



©2022 Ginger Hertenstein  
SERMON TITLE: **The Two-way Street Does Not Work for Jesus**  
SCRIPTURE: **Mark 10:17-31**  
DATE: **February 27, 2022**  
Online service at [www.fpcd.org/live-stream](http://www.fpcd.org/live-stream)

Read also Exodus 20:3-5; 11-17.

Cultures hold different values as to what constitutes “good” in a person. Each century seems to have its own. For example, The Reformation, in the 16th century defines a movement that reformed religious beliefs. The church was revived and reformed as the Bible was discovered and translated. Christian values flooded into art, music, education, politics—and, the church.

Then there’s the Victorian era, during England’s Queen Victoria and her son’s reigns in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Christian principles highly influenced the culture; values like sexual propriety, hard work, honesty, thrift, a sense of duty, and responsibility towards those who are less well off. During the Victorian era, slavery was abolished; social justice reforms enacted; and voting rights decreed. Freedom was valued. Churches thrived.

What does our culture value? How would you describe today? Have our values changed over the course of your lifetime? How well do Christian beliefs fit into today’s culture?

During Jesus’ time, values were distinct by nationality. Pagans practiced low morality while the Jews valued high morality. Pagans had many gods. The Jews had one. The ill result was that the two groups refused to have anything to do with each other. But that was not always the case. Often non-Jews came to Jesus because something in his words resonated, or they were sparked to explore his values, or they needed help with an unrelenting problem; and he received them.

A young ruler went to see Jesus. He was rich. He was drawn by Jesus’ values. He wanted to know more of Jesus. He humbled himself by bowing before Jesus. Let’s read it. READ MARK 10:17-23

This young man values the law. He knew the law. He knew it was good. Do you? He has lived his whole life to value the law. Do you strive to keep the law? You might describe it as this: “act justly,” “practice mercy,” and “walk humbly with God?”

Do you value living the “good” life?

- ~ Not murdering or even raging,
- ~ Not commit adultery, not even looking at a woman with lust,
- ~ Not stealing,
- ~ Not lying,

- ~ Not defrauding,
- ~ Honoring your parents.

How do these values shape your life? What does our culture believe? Do your values mesh you with the culture, or separate you from the culture? These values are not just what you believe, but what you practice.

If you took the Avoiding Scams workshop, you now know the proliferation of stealing that occurs over the internet. I do not think anyone would say that stealing is okay, but you can see the practice of stealing has increased. We would also say we believe in marriage, but the practice of living together outside of marriage has increased.

Are you sure about Christian values or are your beliefs a little “muddy,” being influenced by the culture?

Jesus had great respect for this young ruler—he loved him for the ways the man had honored God by his humility and his high commitment to God’s law.

Well, Jesus immediately took him up on this discussion about inheriting eternal life. He gave him the hardest saying he could have given him!

Do you find the Bible filled with hard sayings? You think you are doing pretty well and then here Jesus comes with a whammy:

“Go sell everything you have and give it away to people who need it, and you will have treasure in heaven.”  
I doubt that any of us would consider doing that. It’s too risky!

Then he adds, “Come, follow me!”

The young man kind of shrunk away and went in the opposite direction.

You might think, well good thing the rich guy is not getting in, he’s evil. You see, the value about wealth today is that you cannot gain great wealth without taking advantage of people; or exploiting people; or putting yourself first. Tim Keller says, “Even having a lot of wealth is seen as an injustice” in today’s society.

The disciples, though, could not believe their ears. They thought he was a good person because in Jesus’ time, wealth meant God had blessed you because you were good. Their 1st century values attributed wealth to a reward from God. So they reacted in a completely different manner:

This amazed them. But Jesus said again, "Dear children, it is very hard to enter the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked. Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God" (Mk 10:24-27)

So, Jesus sidestepped the issue of wealth by pointing out true wealth. Being a disciple is true wealth.

Give up your life and put your life into the hands of Jesus.

Once Jesus said it this way:

"No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Matthew 6:24)

Jesus rationalizes:

"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6:25)

We sort of know this. Remember the song, "Can't Buy Me Love?"<sup>1</sup>

I'll buy you a diamond ring my friend  
If it makes you feel alright  
I'll get you anything my friend  
If it makes you feel alright  
'Cause I don't care too much for money  
For money can't buy me love

I'll give you all I've got to give  
If you say you love me too  
I may not have a lot to give  
But what I've got, I'll give to you  
I don't care too much for money  
Money can't buy me love

If you marry for money and the guy goes broke, then what have you got?

If you live for money (or pleasure, the things that money can buy), and you get to the end of your life, what is going to gain eternal life if you never learned to live by faith?

Say you don't need no diamond ring  
And I'll be satisfied  
Tell me that you want the kind of things  
That money just can't buy

What Jesus is offering the rich young man is radical faith. Jesus is saying, You cannot have that seen security and follow me fully.

That two-way street does not work for Jesus because you will be devoted to one and despise the other.

Faith is rewarded. But it comes by "following Jesus." READ Mark 10:28-31

Then Peter began to speak up. "We've given up everything to follow you," "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property, for my sake and for the Good News, will receive now in return a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and property-- along with persecution. And in the world to come that person will have eternal life. But many who are the greatest now will be least important then, and those who seem least important now will be the greatest then."

What drives your values?

- ~ Enhancing/building up your family? If happens by putting Jesus first.
- ~ Pleasing yourself or looking good to others? That's the two-way street.
- ~ Pleasing God? That's what Jesus offers – now and forever.

Which side of the street do you want to be on?

AMEN

<sup>1</sup> Lennon-McCartney Partnership, "Can't Buy Me Love," A Hard Day's Night album, 1964.  
704