

Hung Up
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My son Caleb and I went cycling with a friend on our vacation last week. We were flying going over stumps and going through all these turns and this is on what's called the "A" trail. There is "A" "B" and "C" at Tyler State Park and so we're on the "A" trail and we're just killing it man. We're like is this all they got?! We love it! Our friend is at least a mile and a half behind us. He is out of shape and he was struggling. So I am the king of mountain biking and I'm leading my son and we're going up the hill and I look back at Caleb and I am honestly huffing and puffing and when I look back at him he's breathing through his nose still. So we're going up the mountain and as we go up there it was a nice ride. Day two happened though. Our friend didn't make the bike ride with us on day two. He decided to stay back with our family at the camper to make sure everything was okay. Caleb and I were like let's ride "A" then "B" and then let's ride "C" and the next day we'll ride "D". So you have to take "A" to get to "B" to get to "C" and so we're riding having a great time, cutting it up and the weather was perfect and it was so much fun and then finally we get to the split, the fork in the trail where "B" goes this way and "C" goes this way. Here's the thing about the trail system there that I didn't know. I've been riding bikes for a while and I didn't know they had different symbols for different types of trails. I'm always going so fast past the trail signs that I don't notice them right, because I'm that good. We go up past this and there is this one that we're on, the "B" trail and the little placard for this is blue with a river running through it. We get to this fork and this "C" trail turns out to be a black placard and it's got a heartbeat looking thing on it, I guess for cardio right? So, I'm thinking I got this and I look at Caleb and say do you want to take this? I don't know if you can handle it son. He says yeah lets go. I'm like, are you sure, and he says lets think about it so we stop and get some water and power bars and we sat there and enjoyed just hanging out in the woods together and we decide to take it. I love biking and I've got these special shoes that clip into these special pedals that are supposed to give you this ability to give you more push and more pull on your pedal whenever you're trying to get over rocks and stumps and whatever else is out there. I've got my feet clipped in and these two diesel engines (my thighs) are just going, just knocking it out and I'm leading Caleb and all of a sudden I'm reminded of this sign as I look ahead of me and there is a mountain in front of me. I promise you there was snow on it. We get up there and I'm thinking this is getting hard. I'm gearing down, putting it in granny gear, down as far as I can and then all of a sudden here comes Caleb right by me. I yell to him to be careful up there and that I would be there in a minute. Caleb gets further up ahead of me and gets to the top of the ridge and I'm just pedaling up and finally I get closer and these two diesel engines decide they were done. So I've got my feet clipped in and there is a problem when your feet are clipped in, when you stop forward motion, there is

only one place to go and that's down unless you've got incredible balance. So I stop on this ridge and I can't go anywhere. It's not rolling backwards or forwards so what happens? I fall right on my side. There were some rocks and a sea of poison ivy. It's beautiful until you land on it and I fell down and my feet are still clipped in and Caleb's like Dad are you okay? I'm like yeah, it's just part of biking, I'll be right there. So I'm trying to get my foot out of my pedal and I finally get it out and I get up and get back on the mountain and just start to go back up the hill and Caleb goes over the next ridge. What happens to Coleman on the next ridge...same thing. Five stupid times I fell off that bike! Caleb's just pedaling up and waiting, pedaling up and waiting so I get up there and I am dying because one of these falls I get this huge gash in the middle of my shin and my leg is swelling up and it's not because I was working out it was because I had an injury and so I didn't know I had poison ivy yet. This is what happens to you days after. This is the payment you have for enjoying the outdoors with your children. So we go and we keep riding and we're almost done and Caleb's at the next ridge ahead of me and we gotten past the snow by now, then I break a stupid chain. My chain goes flying, I walk back there pick it up and put it in my pouch and walk my bike the rest of the way. I went up there and Caleb's hiking back up looking for me, he's already loaded his bike in the truck so we go back to the campsite and I walk up like nothing happened right. I've got blood running down my leg and telling my friend he would have never made it. When I was preparing for this morning I was realizing that is so very similar to the way some of us end up having to live our lives every week. We'll get to a certain point and we will stick and we won't be making any backward motion or making any forward progress so