

# *April's Fool*

On April 1st 1976, British astronomer Patrick Moore made an announcement on BBC Radio 2 as follows; "At 9:47 a.m. today there will be a 'once-in-a-lifetime' astronomical event occurring."

"The planet Pluto would pass behind Jupiter", he said, temporarily causing a gravitational alignment that would counteract and lessen the Earth's own gravity. He then explained that if people were to jump in the air at the exact moment that this planetary alignment occurred, they would experience a strange floating sensation. When 9:47 AM arrived, BBC Radio 2 began to receive 100s of phone calls from listeners claiming to have felt the sensation. One woman even reported that she and her 11 friends had risen from their chairs and floated around the room.

It was an April Fool's joke.

Then in 2005, April 1<sup>st</sup>, the media reported that NASA had discovered water on Mars and that they had actual pictures on the official NASA website. Those who went to the website to check it out saw this picture of a glass of water balanced on a chocolate Mars bar. **1** April Fools! So...

## **2** *What makes an April Fool's joke funny?*

The idea is to get someone to believe something that may be outrageously absurd, but also might be things that people just want to believe but may not have any foundation in truth at all. In these 2 incidences, and mind you, these are just two out of hundreds of famous April Fools jokes that have been perpetrated.

Today is April 1<sup>st</sup>, traditionally the day on which pranks of this sort are done in the name of April Fools day.

Strong's defines the Hebrew word...

Keciyl (kes-eel') OT:3684

**3**

Properly, fat, i.e. (figuratively) stupid or silly: KJV - fool (-ish).

From the Greek there are a number of words that are defined as fool...

**4**

A) Aphron (a-frawn') NT:87

Signifies "without reason" (a, negative, phren, "the mind"), "want of mental sanity and sobriety"

**5**

B) Anoetos (a no/hto) NT:453

Signifies "not understanding"

**6**

C) Moros (mwro) NT:3474

Primarily denotes "dull, sluggish"

**7**

D) Asunetos (a su/neto) NT:801

Denotes "without discernment," or "understanding"

I find it interesting that these Greek words, and there are a couple of others that are also defined as "Fool" each carry a little different nuance, a subtlety that the English language doesn't allow for. Aphron says without reason, that seems to speak to ability or at the least desire. Anoetos seems to speak to ignorance while moros again appears to be talking about one's ability to understand. Asunetos seems to point a different direction and that is of choice. It is one thing to not be able to grasp a concept or to be slow to understanding, but it is entirely a different matter to make a choice to not understand. Do you see the difference?

In this lesson we are going to be talking about choosing to not understand.

**Mark 10:17**

**8**

17 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Here we see a young man who so perfectly illustrates the vast majority of people today who claim to have faith in God. This young man thought he believed and apparently did so with a great sincerity of faith. So much so that he came to the Teacher, Jesus Christ, and wanted to know what he needed to do to receive eternal life. He thought he believed, but what he believed, made him worse than an **April fool**. What he believed may very well have made him an **Eternal Fool**.

Now, before we get to what he believed that was **NOT** true, I think it important that we know what he believed that **WAS** true.

Notice what this man does; He **RUNS** up to Jesus. Why does he do that? Can you remember the last time you ran? If you're like me, you ran because you were in a hurry. You needed to do something/get somewhere or get away from something. This man RAN to Jesus because he needed to get somewhere... to Jesus. And he needed to get something, something he was sure that Jesus could give him. But what was it that Jesus had that this man needed so badly?

Well, look at his first question:

**9** † "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Now, that seems to be a rather odd question for him to ask, I mean - think about it. This man would seem to be a faithful follower already. He claims to have kept the Law to the best of his ability all his life...

**Mark 10:20**

**10**

**20** And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

He's young, rich and professional, he doesn't live off others. But he's **HUMBLE**, he kneels before Jesus. And he's **EAGER** to know what he needs to do to please God. On top of that he seems to be a highly **MORAL** man. He strives to keep the 10 commandments. In fact he believes he's kept those commandments well ever since he was a boy.

Even Jesus likes him.

**Mark 10:21**

**11**

**21** Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him

Jesus even seems to use this young man to illustrate a point...

**Mark 10:23-25**

**12**

**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** 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."

This is a difficult concept to grasp. This young man was wealthy and Jesus says that it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man to get into heaven. There are some different schools of thought as to what Jesus meant...

**13** † The Persians expressed the concept of the impossible by saying it would be easier to put an elephant through the eye of a needle. The camel was a Jewish adaptation (the largest animal in Israel was a camel).

**14** † Some theorize that the needle Jesus was speaking of was the Needle Gate, supposedly a low and narrow after-hours entrance found in the wall surrounding Jerusalem. It was purposely small for security reasons, and a camel could only go through it by stripping off any saddles or packs and crawling through on its knees. The problem with this theory is there is no evidence such a gate ever existed.

- 15** ✦ Others claim that the word translated “camel” (Greek: kamelos) should actually be “cable” (Greek: kamilos). Then the verse would read that it is easier for a cable (or rope) to go through the eye of a needle.
- 16** ✦ I think that the most likely explanation is that Jesus was using hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates for emphasis. Jesus used this technique at other times, referring to a “**plank**” or “**beam**” in one’s eye in **Matthew 7:3-5** and swallowing a camel in **Matthew 23:24**.

Whatever you choose to believe about what Jesus was saying, His disciples didn't understand it! They ask...

**Mark 10:26**

**17**

**26** They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

It would seem that they look at this young man and think if this guy can't do it, then who can? But this rich young ruler seem to believe all the right things...

