

“The Etiquette of Approaching Jesus” Mark 10:13-27 (Matt. 19:13-26; Lk. 18:15-27)

ETIQUETTE

- Etiquette is defined as: a code of conduct, written or unwritten, that governs expectations of social behavior in a specific setting, according to the contemporary norm.
- There is proper etiquette from everything to table manners, to golf, to writing and receiving invitations, to cell phone use.
- In the 20th century (which many of us grew up in) the supposed expert on rules of etiquette was Emily Post – remember her?

In the early 20th century here are just a few of the acceptable rules of etiquette for men at the dining table – recorded in “The Gentlemen’s Page from 1903.

1. One must wear a jacket when dining at the table. A gentleman must pass muster by dressing well, showing his good breeding
2. Do not put your elbows on the table, or sit too far back, or lounge
3. Never make a disagreeable noise while eating, coming from any part of the body
4. Do not open the mouth while chewing, but keep the lips closed. It is not necessary to show people how you masticate your food
5. Do not break your bread into the soup, nor mix with gravy. It is bad taste to mix food on the plate.
6. Never allow butter, soup or other food to remain on your whiskers
7. Never indicate that you notice anything unpleasant in the food. Never make a great display when removing hair, insects or other disagreeable things from your food. Place them quietly under the edge of your plate.

Contemporary email etiquette for business (selected)

1. Be concise and to the point
2. Use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation
3. Do not write in CAPITALS
4. Do not forward chain letters or petitions requiring signatures
5. Avoid attaching many pictures or other documents
6. Read your email before you send it

Contemporary “Redneck” rules of etiquette (selected)

2. Re: NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY. Always identify people in your yard before shooting at them
2. Re: A DEATH IN THE FAMILY
3. Even if you’re certain that you are included in the will, it is still considered tacky to drive a U-HAUL to the funeral home
4. Re: PERSONAL HYGIENE. While ears need to be cleaned regularly, this is a job that should be done in private using one’s OWN car keys
5. Re: DATING. Always offer to bait your date’s hook, especially on the first date.

6. Re: ENTERTAINING IN YOUR HOME

A centerpiece for the table should never be anything prepared by your taxidermist

- TODAY we look at “The Etiquette of Approaching Jesus” taught in two adjacent and contrasting stories in Mark, Chapter 10: the story of children coming and the rich young ruler coming
- We are bid throughout Scripture to “Come” to the Lord – but there is an appropriate way and an inappropriate way – thus, we might say there is an “etiquette” to approaching Jesus
- In our “Mark My Words” Series in the Gospel of Mark, we have marking the words of Jesus that speak directly to us across the centuries, as well as in the context of the Scripture stories.
- TODAY we mark the words of Jesus in Mark 10:14 where he says: **“Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”**

OUR SCRIPTURE TEXT: Mark 10:13-27

- 13 And they *began* bringing children to Him, so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them.
- 14 But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.
- 15 "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all."
- 16 And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands on them.
- 17 And as He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and *began* asking Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

[Matthew 19:16 inserts “what good thing”]

- 18 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.
- 19 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'"
- 20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

[Matthew 19:20 adds him saying: “what am I still lacking?”]

[Matthew 19:21 then adds: “if you wish to be complete. .” {lit: “perfect”}]

- 21 And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."
- 22 But at these words his face fell, and he went away grieved, for he was one who owned much property. *[Matthew adds in 19:22 that he was a “young man”]*
- 23 And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"
- 24 And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

- 25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
- 26 And they were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"
- 27 Looking upon them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

In verses 13-16, the account of the children coming to Jesus, we find the RIGHT WAY to approach Jesus – the proper etiquette

In verses 17-27, the account of the rich young man, we find the WRONG WAY
THE WRONG ETIQUETTE OF APPROACHING JESUS (10: 17-27)

A. The approach must be correct

At first, the rich young man's approach seems appropriate, as recorded in v. 17

1. He came enthusiastically – "running up" (unique to Mark)
2. He came reverently – "knelt before Him" (also unique to Mark)
3. He came respectfully – calling Him "Good Teacher"

Surely God is worthy of our enthusiasm, reverence and respect - these are always appropriate in approaching Jesus, yet apparently the man had misguided motives and understanding

1. We must not come enthusiastically only to receive, but to BE WITH Him
2. We must not come in reverence without knowing WHO IT IS WE APPROACH - God
3. We must not come respectfully, believing only that he is one of many sources of good, but that He is the ONLY SOURCE OF GOOD – GOD ALONE

This man furthermore sought to "inherit" (Mark) or obtain" (Matthew and Luke) ETERNAL LIFE – what all mankind needs to seek and find. This is commendable – seemingly a right approach. Yet Jesus sees through his seemingly sincere desire as wanting eternal life as a commodity, rather than a relationship. It was something he wanted to "obtain" or "inherit" – like a ticket to heaven, rather than the VERY LIFE OF GOD in ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP. God's gift of ETERNAL LIFE is the very gift of GOD HIMSELF, in our lives. It is "eternal" not because it will last forever, but because HE is the gift and HE IS FOREVER, and HE IS LIFE.

B. Keeping the Law cannot bring us to God and give us eternal life. Two reasons:

1. We are not able to keep the law perfectly
 - a. *Romans 3:20 By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin"*
2. The Law was never MEANT to bring us to God. It was meant to show us that we could never keep the Law and that we needed God's grace coupled with our faith *Galatians 3:24 Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.*

- Since this (obviously) Jewish man sought to live by the law, and knew nothing of grace, Jesus mentions 5 of the 10 commandments as that which will inherit him eternal life.
- Since the rich young ruler sought to find God and eternal life by doing good works, Jesus gave him an additional command to follow that He knew the man could not keep – namely sell everything and give it away. This was not meant to discourage the man, but to disarm him from following after works and cause him to seek a relationship with Jesus.
- This is still God’s tactic today. It is only when we discover the impossibility of achieving rightness through doing right that we can begin to discover rightness through KNOWING THE ONE WHO IS RIGHT (Good).
- The man leaves, disheartened with what he sees as an impossible task. Sadly, THIS WAS THE POINT – but it should have led him to SEEK FOR GRACE.
- Jesus reiterates the truth to His disciples: when he teaches, with the example of the camel and the needle, that following rules is a dead end to entering God’s kingdom. Man cannot and will not achieve eternal life on his own effort – but with God (giving the grace and faith for a relationship with Him) it is possible.
- **THE PROPER ETIQUETTE OF APPROACHING JESUS (10: 13-16)**
- In our desire for RELATIONSHIP we note in Mark 10:13 that Jesus desired to TOUCH the children. That’s what he wants to do for us – and that should be our greatest desire – to be TOUCHED BY JESUS in relationship and blessing.
- *James 4:8a Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

4 PROPER RULES OF ETIQUETTE IN APPROACHING JESUS

1. The etiquette of BOLDNESS

- a. Come not shyly, but confidently – knowing we are called to come
- b. *Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence [boldness] to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.*

2. The etiquette of INNOCENCE (non-entitlement)

- a. God is not in our debt – we are fully in His debt. He doesn’t owe us anything.
 - i. *Psalms 100 Come with joy & thanksgiving and (vs. 3:) know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us and not we ourselves*

3. The etiquette of TRUST

- a. God is good – all the time. All good things come from Him.
- b. *Proverbs 3:5,6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.*

4. The etiquette of ABBA

Jump into His arms and ask for your heart – always wanting God’s will above all

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba Father!” [referencing Mark 14:36]