, at the micro level. He knows this man's heart. Remember, it is taught to us in John 2 of Jesus.
It says, Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people. He needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.
See, the unique thing here is Jesus knows exactly what's on this man's heart. Remember in John 4, Jesus is with the woman at the well.
Well, and he says, call your husband. And she says, I don't have a husband. He says, I know that. And he begins to tell her things that she wonders, how could you know this about me?
[13:16] And the answer is because Jesus knows the human heart. He knows each individual. He knows this man's situation.

And what he does is he puts his finger exactly on that man's problem.
Back in the summer, I was having a crown put on a tooth. And I don't know if you've had that joy in life.
My recommendation is if you have a crown appointment scheduled, just cancel it and pray to go to glory. So, go and have this crown done.
And they do the temporary crown. They do the permanent crown. On the permanent crown, he said, I don't want to numb you because I don't want you to have to leave here with your mouth numb. And you can't eat and drink.
[14:24] And I'm thinking, I don't really mind that at all. And he said that it may hit a nerve as I do this.

And if I hit it, you can let me know. Well, I didn't know that laying in a chair you could jump. But I assure you, he knew.
And I knew. And the poor child getting his teeth cleaned beside me knew. When that nerve had been hit. And it was hit directly.
That's what Jesus does with this man's heart. I'm going to touch you right at your raw, exposed nerve.
And he tells the man, go sell all your stuff. And come follow me. And the reason he tells him that is because it's the exact barrier this man has to following Jesus.
[15:40] His problem is he loved his stuff. He was the rich, young ruler. He was wealthy.

And he was young. And he's wealthy and young. And so he's got, obviously, good business acumen. He's got nothing but time on his side to go increase his wealth all the more.
And he loves his stuff. And Jesus, knowing that, knowing what's in the heart of a man, just puts his finger right on that heart nerve.
And right where that man, who's a good man in the sense of humanity, he's an honorable man, a respectable man, a kind man, a generous man, a successful man, a man who people trusted.
But his problem was he loved his stuff more than anything else. And Jesus says, if you want to follow me, here's the invitation.
[16:46] Get rid of your stuff, which is Jesus' way of saying to this man, get rid of your idol. Get rid of your false God.

Jesus is commanding this man to get rid of his stuff because his stuff is his idol. And how would he prove if he really does love God more than his idol?
He would prove it by smashing his idol. By getting rid of his idol. A lot of times, people don't even realize they have an idol until that raw nerve gets touched.
And there are things that in the human heart, people really love more than God. And that gets exposed when they lose something and now they think they've lost all their joy.

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If there's something you can lose that takes away how you feel who you are at your most deep, important level, that is an idol for you.
[18:05] And so, Jesus, knowing his heart, says, your problem is you have an idol. And your idol is your money. And so, to follow me, you can't have any gods before me.

So, you've got to get rid of your money. You've got to get rid of your idol. You've got to love me above all else. That's his invitation. And the rich man doesn't do it.
And when the rich man does not choose to obey Jesus here, what he's doing is he's exposing and expressing his sinfulness.
This man who thought he had obeyed all of the law, all the commandments, actually gets exposed as disobeying the very first one.
If you were to read the Ten Commandments, what's the first one? Have no other gods before me.
And this man, Jesus, has given him the law to convict him of sin, to confront him of his sin, to show him how much he needs to know the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.
[19:23] And this man's response was, I've kept all the law. And Jesus says, have you? Have you kept all of it? Let's start with the first one.

Have no other gods before me. Your God is your stuff. Smash that idol. And he won't do it.
He thought he had kept all the law. He didn't even get past the first one. And Jesus, with this brilliant insight into the heart of this man, with love and with grace and compassion, exposes to this man, you think you've kept all of it.
You missed the very first one. You don't even have to go through a long test. He missed the first one. He was to have no gods before him.
And he did. Jesus said, you lack one thing, go, sell all that you have, that's his idol, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come follow me.
[20:47] Jesus invites this man to love the one true God more than anything else. He invites this man to smash and destroy his idol of materialism.

