

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

*A call to return to the teachings of this Jewish prophet of the poor (1 of 2)*

**Mark 1.14-15**—After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

**Matthew 20:8-16**—When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’ But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ **So the last will be first, and the first will be last.**”

**Luke 4:18-19**—The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

**Mark 8.14-19**—The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. “Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.” They discussed this with one another and said, “It is because we have no bread.” Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: “Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” “Twelve,” they replied. “And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” They answered, “Seven.” He said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

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"[Jesus's] basic issue, still basic today, is that most people have solved the human dilemma for themselves at the expense of everyone else, putting them down so as to stay afloat themselves. This vicious, antisocial way of coping with the necessities of life only escalates the dilemma for the rest of society . . . I am hungry because you hoard food. You are cold because I hoard clothing. Our dilemma is that we all hoard supplies in our backpacks and put our trust in our wallets! Such "security" should be replaced by God reigning, which means both what I trust God to do (to activate you to share food with me) and what I hear God telling me to do (to share clothes with you). We should not carry money while bypassing the poor or wear a backpack with extra clothes and food while ignoring the cold and hungry lying in the gutter. This is why the beggars, the hungry, the depressed are fortunate: God, that is, those in whom God rules, those who hearken to God, will care for them. The needy are called upon to trust that God's reigning is there for them ("Theirs is the kingdom of God") . . . Jesus' message was simple, for he wanted to cut straight through to the point: trust God to look out for you by providing people who will care for you, and listen to him when he calls on you to provide for them."

- James M. Robinson, *The Gospel of Jesus*

*It's a Wonderful Life*: an 1946 American Christmas fantasy drama film produced and directed by Frank Capra, based on the short story "The Greatest Gift", which Philip Van Doren Stern wrote in 1939 and published privately in 1945.

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## Two Narratives

**Matthew 6.24-33**— No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the gentiles run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

**Luke 12.32-34**—Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Mark 10:21-24**—Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."



RENEWED HEART MINISTRIES

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

*A call to return to the teachings of this Jewish prophet of the poor (2 of 2)*

Matthew 5.45—He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust.

Missional Instructions  
Exchange of Food for Care

“This warrants pause. Food for care. In the ancient world, those who lived on the margins of peasant life were never far from death’s door. In the struggle to survive, food was their friend and sickness their enemy. Each day subsistence peasants earn enough to eat for a day. Each day they awaken with the question: Will I earn enough to eat today? This is quickly followed by a second: Will I get sick today? If I get sick, I won’t eat, and if I don’t eat, I’ll get sicker. With each passing day the spiral of starvation and sickness becomes deeper and deeper and finally, deadly. Crossan has argued that this little snippet of ancient tradition is critical to understanding why the followers of Jesus and their empire of God were compelling to the marginalized peasants who were drawn to it. “Eat what is set before you and care for the sick.” Here is the beginning of a program of shared resources of the most basic sort: food and care. It’s an exchange. If some have food, all will eat; if any get sick, someone who eats will be there to care for them. The empire of God was a way to survive—which is to say, salvation.”

Patterson, Stephen J.. *The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins* (p. 75). HarperCollins. Kindle Edition.

**Luke 19.1-9**—Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

**Luke 16.13-20**—“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus . . . “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus . . .”

**Matthew 23.8-12**—But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

**Matthew 20.20-26**— Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

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When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

**Luke 22.24-27**—A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

**Galatians 2.6-7**—As for those who were held in high esteem—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—they added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised.

**2 Corinthians 11.5-6**—I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge.

**Mark 10.43**—Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

**Sam Wells**—“The traditional way of understanding discipleship as one of taking people out of the world because it is a hostile place, promising them a better place in God’s heavenly kingdom, has been radically transformed by this insight. Jesus call us rather to change the world in such a way that it will cease to be the hostile place it is, as we construct the way for God’s reign on earth . . . The one thing everyone seems to agree on today is that there’s plenty wrong with the world. There are only two responses to this—either go and put it right yourself, or, if you can’t, make life pretty uncomfortable for those who can until they do. When we take stock of our relationship with the powerful, we ask ourselves, ‘Does the shape of my life reflect my longing to see God set people free, and do I challenge those who keep others in slavery?’” (Introduction to *Binding the Strong Man: a political reading of Mark’s story of Jesus* by Ched Myers)

## Shared Table

Egalitarian

Economic

NonHomogenous

Inclusion

Listening (Preferential Option)

Humility

Faith

Safety, Compassion, Justice

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