we just kind of fall and sometimes we get hurt right there and some of us have found ourselves in that exact situation as you sit in this room today. Some of us financially are in a painful spot, you have stalled out, you're hung up and maybe you've fallen over and you're hurting. Maybe your marriage is gotten to a place where it's stalled out and it's hurting and maybe you're just hung up there and you don't know what to do next. Well guys, there's a dude in scripture that we're going to look at that had a very similar experience. Spiritually he was hung up, he was stuck in a spot and he wasn't quite sure how to move on to the next place and when we're talking about that I want you to go ahead and turn your bibles to Luke chapter 18. We're going to look at a passage today about a guy who was hung up and how Jesus proposed to him how to fix that and in order for us to really understand this as completely as we can today, I want you to remember this, this passage is in three out of the four gospels so it's got to be important. There's got to be some truth in there that we want to hang on to today. So I want you to keep that in mind, I want you to hold your spot there and we're going to talk about that in just a minute. Here's the thing about me biking and doing that kind of stuff, usually when I fall like that I try to blame it on stuff. Stupid shoes, stupid pedals, stupid gravity, things like that and if I could blame those falls on Congress somehow I would but it probably wouldn't work out. The only person I can blame that on is me and my lack of ability, lack of balance or lack of forward motion. There is a guy that we are

going to look at, this rich young ruler who had found himself in a particular position in life and he had accomplished many great things but he had now an opportunity to do something very different, to make some different kind of forward motion, he had a choice to make and the choice was all his. So that's where we are going to focus and talk today. David has been talking to you out of the book of Exodus, talking about the Israelites and their process through getting out of Egypt and going out and being God's people and discovering God out in the wild country, the wilderness. Here's the thing, there were in a very similar position too. There were in a slavery pattern, a holding pattern, a place where they weren't making any progress at all and then Moses comes in and God does these plagues and Pharaoh decides at the end of the day, finally, to let the Israelites go and when he let the Israelites go so they could be God's people and go worship God and be where God had asked them to be and where he was taking them, when they did that they went through the town and gathered all of the things that they could. David will hopefully hit on this a little bit more next week. They went door to door and got gold, animals and whatever they could get door to door before they left on their journey when Pharaoh had released them. They did this because they knew they were going to need these things for their journey. They had all of the stuff that they might ever need right at their fingertips, yet they were still wandering in the wilderness years later asking God what now, what now. It's very similar to this rich, young ruler that we are going to look at here in this passage. He was a guy who had acquired a lot of stuff and just like the Israelites he had done a lot of good things but like the Israelites this guy had a hang up. Like me and cycling, I was hung up on something, I got stuck and the Israelites did the same thing, they got stuck and they had to pay attention to God but they didn't always do that and this guy right here actually went to Jesus and said, Jesus what do I need to do. Jesus told him and then we are going to look at what his response was compared to ours. If you look at this, Luke chapter 18 verses 18-30 says this, Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question, Good teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life? Why do you call me good Jesus asked him. Only God is truly good, but to answer your question, you know the commandments, you must not commit adultery, you must not commit murder, and you must not steal, must not testify falsely and honor your father and mother. So the man replied, Jesus, I've obeyed all of these since I was young, I've done all of this stuff that you just named so I'm good, okay. But what do I need to do now? When Jesus heard his answer Jesus said there's still one thing you haven't done. Sell all of your possessions and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come and follow me. When the man heard this he became very sad because he was very rich. When Jesus saw this he said how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. In fact it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Those who heard this said, then who in the world can be saved. Jesus replied, what is impossible for people is possible with God. Peter said Jesus we have left everything to follow you, we've left our homes, everything. Yes, Jesus replied, and I assure you that everyone who

