"HOW TO GAIN ETERNAL LIFE"

Matthew 19:16-26

9-2-2018

INTRODUCTION: Jesus loves little children (v.13-15)

- Jesus is not too busy so as to ignore children (v.13) *He has time for them!*
- Jesus invites little children to Himself (v.14a) *He welcomes them!*
- Little children can obtain God's kingdom (v.14b) *He saves them!*

***This rich young ruler, like all of us, needed to have eternal life!**

What did he have to "do" to be saved?

I. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE JESUS for who He was (v. 16-17a)
(He needed to recognize that Jesus is God)

II. *This rich young man needed to*
SEE HIMSELF at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a sinner whose god was money, and needed to repent)

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

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V. 16

All three of the synoptic gospels contain this account (cp. Mk. 110:17-30; Lk. 18:18-30).

This question is obviously sincere. He really wanted to know how he might "gain" eternal life.

Mark's gospel tells us of the earnestness of this zealous young man. He *"ran up to Him and knelt before Him"* (10:17).

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V. 16

"What good thing shall I do?" - This man thought that eternal life was acquired by "good works," by his "doing" something "good."

However, the Bible teaches that this is not so (Ti. 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9; Is. 64:6).

"What good thing" (singular) - This man thought that by going up to the *"Good Master"* he would learn the "secret" one good thing that would gain him entrance into God's Kingdom.

"Jews of the time believed that performing some single act would guarantee salvation" (Ryrie note).

V. 17

"Why callest thou me good?" - By this answer, it's as if Jesus didn't hear the question; but indeed He did.

By making the statement ***"There is none good but one, that is God"*** Jesus is making at least two points:

1. Since none are good except God, all men are sinners (cp. Rom. 3); therefore sinners can't do good to go to heaven.

2. Since none are good except God, Jesus (if He is *"good")* must be God! Jesus does not make this statement to say that He is not God, but to cause this man to see that He is God, if He is good.

Just as God is the only One who can forgive sins (Mk. 2:7), and Jesus forgave sins (Mk. 2:10), proving He is God -- so God is the only One who is *"good,"* and Jesus is good, again proving He is God.

If Jesus ever committed one sin, He could not be considered *"good"* (according to God's perfect standard of goodness). Yet He was sinless.

I Pet. 2:22 - *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth"*

Heb. 7:26 - *"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens"*

Heb. 4:15 - *"...[He] was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin."*

He *"knew no sin"* (II Cor. 5:21). Jesus boldly said: *"Which of you convinceth me of sin?"*

Jesus is saying: "If I am 'good,' then I must be God, because God is the only one who is 'good'."

Verse 17, when thought about, is actually one of the greatest proof texts for Christ's deity in the Bible!

This man viewed Jesus as a ***"good teacher"*** (v. 16), but needed to see that He was a "good God."

II. *This rich young man needed to*
<u>SEE HIMSELF</u> at he really was (v. 17b-22)
(He needed to realize he was a <u>sinner</u> whose god was money, and needed to repent)

V. 17

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" - The imperative verb "keep" (in the present tense) refers to a continual obedience, a non-stop holding on to and observing of God's commands.

Has anyone (outside of Jesus Christ) ever ***"kept"*** God's commands perfectly, every second, of every minute of every hour, of every day, of every week. . . month. . . year of his/her life? No!

Hypothetically, if one did obey perfectly all of his/her life they would be "perfect," showing that they had no sin, and would go to Heaven. However, no one has ever done so, including this rich man. And Jesus wanted Him to see this.

"Which?" The rich man, wondering if He had kept the commands, asked, "Which?" to see if He had met the requirements for eternal life.

Note: Of these six commands, four are negative (v. 18) and two are positive (v. 19), and all are man-centered. That is, they are man-to-man commands.

V. 18

Jesus selectively listed commands which referred to relationships with others.

V. 18-19

Jesus intentionally did not mention the first four of the ten commands which focus on man's attitude toward God; nor did He cite the greatest command (Deut. 6:5; Mt. 22:38), which is the most difficult to keep.

The one commandment that especially applied to him, Jesus did not quote: *"Thou shalt not covet"* (Ex. 20:17).

Outside of Christ, no one has ever kept the commands perfectly. God gave His perfect commands to an imperfect, depraved people, <u>not</u> so that the people would "<u>do</u>" and be saved, but so that they would see that they cannot "<u>do</u>" and need God's mercy and grace to be saved. Rom. 3:20 - *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

Remember the commands not to murder or commit adultery have a deeper application. Unrighteous anger and lustful thoughts in one's heart actually make one a murderer and adulterer in heart (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28).

