

Why Is It Hard for Rich People to Get to Heaven?

"Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 19:23-24

Most people agree that wealth is relative in the sense that you can usually find people who are both richer and poorer than you; it is an issue of comparison. If this is the case, then Jesus is probably talking about something other than relative wealth.

If you agree that you do not like being dependent upon others for the meeting of your needs, then let's say being rich is having enough to avoid this unhappy situation. It is precisely here that we encounter the issue Jesus addresses. Earlier He said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."¹ Little children have in common their dependence upon others.

Whenever I feel secure in my finances, I should fear for my soul. All who think about it realize that they can lose their wealth far quicker than they obtained it. If I understand that all I have belongs to my Master, and I just steward His assets; if I realize that I am perpetually dependent upon Him to meet my needs; then I may get through "the eye of the needle."

¹ Matthew 19:14

Making Enemies

"Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?"

Galatians 4:16

When as a boy I would ask my father's counsel on an issue, he would ask, "Do you want me to tell you the truth or make you feel good?" I thought at the time that it was a good question, for if I did ask him to tell me the truth I could not get mad at him for his answer. It was said of our Lord Jesus that He came in "grace and truth." No one can withstand God's revealing to him the whole truth; it would destroy him. So in His gentleness, He mixes grace with truth.

Each person is responsible for determining what this looks like in his interpersonal relationships. Like my father, people may ask you to tell them the truth, but that does not mean they can handle the truth. Nevertheless, when receiving the truth, you must be careful not to become angry with those who are honest with you.

My father also told me that there are two kinds of people I should listen to carefully: those who love me and those who hate me; they are the only ones who will tell me the truth. When you look in a mirror and do not like what you see, don't blame the mirror. You can find a mirror that will give a distorted image; it may give you a flattering image, but it is not accurate.

When you are emotionally bruised by the words of others, resist the temptation to get angry with them because they tell you the truth from their perspective – even when you are confident they are wrong. Take it before God and objectively evaluate it, thanking the Lord for those who hurt you.

¹ John 1:14