And he says, come follow me. What Jesus is saying in this brief conversation is he invites the man to repent, believe, and obey.
He invites him to repent of his idolatry by getting rid of that idol. He invites him to believe that following Christ is a greater treasure than anything of this world.
And he invites him to obey and to come follow him. Now let's be crystal clear. Nobody goes to heaven because they sell their possessions.
If you're here this morning, and you don't know Christ is your Savior, and you're asking the questions this man has been asking, and you're wondering how can my sin be forgiven, if you're wondering how do I find eternal life, if you're wondering how can I go to sleep at night and not be afraid of what would happen if I never woke up, don't go home and put all your stuff on Facebook Marketplace and sell your house and your car and your clothes and think that if I do that, I'm going to earn heaven.
[22:14] That's not the point Jesus is making. He's making a theological point with him. He's exposing to this man, you have an idol. And your idol is your money.

And the proof of that will be on your response to me exposing that. And if you really do love God above all other gods, prove it by getting rid of your false gods and then come follow me.
This is not a teaching that poverty sends you to heaven. This is exposing to this rich young ruler that he had other gods before the one true guy.
And so he invites him to repent of his idolatry, to demonstrate his repentance, to believe that Christ is greater than anything else you give up of this world and to come follow him.
It's the same invitation given throughout all the Gospels, throughout all the New Testament. This is the same invitation extended to you today, to repent of your sin, to believe that Christ is greater than anything else of the world and for you to follow Jesus.
[23:44] So before we finish what happens with this man, let's just deal with ourselves for a moment. Do you have other gods before the one true God?

Do you have things that you love more than God? Do you look at Christ as the greatest treasure and the greatest gain of the human soul?
Or in your heart of hearts, are you trying to use Christ as a means to gain the things of the world that you really love more than God?

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Are you following Jesus? Jesus' invitation was, come follow me. That was his invitation. Come follow me.
Are you following him? Are you growing in your relationship with the Lord each day? Are you obeying his word?
[24:49] The invitation Jesus gave to the rich young ruler was to turn from everything else, trust only in Jesus, and follow him. That was the invitation he gave him.

And I mentioned last week how completely counter-culture this is, even in the church. In just about any church in the world, if this man had walked in there and looked how he looked and acted how he acted and asked what he asked, people would be so quick to just say, of course you're in. You're using theological words like eternal life, you're religious, you're kind, you're good, you're keeping the law.
Jesus gives this man an invitation. Doesn't try to manipulate him. He doesn't try to stir up his emotions in a false way.
He doesn't bring the band on stage to play background music. Here's his invitation. Repent.
[26:07] Repent. And follow me. That's his invitation. Repent. And follow me.

And I give you today the exact invitation Jesus gave the rich young ruler. Repent. And follow Jesus. If in your heart there's anything you love more than God, repent of that. If there's anything that brings you more joy than your walk with Jesus, repent of that.
If there's anything of this world that you're clinging to and holding on to, repent of that. If you're trying to use the Lord, if you're trying to use your worship as a way to get more stuff of the world because you really love the world more than you love God, repent of that.
And follow Jesus. Obey Him. Worship Him. Love Him. Do what He calls you to do. Repent and obey.
[27:31] That's how Jesus gave an invitation. Repent and obey. There was love and compassion and there was truth and directness.

there was an anger and hostility but He was willing to touch the raw nerve on this guy's heart.
And the tragedy of this story is that it fifthly leads to a decision from a sad heart.
A decision from a sad heart. Verse 22. Disheartened by the saying He went away sorrowful.
Now just stop there for just a minute. We know what comes next but just for a minute let's just take it at face value. disheartened by the saying the man did not hear from Jesus what he hoped to hear.
[28:52] Because Jesus went right to his sin. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus says I know you.