"Jesus did not introduce the law to show the young man how to be saved, but to show him that he needed to be saved. The law is a mirror that reveals what we are" (Wiersbe, p. 72).

He thought he kept this commands from his ***"youth up***" but in fact he could not have, because he was not even willing to give what he had to the poor. v. 21

V. 20

Yet he asks, ***"What lack I yet" -*** This man, although he had a great deal of confidence in his self-righteousness, still saw that he was missing something. A gnawing emptiness bothered him. He knew he was empty on the inside. There was a void in his life that hadn't been filled, not even by money.

Luke tells us that this man was a *"ruler,"* most likely a ruler in the synagogue, revealing this man to be not only rich, but also spiritual in the eyes of the world.

V. 21

Jesus said this with love in his heart for this man (Mk. 10:21 - *"Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."*)

"God. . . come" - This command involved repentance and faith.

Repentance = a turning from anything that is keeping you from turning to Jesus Christ.

"Thou shalt have treasure in Heaven" - It required faith for this man to believe this.

Jesus said earlier: Mt. 6:19-21 - *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Why did Jesus tell this man to ***"sell all"***? Answer: He wanted this man to see his own selfish, idolatrous, materialistic, covetous spirit.

Jesus actually had touched the root of this man's sin (by giving this request).

"Give to the poor" - If fulfilled, this would validate his claim to ***"love his neighbor as himself"*** (v. 19).

"Should all believers sell everything they own? No. We are responsible to care for our own needs and the needs of our families, so as not to be a burden on others. We should, however, be willing to give up anything if God asks us to do so. . . If you are comforted by the fact that Christ did not tell his followers to sell all their possessions, then you may be too attached to what you have" (Life Application Bible note).

"Perfect" - complete; to reach God's goal for one's life. This perfection is not attained is simply because the rich man gave up his wealth, but because his wealth would no longer be a hindrance to him coming to Christ. One must ***"come"*** to Christ to be ***"perfect"***.

It was Christ's finished work on Calvary that *"perfects"* us forever (Heb. 10:14 - *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

V. 22

"He went away sorrowful" - He left the scene grieving (with deep sadness in his heart).

Why? Because he could not have his "cake and eat it, too"; i.e. He could not have *"eternal life"* (v. 16) and still have money as his God, his trust.

"He had great possessions" - the more you have, the harder it is to give it up.

This man's joy and security was all wrapped up in the bundle of wealth he had.

What was it that kept him from eternal life? According to Jesus, the man's problem was that he *"trusted in riches"* (mk. 10:24 KJV).

Having riches does not necessarily mean that you are materialistic and trust in them.

EX: Abraham and Job had vast wealth, yet were men of great faith (their complete trust was in God).

No man can serve 2 masters. You cannot serve God and mammon. You have to decide! Who or what are you going to live for? Anything that would prevent or

hinder you as a Christian from following Christ must be repented of!

III. *This rich young man needed*
GOD TO DO what was HUMANLY IMPOSSIBLE (v. 23-26)
(He needed God to work a miracle of grace in his heart)

V. 23

It is extremely difficult (but not impossible (v. 26) for a person of vast wealth to be saved, because materialism:

1) blinds one's eyes (from what matters most)

2) binds ones heart (is an obsession)

3) becomes one's trust (rather than "in God we trust," it's in money we trust. They never sense an utter dependency).

V. 24

"Camel. . . eye of a needle" - A hyperbole to emphasize Christ's point.

"Needle" - sewing needle.

You couldn't even get a camel's whisker through the eye of a needle!

V. 25

"Disciples. . . exceedingly amazed" - In Matthew's context, Jesus is constantly amazing the disciples with teachings that were radically different than what they had been taught before. (cp. Mt. 16:21-22; 17:23; 18:1, 22; 19:10, 14, 25; 20:26; 21:20-22)

"The disciples were astonished. They thought that if anyone could be saved, it would be the rich, whom their culture considered especially blessed by God" (Life Application Bible note).

"Who then can be saved?" - If it would require a miracle the size of a camel going through the eye of a needle for a rich man to be saved, what is it like for the rest of us? (maybe the size of a dog or cat going through the needle's eye? Still an impossibility!).

V. 26

"Beheld" - No doubt Jesus looked upon them with compassion and pity (in light of their desire to be saved).

"With men this is impossible" - This "salvation" is an absolute impossibility for man to accomplish on his own. Man cannot do anything to save himself. (*"Can a leopard change his spots, or an Ethiopian his skin. . .?"*

"With God all things are possible" - He is omnipotent!

The greatest miracle is the true and genuine salvation of one soul.

If God can save the chief of sinners, He can save you! (I Tim. 1:15-16 - *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.")*

CONCLUSION: