

# The Demands of a King

by Ken Baird

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing spiritual values and relationships with God over earthly possessions, and the danger of materialism in hindering one's relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 37:32

**Scripture:** Matthew 19:16, Matthew 19:27-30, Luke 10:25-28, Ephesians 2:12

**Topics:** "Materialism", "Discipleship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of a rich young ruler who approached Jesus and asked what he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus challenged the young man's understanding of goodness and revealed his attachment to material possessions. The preacher emphasizes the dangers of materialism and how it can hinder one's relationship with God. He also highlights the compensating nature of God, mentioning how the disciples were promised positions of honor for leaving everything to follow Jesus. The sermon encourages listeners to prioritize their relationship with Christ above all else.

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## Transcript

When they come to Greenfield on April 30th, which is on Friday night, they urge me to urge all the young people that will come to do so. Well, I'm going to pass that along to you. They'd like to have the young people come.

They are so inspiring themselves, and I think it will be good for all of us, but they're particularly interested in the young people coming to Greenfield. And this is a kind of a regional thing, because as far as I know, this is the only place they're going to be in this part of the country. So, we hope there will be a converging upon Greenfield on that Friday night, April 30th.

Today your lesson is entitled, The Mans of a King. Matthew chapter 19 and chapter 20. The Mans of a King.

This has been a wonderful series. I'm sure you've enjoyed it here. I haven't had much opportunity to speak on the Matthew account.

Because I've been in Des Moines during the month of March, on a couple of periods there not related to your prosecutorial lessons. We read in verse 16, and this is where we've been asked to read, of a rich young ruler. And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may

have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He said unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness unto thy father and thy mother. And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

The young man said unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

So, this is a very interesting portion, and I get very close to the poem. The Deals of Materialism. This young man did not have a good sense of value.

People pride themselves on a good sense of value. I know a lot of people that attend sales, and they know just when stuff is in. I know of a lot of other people that they pride themselves, in that which they buy, they pride themselves in a good sense of value.

Well, I wonder what kind of a sense of value do we have spiritually? I wonder if indeed this parable, a true story rather, well not a parable, we'll tell the parable later, we'll get into it. But this true story of this rich young ruler coming and kneeling down to the Lord Jesus, and saying to him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Now, as well as his values not being correct, his theology was not correct. And the Lord had to correct him there, because he said, Why can't thou be good? There is none good but one, that is God, but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

He said, Don't call me good. If you can't call me God, don't call me good. Now, some misunderstand this.

They say that our Lord Jesus Christ is disclaiming the fact that he is God, and it would seem that way to read it, because he said, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. And it would seem like he was disclaiming the fact that he was God. But that isn't the point.

The point is, if you can't call me God, don't call me good, because only God is good. And that's what he's trying to tell this young man. Let's think about him for a moment.

He was rich, he was young, and he was a ruler. He was reverent, he came kneeling. Now, you have to read all three accounts in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to get all these details.

But he was rich, he was young, and that doesn't happen too often. And he was a ruler, he had prestige, he had everything. As we would say as far as this world is concerned, he had everything.

Everything going his way. It's nice to be young and rich at the same time. Even the book of Ecclesiastes speaks about the terrible, terrible situation that a man who is a man of means and has everything to satisfy the means and doesn't have any help for the means of fulfilling or enjoying that which his money can buy.

He thinks of the unfortunate circumstances of such a situation. Frequently that's the case. When people get rich enough to enjoy life, they're too old to enjoy it.

And not so with this young man. He was young and rich. And he was a ruler.

Now he had prestige, he had money, he had youth, he had everything going his way. He even had reverence, and he even had religion. You would say this young man had it all.

No, he didn't. He missed it all. He missed the invitation of the Lord to join his forces and give his allegiance to the Lord.

This is a sad, sad story. This is a story that I suppose has been repeated hundreds and thousands of times in this world, down here in which we live. People that have got everything going their way, and yet they don't have a proper sense of value.