- 18** ✦ He believed that he was lost (*He doubted he had eternal life*)
- ✦ He believed that he needed to DO something to please God (“*what must I DO?*”)
- ✦ And he believed that Jesus could give him the answers he so desperately sought
- He believed the right things, but his problem was...

**19**

### ***He was a FOOL***

He walked away from the only one who could answer his question. And he walked away because he believed something about this eternal life that was not true. When he comes to Jesus, having obviously heard about the power of His teachings and miracles, recognizing Him as being from God and speaking for God the man calls Him...

**20**

### ***Good***

Jesus responds with...

**Mark 10:18**

**21**

**18** And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

Why? Why this exchange? What was it that Jesus saw or heard in this man that prompted it? If we are to understand the term "good" here to mean sinless, then Jesus qualifies. Note this comment from the Pulpit Commentary...

**Mark 10:18:** According to the best authorities, the words in Matthew (Matt 21:17) read thus:

**22** "*Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good.*"

The word "*good*" is the pivot on which our Lord's answer turns, both in Matthew and here. The question is doubtless put to test the young ruler's faith. If, as may be supposed, the young man used the term, "good Master," as merely a conventional expression, it was not the proper address to apply to our Lord, who at once transfers the praise and the goodness to God, that he might teach us to do the same.

After correcting the young man, Jesus then tells him what is good...

**Mark 10:19**

**23**

**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.'"

When the young man claims to have kept these commandments from his youth we see a reaction from Jesus that we looked at earlier...

**Mark 10:21** 24

21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him

Why? What was it about this man that Jesus appreciated? There really is only one answer to that, it had to be the sincerity that the young man displayed in eagerly coming to Jesus. He appears, on the surface at least, to truly desire to receive the reward of eternal life. That is what is seen in the world today, so many are sincerely desiring the reward of eternal life, but like this young man, they are fools. It is not because they don't have the ability to understand. It not because they are dull or even slow, they are fools because they have chosen to be.

Was it that he believed his money could buy the reward, that that was where he put his trust, or was it that his greed and avarice were such that they overwhelmed his faith? There is a quote from Paul Humphrey...

25 ***"I always point out that the man's sin was not that he had money, but rather that money had him. In a sense his god was wealth. He was self sufficient."***

This is the concept of what Jesus meant when He cited how difficult it is for the rich to enter Heaven. It has nothing to do with money. It has to do with the trust that is put into money as opposed to trust in God.

This brings us to a discussion of degree. Just exactly how much money does it take before one can put his trust in it? I don't think any of us here would classify ourselves as rich, but that's because our standard of comparison is skewed. We compare ourselves to the bill gates of the world and say we are not wealthy. But what happens when we compare ourselves to the poor of India or Mexico or any even with the homeless and destitute of this country, are we rich in their eyes? The answer is obvious. It is not the degree of worldly wealth that means anything, it is the degree of trust put into that wealth, as opposed to the degree of trust that is put into God, Christ, and the Word. For whatever the reason, the young man appears to have put his trust into his wealth. How do we know this? Because Jesus pointed it out to him and quite frankly, to us. Jesus says to this young man "You know the commandments. There almost seems to be a sense of relief in the young man's reponse..."

**Mark 10:20** 26

20 And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

Is he thinking to himself "Hey, I've got this." But in his sudden excitement, he missed the commandment Jesus had left out.

27 ***"Thou shalt not COVET"***

This rich young ruler was a covetous man. His money and his possessions were important to him. And they were so important that they were robbing him of his ability to be close to God. Money, possessions, things, this world can blind us to God Jesus said...

**Luke 16:13** 28

13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Why is that man cannot serve both God and money? Basically there appears to be a couple of main reason...

29 1) God won't stand still for it

The very idea of placing anything between yourself and your loyalty to God is something He will not tolerate. To love your money, or anything else, more than you love God is idolatry.

**30** 2) The love of money will enslave you and rob you of God's peace.

**1 Tim 6:9-10**

**31**

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10** For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

The young man was a fool. When told by Jesus what he needed to do...

**Mark 10:21**

**32**

**21** 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."

Did Jesus' answer have anything to do with the man's wealth? The answer is no. It had everything to do with attitude. And we have finally arrived at the real crux of this lesson.

This young man knew the Law, he came to Christ to find what it is beyond the Law that would bring him to eternal life. Christ gives him two things that are simply said but enormous in application.

**33** † Sell all you possess

This was a test to see if the young man was ready to place his trust in the Lord rather than his wealth. This is the same test we all face. We can't come to God until we are willing to give Him our all, with no reservations.

The second part of the Lord's answer...

**34** † Come follow me

Here then is the answer. Where have we put our faith and trust? Have we given up everything to follow the Lord? Have we given up anything to follow our Lord? That is what Christ is telling this young man, to receive the reward of eternal life you must be willing to give up the world, give up lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

If we are not willing to give these up, we cannot receive the reward. Maybe the most difficult of these is pride. Am I willing to bend my will to God's, with all that entails? Am I willing to subjugate my stubbornness, my opinions, my agendas, to God and the effort to teach and bring others to Christ? These all speak to pride.

The Lord told the young man to give up the things that bind him to the world and to come follow Him. But...

**35**

### ***The Young man was a Fool***

**Mark 10:22**

**36**

**22** But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

I guess the only question left for us is..

**37**

### ***Am I a Fool?***

If we aren't willing to give it all up for Christ, then we are.