**As is typical in Mark. Jesus and the Disciples are on the move. Jesus and the disciples have just managed to get their act together and set of on to next town to continue the job of proclaiming the kingdom of God.**

**As they journey together a man comes running up to them and opens this debate about eternal life or mare likely life in the kingdom of God.**

**Initially he gets a bit of a cold response form Jesus, the man had obviously heard of the radical rabi and the wonders he had been doing, so may have been taken aback by Jesus’ response to being addressed as the good teacher.**

**But then Jesus mellows, you can imagine the scene, initially Jesus was racing on, trying to get on with the next thing on the mission agenda, wishing this man would just leave them alone, maybe he saw something in the mans eyes, his stance or presentation that made him slow down, stop and engage with the man’s deeper need to know what it would take to enter into the kingdom of God.**

**Jesus opens the discussion in familiar territory, he points the man in the direction of scripture using the commandments.**

**Rather than hit him with all 10 Jesus reduces** only refers to the commandments that highlight how we should treat others.

If we were there, we would see the relief spreading over the man’s face, he has been a Jew since he was a boy and a faithful Jew at that, He has kept all of those commandments.

Jesus fixes him with a loving gaze and then issues the greatest challenge the man will ever face, Jesus issues one more command, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.”

Silence, the man’s look of relief is shattered and he begins to realise the magnitude of what he has asked, what will it take to inherit eternal life?

Dejected, the man goes on his way.

And then Jesus compounds the situation by turning to the 12 and asking, “How hard will it be for those who have wealth to enter the Kingdom of God!”

I wonder what the Disciples made of this, I wonder if like at Caesarea Philippi Jesus’ words are met with expressions of confusion, the Disciples all looking at their feet hoping that Peter would say something.

 It’s almost as if Jesus can see the disciples trying to work out what he’s said and what this may mean to them. So, Jesus repeats the question, but this time he leaves off the bit about wealth. Jesus slims the question down, but by doing so makes the problem wider, It seems that regardless of your financial standing, entering, and participating in God’s Kingdom is difficult, not just for the rich but for all of us.

Jesus, as then goes on to provide a visual aid to help them contemplate the problem, Jesus likens it to a camel, the largest animal around, being fit through the eye of a needle.

If we were hearing this for the first time, you would likely respond the same way the disciples do, “Then who can enter into the kingdom of God”

At this point Jesus offers them some hope by stating that entering into the Kingdom of God is impossible on our own. But Jesus has come to make the impossible possible. The key to the kingdom of God is learning to follow Jesus.

Then the penny drops and Peter true to form, pipes up, like us we left it all to follow you.  Jesus responds, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

Yes, Jesus says, you have been faithful.  You have left it all to follow me, and you won’t go without.  because you have followed me, you’ll receive so much more in return, houses and siblings and children and fields.

However, Jesus as always is honest about the potential cost to, and you will also face persecution and so it was that for 11 of the 12 who stood with him that day would be executed for the gospel.

Today we meet a man searching for a way to understand how to follow the will of God and Jesus tells him sin no uncertain terms that **He is the way the truth and the life** and that all those who follow him **to the degree that their own will gets lost** in His will be inherit the kingdom of God.

Jesus tells the man to let go of all that holds him back from a life devote to the Gospel, to let go of self and wealth and follow him.

I wonder what Jesus is saying to us today in order to encourage us to serve him to the end?