Now this young man, he came to the Lord Jesus, he bowed down, and he asked the question that the Lord had to correct him on. Now he doesn't do it vocally, he just does it in the most skillful way possible. This young man says, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Now this word, have, is rendered in the other two Gospels, that I may inherit eternal life.

Now he was wrong here, because you don't do things to inherit life. You don't do things to inherit anything. You inherit things because you're born into the right family.

Now this young man says, I want to do something to inherit something. That's wrong. That's wrong legally, as well as theologically.

You don't inherit by doing. You inherit by being born into the right family. Now what he was wanting to do was work his way to heaven.

He wanted eternal life, but he thought he had to do something to get it. He didn't realize that there's nothing that you can do to gain eternal life. Another lawyer came to the Lord Jesus, you're familiar with this story too, in the 10th chapter of Luke.

And he said this, well I'm going to read it because I'm afraid I might misquote it. You needn't turn to it because I'll be right back here in Matthew 19. He says in that 10th chapter of Luke, Behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him what is written in the law.

I'll read it now. The answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind. And thy neighbor is thyself, and the Lord.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right. This do, and thou shalt live. Now, you've got to weigh those words carefully.

It doesn't say this try to do. It says this do, and thou shalt live. But he didn't do it, and nobody else has ever done it.

You can't love the Lord with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and your neighbor is yourself. It is simply not possible for human beings to do that. We cannot keep the law.

There is only one man that ever walked upon this earth that has kept the law, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And he magnified the law and made it honorable. The law says, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

He loved his neighbor. No, I'll have to correct myself. He loved his enemies, his enemies better than himself.

That's magnifying the law. He loved his enemies better than himself. He died for them on the cross, hoping to break down their prejudice.

But they would come and make him their own. In any way that you look at the Ten Commandments, you can go through them, you can make a study of it. I can make a sermon out of it this morning, but I'm not going to.

There's too many other things to consider. You can go through those commandments one by one, and you can see where our Lord Jesus Christ magnified the law. And made it honorable.

He not only kept it as it was written, he went farther than that. And I think the fact that it appeals to you and me most of all is the fact that he loved us when we didn't love him. And he loved us more than himself.

He gave his life for me. I can't get over that. I can't get over the fact that Christ loved me better than himself.

That he died on the cross of Calvary for me and for you. Now we're not worthy of that love, but thank God we can return it. Though we don't, though we don't, we can't return it, or we won't return it.

It's impossible to us, I believe, to return it in the degree that he deserves. But we can return it. We can return it.

It's good enough to know how much our love means to him. He's dying to obtain it. Have you got it? Do you love it? I feel sometimes like asking Christians, or asking people, rather, in regard to being Christian, are you a Christian? Well, I don't do that.

Because, of course, we're living in a Christian nation, and people say, well, of course I'm a Christian, what do you think I am, a Jew? But I think sometimes we really ought to ask the question, do you love the Lord? Well, of course they'd say yes. And then they'd probably qualify, not as much as I'm sure. Now, that is correct.

Now, this young man wants to do something in order to inherit eternal life. He was wrong on two counts. You don't inherit it by doing, you inherit it by being born into the family.

And you can't obtain it by doing. It's not obtainable in that way. For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The Lord very wisely referred this man to the Ten Commandments, as he does to the lawyer in Luke chapter 10. He referred him to the Ten Commandments, and do you know that lawyer in Luke chapter 10 was in trouble? The Lord had not only got those words out of his mouth, but that man was in trouble. Do you know why I know? He asked the question, and who is my neighbor? The Lord had gotten him in

trouble with his own conscience, because he asked the question, who is my neighbor? And the Lord told him the story of the Good Samaritan.

And about the priest, and about the Levite that passed this poor man by. And then he told him about that despised Samaritan that came where he was. And cleansed his wounds, pouring him oil and wine, taking him to the inn.

