

Daily Bible Study

“Who Then Can Be Saved?”

Mark 10:23 - 27

July 17 – July 23, 2011

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –As we return to our study of Mark’s Gospel we pick up the text at **Mark 10:17-31**. Lord willing, we will teach at least three lessons from this section of Scripture in weeks to come but for this weeks lesson we focus on **Mark 10:17-22** and we will see one *“Problem with Possessions”*; namely that they can be a hindrance to total trust in Christ as they are in this case before us involving this man who comes to ask Jesus a question. This text will show us that one of the things a disciple of Jesus must renounce in their pursuit of the Kingdom of God is the inordinate love of riches and possessions. If you remember back to Jesus’ teaching in the parable of the soils we have clearly seen how the *cares of this world* and the *deceitfulness of riches* lure, choke, suppress, and distract from entering and growing to maturity in the Kingdom of God (**Mark 4:19**). The incident here in our text is used by Jesus to teach His disciples concerning the dangers of riches and possessions. Many people both in Jesus day and today believed riches were an indication of God’s pleasure, a sign of His favor and a reward for good conduct. Jesus actually taught that *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven”*. Jesus does not say that the rich or those who possess wealth and riches are excluded from the Kingdom but He is very clear that those whose hearts are captivated by possessions and will not submit themselves to His Lordship and demands will not enter the Kingdom. Like the famous illustration of the boy with his hand in the vase who will not release the coin to be free and able to pull out his hand many, and I mean MANY people will miss entering the Kingdom because they refuse to surrender to Jesus; to repent and release all and totally trust in Him. It is interesting that the disciples, almost unknowingly, have in fact have left everything to follow Jesus (**Mark 10:28**). We see the call to trust Jesus alone involves not only the giving up of riches but as **Mark 10:30** illustrates this may include a renouncing of family ties for the sake of the gospel as well. Note also from **verse 30** that all this has its true reward. Read our text for this week: **Mark 10:17 - 22** *“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, teach and feed me from Your Word this week.

TUESDAY – Mark 10:17-18: “Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.” As we begin to unpack the text we find out that Jesus was *going out on the road* and *one came running* to Him. We learn from all the Gospel writers combined that this was a young man, **Luke 18:18** calling Him a “*ruler*” implying he was a leader in a local synagogue. The Greek text also informs us that He owned “*great possessions*”, much property. In summary, this man was apparently a wealthy, moral, significant civic and religious leader. In an act that would be very unusual for a wealthy man in this time and culture to perform in public, this guy comes *running* and *kneels* before Jesus. He is seemingly sincere, not there to trick and deceive but rather to genuinely ask Jesus a question; more on the question momentarily. His excitement, interest, and enthusiasm are apparent and obvious. He begins with *Good Teacher* and Jesus seizes on this statement and begins to help this man examine his “worldview” as we have recently talked about in Wednesday evening Bible Study. Matthew omits *Good* and abbreviates the man’s question to *Teacher* but records Jesus saying “*Why do you ask me about what is good?*” As you could imagine there is much debate as to the differences in these writers but we need not get tied up in anxiety over it. The Holy Spirit wrote through these men and these men often described and abbreviate and “tell the story” as the unique individuals they were. The point remains the same as we combine the stories, Jesus is challenging this mans superficial understanding and use of the word *Good*. The man is using it in one sense but Jesus is saying you are not using this word in an adequate way when you nonchalantly address me as *Good Teacher*. If you want to contemplate goodness, meditate on God who alone is *Good* and His Word which is an expression, declaration, and description of His goodness. Furthermore, since God alone is *Good* and you are calling Me *Good*, are you aware that I am in fact this *Good* God? The question the man asks Jesus concerns what the man must do to *inherit eternal life*. This man’s conception of eternal life would be tied to his understanding of Scripture such as **Daniel 12:2** and most likely be influenced by the teaching of the Pharisees who believed in the resurrection. He is therefore asking Jesus what he must do to partake in the resurrection of the just at the end of the age? He wants to know in today’s vernacular “What do I need to do to go to heaven?”

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to see You, understand You, and fear You as the God who alone is Good. Jesus, thank You for living that perfect righteous “good” life in my place.

