11/8/26

Sermon Title: Those Who Will Enter the Kingdom of God

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 19:13-30

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.”
15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must
I do to get eternal life?”
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.”
18 “Which ones?” he inquired.
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,’[c] and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’[d]”
20 “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”
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.
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.
24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than
for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?”
26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”
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.

Immediately after Jesus finished teaching about marriage and divorce, people brought little children to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and bless them.
But the disciples rebuked the people.
The disciples thought that adults should take priority among the many people who had gathered to receive healing or a blessing from Jesus.
However, Jesus would not allow the children to be prevented from coming to Him.
Instead, He welcomed them and laid His hands on them to bless them.
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.”
15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Matthew's use of the expression “At that time” emphasizes that this event took place immediately after Jesus taught about marriage and divorce.

By doing so, Matthew highlights that children are the precious fruit of the sacred union of marriage.
Jesus acknowledges and blesses these children, the precious fruit of the sacred institution of marriage.
Although they are physically immature and have no significant social status, Jesus regards them as persons created in the image of God and delights in welcoming them as members of the kingdom of heaven.
Jesus explains why He welcomes children by saying that the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are like them.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who, like little children, are pure and innocent and depend on the Lord, submitting themselves to His Word.

Immediately afterward, a man comes to Jesus.
He is a wealthy young man who prides himself on having kept all the commandments, yet he is uncertain about his salvation.

He asks Jesus, "What good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?"
This young man assumes that eternal life can be obtained by performing some good deed.
He fails to understand that eternal life is a gift from God and that only God, who alone is good, can grant it.

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

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."

When the rich young man acknowledges Jesus as a teacher who is able to address his concerns and asks what good thing he must do to obtain eternal life, Jesus responds, "There is only One who is good."

Jesus is not suggesting that there is any flaw or imperfection in Himself.
Rather, He is not using the word “good” to make a statement about Himself.
He is using it to expose the young man's mistaken understanding of goodness and his flawed view of faith.
Since the young man regards Jesus merely as a teacher, Jesus responds at the level of the young man's understanding and declares that no human being can truly be good before God.
By pointing out that God alone is good and that only what comes from God is truly good, Jesus teaches that no one can perform good deeds before God on the basis of human merit or claim to be good in God's sight.

Therefore, the good thing this young man needs to do in order to obtain eternal life is to recognize God correctly for who He is and obey what He commands.
However, the young man fails to understand that salvation comes through the way of faith.
Like the other Pharisees, he mistakenly believes that a person can be justified before God through his own religious achievements and good works.

Jesus tells the young man that if he wants to enter into life, he must keep the commandments.
Keeping the commandments does not simply mean blindly observing the Ten Commandments of Moses in a literal sense.
It means fully understanding the original purpose of God's commandments and living according to their true meaning.
In fact, the promise of life is already contained within God's commandments to love Him and to love our neighbors.
Therefore, by keeping God's commandments, a person can live a life that reflects the promise of eternal life.

This is because the keeping of God's commandments presupposes faith in God, who gave the commandments, and in Jesus Christ, who fulfills them, together with a willingness to follow them.

The young man, however, fails to understand the true meaning of Jesus' words and asks which commandments he must keep.
The Pharisees had added numerous supplementary regulations to the Law of Moses.
Although the young man prides himself on having kept all the commandments, he wonders whether there might be some additional commandment that he has overlooked.
So he asks Jesus which commandments he still needs to observe.

18 “Which ones?” he inquired.

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,’[c] and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’[d]”

Jesus refers to the commandments in the Ten Commandments that govern human relationships and our attitudes toward our neighbors.

The reason Jesus does not mention the first four commandments, but instead refers to the fifth through the tenth commandments, is that the Pharisees and scribes of that time tended to neglect the commandments concerning their responsibilities toward others.
The young man, having been instructed by these religious leaders, had adopted the same attitude.

Although the young man had kept the commandments, he felt that he had not done enough good works to be worthy of salvation.
He had no assurance of salvation.
He continued to live with a sense of spiritual anxiety and emptiness.

[20] “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?”

Jesus commands the young man to sell his possessions and give the proceeds to the poor.
Then He tells him to come and follow Him.
Jesus tells him that then he will have treasure in heaven.
This means that the moment the young man's heart is freed from its attachment to wealth, he will be able to receive the salvation he has been seeking.
The “treasure in heaven” refers to the very eternal life that this young man has been searching for.