And then he asked him now, who is neighbor to him? Anybody that's in trouble is our neighbor. He didn't get much consolation out of that. He didn't get much salvation for his conscience if he was in trouble.

You know that's why God has given the law to us. He told us we might have the experience that this young man has. He said, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? The Lord says, you want to do something to get to heaven? All right, keep the law.

That's good advice. And I say, yes, if anybody insists on getting to heaven by what he can do, I'll tell him to do the same thing. Keep the law.

But I know sooner or later he's going to get awfully discouraged. And he's going to say, I'm a sinner. He's going to be convicted by the law of the fact that he's a sinner.

He's going to realize I can't do it. Now in many cases, many instances I think of sincere people, we'll call them sincere, quasi-sincere at least. They say, well, nobody's perfect.

Indeed we're not. We can try. Indeed we can.

So I'm going to do the best I can. That's not good enough. Not good enough.

God demands perfection. Nobody can get to heaven by keeping the ten commandments. For the simple reason that nobody can keep the ten commandments.

Now he didn't realize that you have to be born into the family of God by means of the new birth. That's the way to inherit eternal life is to be born into the family of God. Now you say, can you inherit eternal life? I thought you had it before you died.

In our sense of inheriting, meaning an eternity. I'll try to make myself plain. I think it means this.

Eternal life is a quality of life as well as the endurance of that life. Now I mean by that this. There are creatures that seek, and then we end, eternal life.

The end of our faith, the goal of our faith. Eternal life. It is the quality of the life and the endurance of the life, both, that are endured.

Now, in that sense, eternal life is still ahead of us. But we have it right now. If we're going to heaven, we have eternal life.

The Lord Jesus, in that wonderful verse, John 3, 16, says, For God so loves the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He's got it right now. But the quantity of it makes it so much of it in the future.

Most of my eternal life is ahead of me. But I've got it now. And I'm going to heaven because I was born into God's family.

That's the way you inherit eternal life. You inherit eternal life through the death you inherit anything, generally speaking, through the death of another. And we have eternal life because Christ died for us.

We are reaping the benefits of his death. And that's the way we get it, is through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, he does something in verse 18 of our chapter, Matthew chapter 19, verse 18.

He does something that he shouldn't have done. He said, which commandment? Now, this does not seem important. The Lord told him, he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.

But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment. Now, I think he's got this young man in trouble. By reason of the fact that he says, which one? Which one? He's dodging the issue.

He's hoping that there is a commandment that he can escape. Which one? Which? Are we to infer by this that some of God's commandments are more important than others? Peter tells us, Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And he doesn't specify the commandments.

If you fail in one of them, you fail in all of them. They are all equally important. And yet he has just one.

That's not good theology. And now, the Lord would seemingly answer his question when he said, Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness unto thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt love thy neighbors thyself.

Now, the Lord himself does not quote all the commandments. He quotes only those commandments that have to do with men. Now, the fact that he does not quote the commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, of all thy heart's whole thinking mind, we meet later when the Lord says, Go and sell all that you have, give to the poor.

Thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me. Now, he had a chance to prove his love to his God, not following the Lord Jesus himself. For Jesus was his God.

All right. The issue becomes clear. What's it going to be? Christ or his possessions? He chose his possessions.

Did he love his God with all his heart's whole thinking mind? Did he love his neighbor as himself? Well, I'm going to ask you a question. If he had loved his neighbor as himself, would it have been difficult to withhold all his possessions and give them away to his neighbor? And to have more in heaven? By the reason of the fact that he did, Thou shalt have treasure in heaven. He failed on every point.

And to look at him, you would have said, this is necessary government. He failed on every point. He turned away, sad, because the Lord had given him this challenge.

And we don't even know his name. But I'll tell you his name was written in heaven. We know it, and we know it there.

He missed the boat. He missed his golden opportunity. This was his chance to be one of the Lord's disciples.

And he failed on every point. Now the Lord has given us this, I think, to impress us with what materialism can do to you. Now we're all guilty.

I'm not preaching down at anybody. I like a nice house. I like a nice pot.

I think the devil will do it. Now if you don't think that, well that's all right. That's what the Lord has given us.

Now don't think for a moment that I'm putting you in trouble. The Lord is our possession. If we've got Christ, we've got everything.

And if we haven't got Christ, we haven't anything. And this incident in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ shows to us the terrible danger of materialism. It's a real, it's something to be reckoned with.

Oh, the scripture says, if riches increase, set not your hearts upon them. Now he does give us, and God loves to give. He's not niggardly in his giving.

He loves to give us the good things. He's generous. He's generous.

Now, he doesn't want us to be occupied with those things. I think of Peter. When the Lord filled his boat with fish, he says, now on henceforth you'll be fishers of him.

Come and follow me. Peter didn't have any trouble of leaving that boat full of fish. He had a bigger task.

He had a greater challenge. And the Lord would throw this challenge out to you and to me, that he might occupy our hearts. That he might be the center of our affections.

That he might be that which we value most highly. So this poor young man, lost out in everything, in one case it says, one thing thou lack. It doesn't say that, I don't think, in the Matthew account, does it? I don't believe that.

He lacks the faith to believe what the Lord says. Think of what he meant. Treasure in heaven.

Treasure in heaven. Now, the disciples were listening. The disciples were listening.

So in verse 27, Peter says, Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all. And followed thee. We gave up our fishing.

We gave up all our means of sustenance. And followed thee. What shall we have, therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. Now here we have this puzzling phrase. Shall inherit everlasting life.

Now they've already got it. Now this is why I made a point of that a while ago. It still remains a heaven.

The exploration, the enjoyment of that life, or its quality of life, as well as the endurance. But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Now Peter is, he has heard what the Lord said to them.

You sell all your goods, you give to the poor, you come and follow me, you'll have treasure in heaven. And Peter says, Lord, we've done it. We've done that.

Now what are we going to get? He wanted to know ahead of time. Well, the Lord told him, you're going to sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Oh, what an honor to be the judge of a whole tribe of the children of Israel.

These twelve apostles didn't realize what the Lord was letting them in for. And he chose them. What a place of honor they're going to have, because they left those things.

Now let's bring another truth to court. Our God is a compensating God. And I love this truth.

And I love to enjoy it. The fact that God compensates. When we give up something for Him, believe me, we get more in return.

Now I don't mean by that that I'm supposed to give a hundred dollars to a good poet and expect a thousand dollars back. If that's the last hundred I've got, I may be embarrassed by that fact. But God will compensate sooner or later.

He compensates He compensates in every way, in everything that He asks from you and from me. He compensates when we bow and say, Lord, it's Thine. We have a lovely word, and I've just been enjoying it as recently, that wonderful verse in the twenty-ninth chapter of First Chronicles.

Of Thine own have we given thee. God compensates. He gives us that which we give to Him in the first place.

And then when we give it back to Him, He rewards us for it. How would you like to have a God like that? Well, I've got one. I've got Him.

He's mine. He gives you, and when you give it back to Him, He rewards you for it. He so wants us to be completely occupied with Himself.

God compensates. He says, now, if you will leave your house, your brethren, your sisters, your father, your mother, your wife, your children, and your land, for my name's sake shall receive a hundredfold. Now it doesn't say that here in Luke, but it says it in the other Gospels in this life.

He doesn't even wait to heaven to compensate us for what we give up for Him. That which we endure for Him, and which we give back to Him, He compensates for it all. We can't lose.

It's impossible to lose when you give God Christmas. You can't do it. This young man missed it.