WEDNESDAY – Mark 10:19-20: “*You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’*” And he answered and said to Him, “*Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth*”. In **verse 18** we were reminded that this man believed *inheriting eternal life* was dependant on actions, specifically his actions, something he must do. While it is true that one must repent and believe the Gospel for salvation, the Gospel story itself tells us that we are saved not by what we do but what Jesus alone has done for us in our place (His perfect life of obedience and substitutionary death in our place, tasking our deserved punishment). Furthermore, the very act of repentance and faith are gifts from God which He gives us and enables us to do (**Acts 11:18, 2 Timothy 2:25, Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:5**). Jesus says, if you want to talk about doing the “*Good*” of Scripture and the God of Scripture, “*You know the commandments...*” Jesus now is recorded quoting from the Decalogue. We again see the issues that come from eyewitness testimony recorded by different and unique individuals as Mark has *Do not defraud* which is unique to him and most likely is paraphrasing the commandment against coveting. Regardless, Jesus is teaching this man the law is to lead him to the gospel. Jesus wants him to understand that he cannot inherit eternal life by the law for all it can do is show him his sin. After he sees this he will know that his only hope is in the gospel. Jesus takes this man to the second portion of the Ten Commandments, where he and most men are confident of themselves. Jesus puts out the list of commandments and shows this man the incredible burden they are upon a sinful person and how much is actually required by God before He grants eternal life. The Good God and His Good law require perfection and you mister along with every other human being that has ever lived, except Jesus, can’t attain it in what you do. Sadly this man, like the Apostle Paul before his conversion (**Philippians 3:4-6**), without blinking an eye tells Jesus *all these things I have kept from my youth*. This is the blinding power of sin beloved. This man felt he was blameless before God. Read **Philippians 3:7-11** and see what Paul learned concerning this attitude of being blameless before God based on what we do.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for opening my eyes to see that the law stands over me and accuses me of violating You and Your goodness and then for mercifully and graciously showing me the beauty of the Gospel. Jesus thanks for Your righteousness which is mine by faith.

THURSDAY – Mark 10:21: “*Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him...*” This first portion of **verse 21** is one of the most incredible phrases in Sacred Scripture. This phrase is again unique only to Mark’s record of the incident. In it we see one of the great paradoxes of Scripture; namely that God can love the lost sinner and yet not for one moment or in any degree lower the standards of entering the Kingdom and obtaining forgiveness of sin. Jesus’ *agapao (love)* would not overlook a required response of faith, repentance, and trust in Him. Like my father always said, “God will not sacrifice His holiness on the altar of His love”. Jesus looked at this man, saw him in his lost condition and felt great compassion for him. We would do well to learn from our

Savior as to how He hurt and grieved as He looked at and saw the multitudes lost in sin; multitudes that refused to repent and believe. People who He would one day at the final judgment cast from His presence into eternal darkness and suffering of hell (**Matthew 25:31-45**) because the refused to obey the Gospel (**2 Thessalonians 1:6-10**), refused to acknowledge and turn from their sin and place their total trust in Him alone for salvation. May we reach out with love and zeal to proclaim to the lost around us the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to be compassionate toward the lost as Jesus was.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Mark 10:21–22: “Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “*One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.*” But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Jesus tells this man “*One thing you lack*”. Jesus once told a scribe in **Mark 12:34** “*You are not far from the Kingdom of God*”. This man in our text like the scribe in chapter 12 came to Jesus sincerely, not like the religious leaders who knew clearly what they were to do but rebelled and defied Jesus. Even though this man was not outwardly and obviously rebellious or hostile to the gospel call of Jesus we will see he did not obey it and this was the tragedy here. He comes to the right man with the right question but makes the wrong choice. We are attracted to this mans seeming honest and earnest zeal in keeping God’s Law and his humble determination (kneeling, bowing before Jesus) to find an answer to his quest for eternal life. Jesus calls him to do something contrary to his entire life’s direction, *Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.* Jesus is saying, if you are to *inherit eternal life* and *enter the Kingdom* you must let go of what you are trusting in now and trust only in Me. You must let go of what you love more than me (money and possessions). This man who thought he was keeping the Commandments was not even keeping the first of them as He had another god before God (**Exodus 20:3-4**). Jesus gave him a choice; riches, money, possessions OR the Kingdom. He understood the call because he refused to give up his wealth, his real god, and follow Jesus. Ironically and obviously, he left Jesus and refused to obey His words, but Jesus’ words did not leave him.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You for giving me freely what I lack in the Gospel of Jesus.