1. **Intro:**
   1.1. Share on communion after 2\textsuperscript{nd} song – See end notes.
   1.2. Last week we covered the prayers of the Pharisee & the Tax collector.
      1.2.1. True prayer should **humble us** & make us **love others more**.
      1.2.2. We learned last week prayer shouldn’t be like an **attorney** bringing an **indictment** against another man; but that we should be like **children** coming to a **Father**.

2. **KINDERGARTEN KINGDOM! (15-17)**
   2.1. **REBUKED BY THE DISCIPLES! (15)**
   2.2. As Seals & Croft sang, “*We may never pass this way again*” I think this fueled the same urgency, of those who feared Jesus wouldn’t be passing this way again.
   2.3. So, the babes were brought…indicating their parents appraisal & approval of Jesus.
      2.3.1. The **parents** had a desire; the **baby’s** had a need; & **Christ** was all sufficient!
   2.4. Mark tells us Jesus was **greatly displeased**, angry.
   2.5. **He didn’t say** bring them to me, but **don’t keep them from me**.
      2.5.1. Because it seems that you get a child into the **presence** of Jesus, & they go straight to Him.
   2.6. **RECEIVED BY THE SAVIOR! (16,17)**
   2.7. Focus on the **children! (16)**
   2.8. Little children belong with their loving Lord.
      2.8.1. **Q:** Dads, how are you doing in this area? {They in vs.15 is masculine}
      2.8.2. **Q:** Dad’s, Mom’s, anything in your lifestyle that might keep your kids in the future from coming to Jesus? (i.e. hypocrisy)
         2.8.2.1. **Jesse James** killed a fellow in a bank robbery and shortly thereafter was **baptized** in the Kearney Baptist Church. Then he killed another man, a bank cashier, and **joined the church choir** and taught hymn-singing. **He liked Sundays,** Jesse did, but he couldn’t always show up at church. On two Sundays, he robbed trains.
      2.8.3. You probably not **robbing trains**...but would your kids say...
         2.8.3.1. “**Dad doesn’t have to go to church, why should I!”**
         2.8.3.2. “**The way mom acts, I don’t want a part of her religion.”**
   2.9. **Focus on the adults! (17)**
   2.10. **You** – He applies this truth to the crowd.
   2.11. **Receive the kingdom of God** = Welcome God’s **Rule & Authority** into your **heart & life**.
2.11.1. **Children** start with what **adults** have lost… **innocence**!

2.11.2. It’s stooping & entering through the **children’s door**, the **lowly door**, by **trust & humility**.

2.11.3. Little children possess **humility** because they lack anything to boast of, & can make no claim on God.

2.11.3.1. We really don’t have anything to boast of either! - We’re like the **little dog** who acts ferocious & scares away the stray dog…not realizing the intimidation was the **large dog** standing behind us!

2.12. **Receive** – Key “receive” in vs.17.

2.12.1. Ps.116:12,13 “What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I will **take up** the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD.”

3. **RICHES & THE KINGDOM! (18-27)**

3.1. **THE RICH YOUNG RULER COMES!** (18-23)

3.2. **Mark & Matthew** also tell this story. (Mrk 10:17-22 & Mt.19:16-26)

3.2.1. He was most likely a ruler of the local synagogue.

3.2.2. He was engaged on the **highest quest** possible, he was seeking life in its **fullness**, the **abundant plentiful** life.

3.3. **Q:** The ruler’s concern?...to inherit eternal life.

3.3.1. He had some **great qualities**:

3.3.1.1. He was serious about finding out. [Mark – running & knelt]

3.3.1.2. He had obvious **self-dissatisfaction**.

3.3.1.3. He was **ready** to “go for it” he was ready to **do**!

3.3.1.4. He was confident in **Christ’s guidance**.

3.3.1.5. He was young, rich, powerful, religious, moral, & sincere.

3.3.2. He had some **misunderstandings**:

3.3.2.1. He had the **misconception**, eternal life could be won by **good deeds**.

3.3.2.2. He was **overconfident** in his own power to **accomplish** the task!

3.3.3. Although the young man had many **good qualities**, one of them was not **spiritual understanding**!

3.4. **Good** – a polite compliment, but shows low estimate of the word “**good**”.

3.4.1. I see Jesus graciously setting up the conversation, trying to get him to see “**good**” is much **deeper & wider** than he imagined.

3.4.1.1. So maybe he would perceive his own imperfections.

3.4.1.2. Maybe he would see only **God** is **good**.

3.4.2. Christ then meets him on his own ground of **law** & refers him to **usual duties**.
3.5. I’m sure this young man thought he was going to be asked to do something pretty spectacular…but instead, ordinary obligations???
3.5.1. He had Naaman syndrome! (2 Kings 5 esp.13)

3.6. Nobody is saved either by keeping the Law or by becoming poor and generous.
3.6.1. It was our Lord’s way of making him face up to his covetousness.
3.6.2. Outwardly he obeyed the laws Jesus named in v.20; but he forgot about “Thou shalt not covet” (10th com) (Jesus quotes 7th, 6th, 8th, 9th, 5th com)
3.6.3. If we covet, we may end up breaking all the other commandments!
3.6.4. Sometimes your radiator needs water/antifreeze…other times it needs a complete flush!…this man needed a complete flush!

3.7. He rejected the gospel as he loved his possessions more than God & his neighbor.

3.8. He had to grapple with 2 issues: “Go & sell” & “come & follow” [neg & pos command]
3.8.1. He lacked the element of control over his life that comes from outside
3.8.2. Jesus called him to submit his life to control.
   3.8.2.1. Submit, surrender, follow me!
   3.8.2.2. Yield your life to the control of God!

3.9. He went away…where? - Back into the world; to former friends; to the grave; to judgment?
3.9.1. Actually it never says. He ended the story short of that.
3.9.2. I think a great painting would be of him walking away, head dropped, shoulders drooping, hands hanging limp.
   3.9.2.1. George Fredrick Watts painting came close, 1897 (profile).

3.10. Q: Was Jesus’ prescription for this man intended for everyone?
3.10.1. “A doctor does not ask all his patients to take the same medicine.”
3.10.2. The man became very sad precisely because he had a different will of his own.

3.11. Good intentions do not count!
   3.11.1. The wave is mighty but the spray is weak,
   And often thus our great & high resolves,
   In their forming as an ocean wave,
   Break in the spray of nothing.¹ [Mere conviction of sin does not atone!]

3.12. Last week we learned the Tax Collector went away justified, & this week this young man went away sorrowful…what happens at the close of your prayers?²

3.13. So we learn:
   3.13.1. [1] One can be interested in eternal life w/o possessing it.
   3.13.2. [2] One can “obey God rules” but only in a superficial sense.

3.14. This guy missed the kingdom by one garage sale!

¹ Griffith Thomas; pg.280
² Warren Wiersbe; With the Word; pg.682.
3.15. **THE RICH YOUNG RULER GOES!** (24-27)

3.16. This resulted in an occasion to talk about the diff of a rich man entering heaven.

3.16.1. Thus leaving the disciples shocked, as the theology of the day viewed **wealth** as a sign of **God’s favor**.

3.17. **Eye of a needle** –

3.17.1. A **very wealthy pastor** was dying in his mansion, and his flock gathered round to ask him for his last wish. "Before I die," he said, "I would like to take a ride." And they asked the rich pastor what he required for that final ride before entering the kingdom of heaven. And he said, "I would like a **very small camel** and a **very large needle**."  

3.17.2. **C.S. Lewis** once observed that **God can** bring a camel through the eye of a needle but the camel will **not be the same creature** having come through a needle’s eye! 😊

3.18. **Impossible** with men; **possible** with God –

3.18.1. Two great lessons here:

3.18.2. [1] **Many** have learned the lesson it’s **Impossible with men**. Then shrugging their shoulders they **give up in hopeless despair**. And then live a **miserable religious** life, w/o **joy**, **strength**, or **victory**!

