

Bible Study

For small group discussion or personal journaling

Mark 10:17-31

*also references 10/10/21 sermon by **Rev. Sharon Snapp-Kolas**;
hear on our FB page, UMCSierraMadre; text contact sierramadreumc@gmail.com
"First Steps"*

Day 1. First steps. Read Mark 10:17-31.

Jesus is setting out on a journey; his disciples are accompanying him. A man runs up and kneels:

- Name some of the first steps you have taken in your life. Try to think of at least 10.
- Name some first steps you have taken along with other people – it's ok if you already named some of these in your first list. This second list might include your family, your church, a club, a school you attended, or other similar groupings of people.
- Name first steps that have been taken for you, on your behalf, similar to Neil Armstrong's "One step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Can you think of other examples of first steps taken by others on your behalf?

Reflect/discuss/journal.

Day 2. Fear and first steps.

- If you haven't already, name some first steps that are truly challenging and difficult. There were a few in Sunday's sermon to get you started:
 - that first step towards an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting
 - asking for help with depression
 - calling a marriage counselor for help in our marital relationship
 - talking with a son or daughter about a worry we have about what's going on with them
 - stepping out of the closet, whatever closet we've been in – maybe for years
 - deciding to follow a particular calling Jesus has been placing on our heart, and we've been avoiding it – maybe for a long time

- Note Jesus' reference to the Ten Commandments in v. 19. Read Matthew 22:37-39.
- Discuss in your group or journal Jesus' review of basic Jewish Law with the young man.

Day 3. First steps for a man. Read Mark 10:17-27

Read also Matthew 19:20 and Luke 18:18. Mark refers to him as "a man."

- What does Matthew add?
- Luke?
- How does the exchange between Jesus and the young man end? (v. 21)

The first step Jesus asks this man to take is clearly challenging for him. Mark's gospel says, "he was shocked and went away grieving..." (v. 22)

- What is the first step Jesus asks him to take?
- Why does this shock and grieve the man?
- Read again Mark 10:25. Reflect and discuss in your group or journal.

Day 4. What must we do to inherit eternal life? (v. 17)

Jesus asks the young man to make big sacrifices. And... Jesus says, "Come, follow me."

- Should we show up for worship, give an offering, participate in the life of the church and its mission to the community? Yes. What does this look like for you right now? Discuss in your group or journal.
- Will doing all this stuff win me a place in heaven? No. Discuss this "works righteousness" perspective.
 - What do you think it means for the young man in our Bible reading?
 - What does it mean in our church, community, society, and world?
 - What's the deal with Jesus and his countercultural approach to everything – in this case, that we can't earn our way into eternal life like we are told we can earn our way into so many other things in this life?
- What must we do to inherit eternal life? – That's the wrong question! The right question is, "Lord, I love you; what do you want me to do for you today? Discuss.

Going deeper... Success and failure. (vv. 28-31)

Theologian John Killinger writes about two paintings:

- “The Failure that Looked Like Success” – “the rich man whose crops produced so abundantly that he decided to pull down his barns and build bigger ones, and he said to his soul, ‘Soul, eat, drink, and have a great time, for tomorrow you die.’”
- “The Success that Looked Like Failure.” – “Jesus dying on the cross, the crown of thorns on his head, his chin drooping against his chest, the crude nails in his hands, and all his friends off somewhere in hiding.”

Jesus said:

“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... and in the age to come eternal life” (vv. 29-30), and he give us the assurance that “many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.” (v.31)

- Discuss in your group or journal how Jesus’ words and Killinger’s themes of success and failure might give us hope as we take first steps along the journey of faith.

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