has given up house, or wife or brothers or parents, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will be repaid many times over in this life and will have eternal life in the world to come. Here is the most hitting, most powerful part of this passage for me. As I was thinking about it and I thought about this passage and thought about the bike ride and this guy being hung up on something, I realized there are some things in my life that I am stuck on that are keeping me from being who God has truly created me to be fully. The most hard hitting, convicting part in this passage for me is what Jesus said to the guy after he had claimed that he had been doing some good things and really trying to live the right way. Even though this guy mentioned a lot of good stuff, giving to the church, helping out the poor, being a good guy, Jesus said you still lack one thing. There is still one thing, and Jesus went on to point out that one thing that the guy lacked which Jesus is good at by the way, he may be speaking to your heart at this very moment and you're sitting here thinking Jesus don't talk to me about that right now, I'm busy, I'm listening to Lee because he likes to tell funny stories but what your listening to possible right now is the heart of God saying you have something in your life that is keeping you from being everything that I've created you to be. You still lack one thing, and then Jesus went on to point out the one thing that the guy lack and followed it up with a radical challenge. A radical challenge to make an extreme commitment and sacrifice. Listen, Jesus doesn't play games alright. Jesus is the real deal, Jesus deals with life and death, eternal life and death. He's not just the fun loving Jesus and this person we picture children running up to and sitting on his lap. He is also this Jesus that will confront you right at the heart of what you're dealing with. He doesn't usually beat around the bush. He likes to get down to it because he knows how important the human heart is and the condition of our heart and our relationship with him. It is important to him and he will confront you on it. Here's the thing that's hard. This rich, young ruler got fronted out. He has Jesus in his face saying, listen there is one thing you haven't done. Sell everything and give it to the poor, then you can follow me. That guy wasn't into that was he? Jesus always comes after what's most dear to us. Whatever it is that's holding you back is probably something you've held on to for quite some time. Maybe some of you have something that you're hung up on that you've been hung up on since you were a child or teenager. Maybe it's some private sin or maybe it's something someone has done to you, maybe it's something someone has said to you that is keeping you're from being who God has created you to be. Maybe it's just that thought life that you have that you don't really want to turn over to God because it's your brain it's not his. Maybe it's your finances like this guy and you really like your money. You like it to stay in your bank account. Maybe it's your time and you're like I like coming to church, I like coming to worship but I don't really want to serve because there are plenty of people to do that. No there's not. We're shorthanded every week. What is it that is yours that you have said, you know what God, I think you're great and I'm going to sing some songs to you and I'm going to give you some money, throw some cash your way, but I'm going to hold on to this. What is it that you're hung up on? What is it that keeps

you from being a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ? I want you to listen to what happened in Luke 18:23, Jesus said sell everything right, the dude's response, he walked away. You don't walk away from Jesus! Jesus is helping people, leading them to salvation and you walk away from that because Jesus told you to give up all your money? Are you insane? I guess so. But some of us in this room do the exact same thing today. We walk away from Jesus because we think we've got a better way of doing it. The price for this guy was literally too high. He was doing some good things, he even had the guts to approach Jesus, he was even man enough to say, you know I'm doing a lot of good stuff but what it is really Jesus that I need to do? I'm mean that was pretty gutsy to do that. Could you ask Jesus what you needed to do? Guess what? He's going to tell you, he's going to let you know and this guy was confronted with that and chose his own way. He knew there was something wrong with his life. He knew there was something that he was missing and all of us in this room; we know there is something missing in our lives. We know it and we realize it and many of us, when we came to Christ we gave our lives to him, we said Jesus I know that I've messed up and I know I need forgiveness and I want to ask you to come into my life and be my Lord and my Savior. Some of us in this room have done that, but some of us in this room have not. But all of us can probably admit in all our lives there's something missing a lot of days and for many of us that's simply whether you're a Christian or not, it's the tightness of your relationship with Jesus Christ. That emptiness is meant to be filled by Jesus himself and