3.18.2.1. **Carrie Underwood** sings, “pouring raindrops back into a cloud.”

3.18.3. [2] **Others** learn all things are **Possible** with **God**.

3.18.4. It is **possible** even for a rich man to enter the kingdom with **God**. When a man becomes **linked up with God**, all impossible things become **possible**!

4. **FORSAKING ALL FOR THE KINGDOM!** (28-30)

4.1. **Sacrifice**?

4.2. Following the rulers refusal to “**forsake all**” Peter said, “**We forsook all**”!

4.2.1. Jesus seems to overlook any self-congratulation here, but instead points to His own faithfulness.

4.2.2. **Any sacrifice will be more than repaid!** - Which seems to make ANY & EVERY sacrifice…only a **temporary** sacrifice!

4.2.3. **If I say give me $10, & I’ll turn around & give you $100 now/$1000 later.**

4.2.3.1. That doesn’t sound like a **sacrifice** to give up my $10…but an **investment**!

4.3. **The disciples left all** – not much, but all to them.

4.3.1. **God’s store** includes even widows “mites”.

4.3.2. **The disciples followed** – they broke with the world, which is the real test.

4.4. **Earthly** increase is promised, **Heavenly** blessings assured.
End: Receive the kingdom of God as a little child –

Childlikeness:

4.6.1. Love (a child is cherished for months before a spark of returned love; 
He 1st loved us);
Dependence (a child finds dependence on, & safety in, the care of his parents; believer trusts in Christ);
Humility (children ask a ton of questions showing they need knowledge; believers should be eager to learn spiritual things);
Obedience (children learn to do as told; believers must also... sometimes by difficult lessons!).

4.6.2. This is the Kindergarten Kingdom!

Childishness:

4.7.1. One who is childish wants: his/her own way, own plans, own protection, own world, & be his/her own boss!

4.7.2. The Rich young ruler was an example of this. [poor little man!]

4.7.3. This was the best way to miss the Kingdom!

Ps.131:1,2 “LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me. Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.”

4.8.1. Another version, “Like a baby content in its mother's arms, my soul is a baby content.”

4.8.2. Don’t walk away sorrowful, lay content in His arms of Love!

The city dump. That's what it was that day in 1904 when a young African American woman, Mary McCloud Bethune, saw it. Nevertheless, she and other willing hands built a shack on that desolate place, for she had a dream that, with God's help, she could help other African American women learn to read and write. The first desks were wooden packing crates; the ink was blackberry juice.

As I wandered among the collection of tall buildings, classrooms and dormitories that is now Bethune-Cookman College, I stopped at a plain stone that marks the place where Mrs. Bethune's body was laid to rest at the age of seventy-nine. It had taken more than half a century for her dream to become a reality. The words carved on that stone told her whole story: "She has given her best so that others might live a more abundant life."
The cup in the Lord’s Supper serves as two reminders:
[1] We are to **look back** to the shed blood of Christ, and
[2] **forward** to the Lord’s 2**nd** Coming.
For all Christians, there will be a **last** sharing of the bread and the cup on this side of eternity.
When we meet once again, we will be in Christ’s presence.
One church at the close of communion **raise their cups in anticipation** and say, “**Next time, with Christ!”**

**Welcome To The Table (Poem)**
This is the feast of heavenly wine,
And God invites to sup;
The juices of the living vine
Were press’d to fill the cup.

Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,
With royal dainties fed;
Not heaven affords a costlier treat,
For Jesus is the bread.

The vile, the lost, He calls to them;
Ye trembling souls appear!
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you;
Dear Savior, this is welcome news,
Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome me,
And I shall see His face.

Olney Hymns, **William Cowper**, from Cowper’s Poems, Sheldon & Company, New York