[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.

Such a requirement is not found in any specific commandment or regulation in the Old Testament.
Nevertheless, Jesus knew very well that a person cannot serve both wealth and God wholeheartedly.
Therefore, He showed this wealthy young man the way to be set free from his attachment to material possessions and to experience true eternal life.

Jesus' command to go, sell his possessions, and give to the poor ultimately leads to the call to discipleship—to follow Jesus.
In other words, absolute obedience to God's will and commandments means following Jesus, the Lord of true life, who alone can make human beings complete.

However, the command to sell all one's possessions and give the proceeds to the poor is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for someone who does not have an urgent sense of the coming kingdom of heaven and the end of the age.

Unfortunately, the young man rejects Jesus' invitation to give up his material possessions as the way to obtain eternal life.
In the end, he goes away sorrowful.
He makes the tragic choice of clinging to the security of the present at the expense of the future glory that could have been his.

Jesus then warns His disciples about how great an obstacle wealth and greed can be to entering the kingdom of heaven.
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.
24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

Regardless of whether a person is rich or poor, anyone who depends on wealth more than on God cannot obtain eternal life.
However, because the rich possess more material wealth, they are often more strongly attached to it and more likely to depend on it than the poor.

When the disciples hear Jesus' words commanding the rich young man to give up his possessions and warning about the dangers of wealth, they are deeply shocked.

For the Jews, wealth was regarded as a blessing from God, while poverty and destitution were considered signs of God's curse.
But now Jesus is presenting an entirely new perspective, one that challenges their traditional understanding.

The disciples become concerned that if even the rich young man cannot be saved, then they themselves, who possess far less than he does, may also be in a hopeless situation.

Deeply troubled, they ask Jesus, “Who then can be saved?” if a wealthy young man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.
In response, Jesus explains that salvation is not something human beings can achieve by their own efforts, but rather a gift from God.
Through this teaching, He comforts His disciples, who have fallen into doubt and despair, and leads them to embrace a new faith and hope.

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

26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Concerned by Jesus' statement that it is impossible for human beings to enter the kingdom of God by their own strength, Peter speaks on behalf of the disciples. He wants to make sure that they, who have left everything behind to follow the Lord, will indeed receive eternal life.

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.

Jesus assures His disciples by promising that when He sits on His throne as the Judge, they too will sit with Him as associate judges and judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

Furthermore, Jesus extends this promise beyond the Twelve, including all disciples who have made sacrifices and devoted themselves to serving the kingdom of God.

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.

Those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus will receive the future inheritance promised by God and inherit eternal life.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,
Matthew places the story of the rich young man immediately after the account of Jesus welcoming little children, thereby drawing a clear contrast between those who will enter the kingdom of heaven and those who will not.

Jesus gladly welcomed little children, who had no social status or power and were incapable of accomplishing anything through their own abilities.
This is because the kingdom of God belongs not to those who depend on their own abilities or merits, but to those who humbly trust in God and receive His grace, just as little children do.

In contrast, the rich young man desired eternal life, but he loved his wealth more than eternal life.
Consequently, he turned away, refusing Jesus' command to sell his possessions, give the proceeds to the poor, and follow Him.
He gave up the eternal future and glory that could have been his in order to choose the comfort and security of the present that he could see before his eyes.

Through this encounter, Jesus warns His disciples about how great an obstacle wealth can be to entering the kingdom of heaven.
Yet at the same time, He declares that what is impossible with human beings is possible with God.
This is because salvation is not something that human beings can accomplish through their own efforts; it is brought about by the sovereign work of God.

Furthermore, Jesus promises His disciples, who have left everything to follow Him, glorious rewards and an inheritance in the kingdom of God.
Nothing we give up for the sake of the Lord will ever be in vain.
Jesus assures us that a glorious future, prepared by God, awaits those who follow Him.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Following the Lord may require sacrifice and surrender.
But it is by no means a futile journey.
At the end of that journey awaits the eternal life and heavenly inheritance that God has promised.

Let us not be foolish people who lose what is eternal in order to gain what is temporary in this world.
Rather, let us become people of faith who are willing to give up the things of this world in order to gain what is eternal.

May all of us depend on God's grace with humble faith like little children, follow Jesus faithfully under every circumstance, and live with our eyes fixed on the eternal life and heavenly inheritance God has promised us.
May this be true of each and every one of us, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.