The apostles didn't. But the Lord has something to say to them. He said, Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

What does this mean? I've tried to attach the meanings of this down to the years, and here's one of the meanings that I've attached to it. The Jewish people, now incidentally, this is the parable, the story that we have, it's about I think I can read it quickly enough, but it's not as quickly as I can tell it. Let's read in fact this one.

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw another standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them, It will be also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is ripe I will give you.

And they went therewith. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise, and about the eleventh hour. He went out and found another standing idle, and said unto them, Why stand ye here idle all the day idle? Why stand ye here all the day idle? And they came to him, because no man had hired him.

He said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is ripe that shall you receive. So when he even was come, the lord of the vineyard said unto his stewards, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, and the penny from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man's penny.

And when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more. They likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us which have borne the burden, and even the day.

And he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong, didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way, and I will give unto this last even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine I evil because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last. And many shall be called, and a few chosen.

Now, I think that this parable is spoken to his apostles. Twelve apostles. Now, he wanted them to be sure that what the reward that they would receive in that coming glory was due to the sovereignty of God and to his throne.

Now, I tried to tell you a while ago that I put a distantational meaning to this. And I'm not sure that it's wrong, but I think there's a deeper meaning of that. The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

Israel has served, and this is a parable of service. The payment is not salvation. You don't serve and then get the penny, and the penny is salvation.

That can't be the meaning here because you don't work for salvation. We have to look for it as a parable of service. And I thought, now, here is the nation of Israel.

They have served the God, served the Lord all those centuries. And now the Gentiles come on the theme that's only come lately. And they are given the place of higher rank than Israel because the church, we Gentiles, are the bride of Christ.

We have a higher place than Israel. I wouldn't trade places with Israel. Now, I know to the Jew first is God's order, and then also to the Greek.

I recognize that. But the first is to the Jew. The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

God reaches down, I think of the book of Ephesians, the beauty of it, when it speaks of the constituency, if I may use that word, and I can't think of another word for how to use it, the constituency of the church,

completely in the control of the enemy, the world's flesh and blood. The second chapter of Ephesians, and then he says, remember where you came from. That's the thing that's worth remembering.

It's the thought that we came from. Without hope, without God, without a covenant relationship to God, but maiden and I thank God by the blood of Christ. Do you take my hand? Yes.

But, I think it means this. If we have to say that it's a parable of service spoken to the apostles, I think it means this. Many that are first shall be last.

If I am first in my own estimation, I shall be last in His. If I am last in my own estimation, I'll be first in His. These apostles thought that they deserved something because they had served the Lord, and the Lord takes the pain to tell them that they actually came in on the latter part of the parable.

Here's something else that makes me think that this has a dispensational connotation. What did I use that word for? Dispensational meaning is because the Jewish people went into an agreement with God in the 19th century to keep His law. Now these men that served from the first hour, they made an agreement and God holds them to that.

What are we talking about? We're still talking about the law, aren't we? I'm glad I've been delivered from sin. I'm glad that I was saved by grace and grace alone. Israel made an agreement and God tells them so.

But for those other men who were hired the 6th hour and the 9th hour, even the 11th hour, the man says and whatsoever is right, I'll give it to you, they were depending on His grace and His grace alone. They came out not to lose it. He says whatsoever the first hour, they made an agreement the others just depended on His grace and do we ever lose out depending on just the grace of our God? May this lesson today keep us from putting our dependence on the Ten Commandments.

I don't think there's any danger in that but I think we're legal to a great degree. Don't put our dependence upon ourselves. Put us upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He will compensate. He will reward. And when He, when we serve Him, we can lose.

Father, we thank Thee for the words of our Lord Jesus. We pray that their meaning, the depth of their meaning will reach into our souls. That they might be so devoted to Him that our lives will just be lived out for His glory and we know that He will reward us in the coming days.

This we ask that we give thanks. May our Savior bless us. Thank you, Lord for saving my soul.

Thank you, Lord, for making me whole. Thank you, Lord, for giving to me my great salvation for which I am worthy.

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