I know your heart. I know where your trust is. I know where your hope is. I know where your delight is. I know where your joy is. I know how you define yourself by.
I know what you're thinking. I know what you love. I know what you crave. You've got to repent from your idolatry. And the evidence that you have turned from your God of idolatry will be that you will smash the idol of materialism.
And the evidence of that would be go give everything away. Have nothing of this world. and all you're going to have is me. Come follow me. Here's the question Jesus asked him.
Will I be enough for you? That's the question. If you have me and none of your stuff will that be sufficient?
[29:59] If you have Christ and no worldly good will that be enough?

And this man to his credit listened thought thought and he understood Jesus crystal clear.
And he walked away sorrowful. Why was he sad? Why did this man walk away so sad?
verse 22 tells you because he had great possessions. Because he owned much stuff.
And I suppose we could say it maybe even a different way. It's not so much that he owned much stuff it's that his stuff owned him. At first it looks like this man has everything.
[31:24] I mean just think of the way we refer to him. We don't call him Johnny. We don't call him Willie. We just know him as the rich young ruler. I don't know what his name was.

He was the rich young ruler. Oh that guy over there with the money with youth and health with power and prestige that man over there that's got everything everybody wants that man over there that seems to have it all that's how people know him.
He's rich he's young and he's powerful. This man we meet him seems to have it all in truth he had nothing nothing of permanence nothing of eternal value he owned nothing that would be his one second after he dies and because he knew that he loved his stuff more than anything else and

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because he heard Jesus clearly say that to follow me means I'm enough for you and this man realized I love my stuff too much to let go of it and so he walked away sad he counted the cost he thought about the invitation he understood it perfectly clear and he walked away sad
I think about this pretty often because in my life one of the things that I do with some regularity is I'm at the bedside of someone who knows they're living their last moments this has been true for me a couple of times just in the last several weeks where I've been right there at the bedside of somebody who knows their time is almost over on this earth now not everybody gets to know that death can come very unexpectedly things happen and people had no idea that their time was about up but sometimes I get to sit there and be with people who know their time is almost over and if they're a believer one of the real just overwhelming comforting beautiful lovely things in that moment is to think about what is about to be theirs when they take their last breath and though I believe in heaven with all of my heart and though I trust the bible with all of my being I still feel for that spouse who's losing a loved one there's no way not to I still feel for children and grandchildren who are going to lose on this or someone they love that the knowledge of heaven does not take away the pain of loss and of grief for those who are left behind most of you in this room have been through that you know that you understand that you believe that but when you think about the person the one individual who knows their time is almost up on this earth and they're a believer one of the lovely things to think about is in a matter of moments or hours or maybe a day or two they're going to take their last breath and they're going to close their eyes in death and when they open their eyes what are they about to see they're about to be with Jesus their faith is about to become sight they're about to pass from this life to the life to come they're about to experience more joy and more hope and more love and more life they're about to have more than they've ever had they're about to live out what we know when the apostle
[35:58] Paul said to live as Christ and to die is say it with me gain gain that if all you have is Jesus and if everything of this earth gets left behind for the believer one second after you die you've lost nothing you've gained everything and it's a sobering thing it's good for my soul to stand at the bedside of people who are about to lose everything of this world and to be reminded they're about to gain it all that's good for me to be reminded of and when I think in those moments about what they're about to gain and what is about to be theirs it reminds me that stuff of this earth we'll use it we'll enjoy it we'll try to help and serve and bless other people by it but the stuff of this world makes a lousy