that's one of the truths that this rich, young ruler came face to face with. He knew that he was missing something, but when Jesus pressed down on him he chose his love for stuff over becoming radically devoted to Jesus. He knew what he needed to do, but he refused to do it and walked away. He chose his own terms rather than Jesus' terms. Let me ask you to write this down if you're taking any kind of notes, here's the question of the day. Are you hung on your ability or are you centered on Jesus' simplicity? Here's the thing, most of this in the room feel like we can fix all life's problems on our own. We're good to go; we've got this just like this rich young man. He's like you know what, I've done these five things, and it's interesting that Jesus only mentioned five commandments out of the ten. This guy did a lot of good stuff, he really did but that's not enough. He knew what he needed to do but he refused and walked away. He chose his terms rather than Jesus'. See Jesus was really simple, I mean the master of the universe, and we're not talking about He-man here, we're talking about Christ. We're talking about this one who is the creator of everything. He only wants one thing and that's everything. He wants all of you and now if you're sitting in here today and you're not a believer, you've not placed your trust and faith in Jesus Christ, you haven't given yourself to him, you're like, I'm not given Jesus nothing because I like to keep some of my stuff. Well that's what's hard about following Jesus is that he wants all of us, everything. This guy it was money, for some of us it's our thought life, for some of us it's our marriage, for some of us it's our family, for some of us it's our jobs, for some of us it's our stuff, for some of us it's our passion for our lawn. Some of you guys will spend a million times more

minutes or hours on your lawn then you do in the word of God. God's the one that makes the grass grow, not you. Spend time with him, anyway, many of us in this room we're hung up on something. But what is it? What is it that the Lord continues to press into you yet you refuse to obey? I know that most of us in here have something, I know I do. You may have that one thing, but you might also have ten or fifty one or a hundred and one. What is it that you've not given to him? If you call yourself a believer what is it that you're holding back? I know you're thinking, well Lee, I'm not holding anything back, I give it all. Rethink that. Ask God to look into your heart. Is there something really that you're grasping because that's what's cool for you and that's what's important to you. That's your area and God's not allowed to have that. I mean a lot of us fall into that pattern and we get hung up on that. Hung up on our ability instead of being centered on God's simplicity of giving him everything. Listen; if we will do this, whatever this thing is, turn it over to him, whatever that one thing is in your heart, in your life, then we will be privileged to be able to live out another verse that I want you to look at with me. It's Ephesians chapter 3 verse 20. Maybe you're a single person today, maybe you're young and you're looking for that future mate. Maybe you're an older single person, maybe you're divorced, and maybe you've gone through some really tough stuff in your life. Maybe you're in the middle of a crisis' right now, maybe you're a teenager and you're like I need to date somebody to find myself worthy, here let me ask you to think about this. Maybe you're dating somebody; maybe you're hanging out with somebody that you know is not the Lord's best for you. You know you should break up but the thought of being single haunts you, you're scared to death of being by yourself. Don't let a date hold you back from God unleashing Ephesians 3:20 on you. Maybe your marriage is just not going good at all. Maybe your adult children that you raised in your home are completely straying away from the way that you raised them. Maybe you're going through something at work and your holding on to that thinking you can manage and handle it and you're not enabling God to help you live in Ephesians 3:20 life. It says this, now all glory to God who is able through his mighty power at work within us to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Listen, us holding on to our one thing is what keeps God from doing this in our life. To do infinitely more than we can ever ask or imagine. I want that to happen in my life, I want to see God do more than I can ever imagine that he can do in and around me. I want to witness that, I want to be a part of that and you know probably many of you that are believers in here, you want the same thing. Maybe you're in a job that just pays the bills. You know the Lord is leading you in a different direction and you're like in this economy, what are you talking about. You're saying that maybe I should leave my job because I have seen God lead me in this direction? I don't know, maybe. That's between you and the Lord. But if God is leading you to do something like the rich man to give up your finances, to give up whatever, will you be willing to do it? It's a tough situation man; I'm not going to lie, it's tough. Maybe you want to totally sell out and be who God created you to be and you want to do this but you fear what might happen. Listen, hell is too