God and there are all kinds of things in this world that make good habits and or good hobbies but make lousy gods your money your job your recreation kids kids sports all of these things make good recreation and good hobbies but terrible gods and when you are reminded that those who are in Christ when they go to be with the Lord that to live has been about Christ but in death they gain it all that's when you understand just what this man gave up
I think in those moments when I'm there at the bedside and they know time is short sometimes they'll mention a song that's meaningful to them or sometimes the family will sing a song there at the hospital or there in the living room with their loved one and I love to hear the songs that the family talks about in their final moments just in the last couple of weeks songs that have been talked about with me there at the bedside of one who's about to pass away or songs that have been sung there have been songs like blessed assurance Jesus is mine oh what a foretaste of glory divine amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me last week with the family with a wife of one who's about to say goodbye to her husband she talked about the hymn she had just sung with him some glad morning when this life is o'er
I'll fly away it's songs about salvation it's songs about Jesus it's songs about heaven that's the music that comforts our soul it's not songs about money it's not songs about sports it's not songs about houses and lands it's songs about heaven and I think it's worth noting too that the songs people think of in their final hours are they're not just songs they like they're songs that they've sung with the body of Christ because our salvation while it's personal it's salvation that brings us into the family it's a salvation that brings us into the body of
Christ so when you follow Christ you have everything you need and infinitely more and this man walked away sad because he recognized I do have an idol and I love my idol and I love my idol more than God and I won't give it up and this man who came to the right person asking the right question just walked away from eternal life what he refused to let go of could not save him and will not be his one second after he dies there's only one word to describe that condition and it's sad and

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he walked away sorrowful there were two men in the new testament that
[42:13] I think are about as tragic of stories as you can get one is this man the other very similar we read about in second timothy!

but he gets he's named his name is Demas and it says of Demas having loved this present world he is forsaken he walked away on the ministry he walked away on what was offered to him because he loved this present world Demas was on a mission trip if Demas belonged to any church every church would say he's in he's a good man he's a nice man he's a generous man he goes on mission trips of course he's in but he was unconverted he was unconverted while he was going on mission trips he was unconverted while he was teaching he was unconverted while he was talking about the gospel why because he had a
God and his God was the stuff of this world so lest you say the rich young ruler must be somebody out there or Demas must be somebody out there let me just remind you if if we could take 2 Timothy and if we could take Mark 10 and if we bring it into our time the rich young ruler so to speak would be in here Demas would be in here they were religious people they went where they were supposed to go they did what they were supposed to do and they seemed like genuine people here's what only God knew about them!
their heart was unconverted because their heart had other gods and if that could be true in Mark 10 and if that can be true in 2 Timothy that can be true on October 29 2023 in this room you're nice you're kind you're gracious you're friendly you're respectful and people admire you but are you lost in the midst of your niceness could it be that you're trusting in yourself or your stuff for meaning and for life
I give you the same invitation Jesus gave repent of your idol and follow Jesus turn away from your sin and follow Jesus I wish I wish there was another verse between verse 22 and verse 23 I wish verse 22 kept going and said the man stopped in his tracks and he turned around and said Jesus I believe I wish that we read later in the gospels that this man ran back into Jesus and said I thought about it and I confess my sin and by the glory of God and his grace I trust you
[46:27] I follow you as far as we know this is where the story is as far as we know this man literally looked life in the eye there's never been anyone in human history so close and you walked away sad today I invite you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ I invite you to repent and turn from your sin I invite you to follow Jesus and if it cost you everything you you've lost nothing because to live is

Christ and for the believer one day to die will be gain and I invite you to eternal life found only in the person of Jesus Christ Lord we thank you today for your word the clarity and conviction that it does bring and I do pray that even in this sanctuary that anyone who does not know you believe in you or trust you this very day would repent of their sin and call upon the name of your son the Lord Jesus who is a savior that we could rejoice as we have sung and as Isaiah 52 says that we have read that our God saves it's in the name of
Jesus we pray amen if you need help if you have questions about how to walk with the Lord if you have questions about how we can serve you we want to do that use that connection card guest or member let us know how we can pray for you let us know how we can help you we would love to sit down with you with an open Bible and walk with you through whatever your questions are and to try our best to give you biblical answers to all of your family remember tonight five o'clock we start family matters we're going to start serving about 445 early if you want to try to come and beat the crowd and space that out would be really helpful we're going to have an amazing time in the gym tonight look forward to seeing you there love you church family God bless you you!
dismissed

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