hot for you to live in fear. If he calls you to do it, then do it. Don't let fear hold you back from God unleashing Ephesians 3:20. I could go on and on but let me end this section with this, what did the rich young ruler walk away from? He walked away from this; he walked away from what could have happened in his life. When he said no thanks Jesus, he walked away from what could have happened in his life and some of us in this room when we were a teenager we became a believer in Jesus Christ and then Jesus said I need you to give this up and we said no, I've got other plans God. We walked away and wasted ten, fifteen, twenty years of not living fully devoted for Jesus Christ. This guy walked away from possibly being one of the people that ended up writing the New Testament because of God's power and action in his life, because he chose his own way rather than God's. He got hung up on his own stuff and if you're hung up on your own stuff you're going to probably miss what God has best for you. Because he knows better for us than we do, he's got more for us. Ephesians 3:20 tells us that but here's the deal, he walked away from what could have happened in his life, what would he have become if he would have completely sold out to Jesus? What about you? What could you become if you completely sold out to Jesus? I mean everything. There was a lady in our last service that talked to me afterwards and she said that was exactly what I needed to hear because I have been a Christian since I was a child but I have not given Jesus everything. I started tearing up. A lot of us live a lot of life without given everything to God. Life is too short for us to blow through the next ten or twenty years to look back and say what might have been if I would have devoted my life to Jesus. I bet you that this guy who Jesus confronted right there, the rich young ruler, probably when Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead, I bet that guy saw that and thought man I should have done that. I should have sold everything, I should have followed Jesus. Living life with regret because we have not fully devoted ourselves to Jesus Christ is a really sad way to live. I don't want to do that. I would guess most of us in this room don't want to do that either. We'll never accomplish great things for God without first making sacrifices. So what are you holding back, what is the stuff that you're holding on to? What are you not surrendering to him, your fear, your money, your career, your family, your life? What is it? It's kind of like today we're sitting at a stoplight. You're sitting at a red light and you've got the brakes on and then the light turns green and you have a choice. Do I step on the gas and go or do I stay here and tick off all the people behind me? You have that decision to make; the ball is in your court at that time. Try that on the way home it's kind of fun. Here's the thing, we have a choice and a decision to make right here in this moment, will you press on the gas and move forward or will you stay stalled out where you are and fall over and possibly get hurt and get poison ivy spiritually speaking? Will you stay where you are or will you make progress because you're doing what God has said to do instead of considering your own thoughts as greater than his? Where are you on that? Some of us in this room have our one thing or our few things that are keeping us from that and some of us in this room; our one thing is that we've never given our lives to Jesus. We went to VBS as a kid, we've been to church for years,

but we've never asked Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. You just never done it, you never got around to it, we had other things to do. You know what? That may be your one thing that's keeping you from being everything that God has created you to be because you haven't given yourself to God. You haven't truly said I want you to be my Lord. When you ask Jesus to be your Lord, a lord is not like he comes out and checks out a few things. A Lord governs everything, the whole deal and if you haven't done that, well today we're going to give you an opportunity to do that. The bible says that if you will believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, then you will be saved. Saved from what? Saved from yourself and your own ideas of what it takes to satisfy God. Of what it takes to get to heaven. Because what it takes is very simple, what it takes is everything. Turning everything over to Jesus Christ no matter what it is and that my friends, is what Jesus is confronting us about today? Are you hung up on your own ability or are you centered on Jesus' simplicity of giving him everything. My prayer for us is this that we will be able to live in complete surrender and if we can live in complete surrender we'll get to experience that Ephesians 3:20. God never asks us to give something up without blessing us with something even greater so let's go for it. What are you hung up on? What's causing your pain? What's keeping you from where God would have you go?