

THE MAN WHO LEFT ALONE

“Until my ONE Thing is done — everything else is a distraction. Gary Keller
The Man who went to Hell with Heaven on his mind

Title: THE MAN WHO LEFT ALONE

A Rich Man Meets Jesus Mark 10:17-31

¹⁷As Jesus started on his way, a man came running up to him. Kneeling down in front of him, he cried out, **“Good Teacher, what one thing am I required to do to gain eternal life?”**

Note: What must I DO? One who held the office of rabbi in the Jewish community was considered one of the most distinguished and honorable persons in the community. It was the custom of the Jews that anytime the father, the patriarch of the family, entered a room, his children were required to stand in respect for him—with one notable exception. If one of the sons became a rabbi, then the custom was that when that son entered the room, his father would stand in respect of his son because of this elevated office.

So, it is with great respect that this young man asks Jesus, “Good Teacher, what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?” The Psalms in the Old Testament talked about inheriting life, and so often in the Old Testament the notion of inheriting life was related to obedience to the law. **This man comes with that assumption that the only way he will ever inherit eternal life is by doing something that would make him just before God.**

¹⁸Jesus responded, **“Why do you call me good? Only God is truly good. ¹⁹You already know the commandments: ‘Do not**

murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give a false testimony, do not cheat, and honor your father and mother.’ ”

20The man said to Jesus, “Teacher, I have carefully obeyed these laws since my youth.”

21Jesus fixed his gaze upon the man, with tender love, and said to him, “Yet there is still one thing in you lacking. Go, sell all that you have and give the money to the poor. Then all of your treasure will be in heaven. After you’ve done this, come back and walk with me.”

22Completely shocked by Jesus’ answer, he turned and walked away very sad, for he was extremely rich.

Note: He was sad at this word.” That word is not strong enough. He was downcast. In the Greek it says that he was “appalled” or “shocked” by these words. He was devastated.

23Jesus looked at the faces of his disciples and said, “How hard it is for the wealthy to enter into God’s kingdom realm.”

Note: what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?

24The disciples were startled when they heard this. But Jesus again said to them, “Children, it is next to impossible for those who trust in their riches to find their way into God’s kingdom. 25It is easier to stuff a rope through the eye of a needle than for a wealthy person to enter into God’s kingdom.”

26But this left them all the more astonished, and they whispered to one another, “Then who could ever be saved?”

27 Jesus looked at them and replied, “With people it is impossible, but not with God—God makes all things possible!”

28 Then Peter spoke up and said, “Can’t you see that we’ve left everything we had to cling to you?”

29 “Listen to my words,” Jesus said. “Anyone who leaves his home behind and chooses me over children, parents, family, and possessions, all for the sake of the gospel, 30 it will come back to him a hundred times as much in this lifetime—homes, family, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, possessions—along with persecutions. And in the age to come, he will inherit eternal life. 31 But many who are considered to be the most important now will be the least important then. And many who are viewed as the least important now will be considered the most important then.”

In the story of the rich young ruler **two truths** stand out before us. First we learn that in many ways our lives may be excellent, and yet lack **"one thing."**

Secondly, we discover that this "one thing" is single-hearted devotedness to Christ.

Of all the people that came in contact with Jesus, in His earthly ministry, none presents a more pitiful and pathetic end than that of this rich young ruler.

There was so much at the commencement of his story that gave promise to a bright future as the curtain rose on this potential disciple of Jesus; yet, in the end, we read he "he turned and walked away sad." As far as we have any record, in Scripture, he is never again found in the company of Christ again.

Even though he meant well and had good intentions , he missed the blessing of the company of Christ for eternity because he lacked the courage to complete the challenge before him.

This young man was marked by excellence and branded with moral integrity. He was a bright young man, he came "running" to the Lord. He was reverential for he "kneeled" in His presence.

He had courage

I. v. 17a **STOOD ON HIS STATUS**

- A. **He Had Privilege** – All three Gospel writers tell us that this man was rich. Matthew also tells us that he was young, **Matt. 19:22**. He lived a life of privilege. The world was his! Anything he wanted was well within his reach.
- B. **He Had Position** – Luke tells us that this man was a “*ruler*”, **Luke 18:18**. This probably means that he was an influential leader in the local synagogue.
- C. **He Had Prestige** – According to all the information we have about this man, it appears that he was very moral, **v. 20**. He lived a good life. People all over that region probably looked up to this young, rich, moral, religious leader.

(Note: From every outward appearance, this young man was riding high on the pinnacle of success. He was everything a mother or father could want their child to be. If you looked at his life, you might think that he had it all. But, appearances are deceiving!

In spite of everything he has going for him, this young man had one mighty big skeleton in his closet! He had much, but with his much, he had an itch he could not scratch!

He had found that his youth left him unsatisfied. His money had left him feeling unfulfilled. His morality, his clean living and his religious activity had not been able to satisfy the deepest longing

of his soul. His swift climb up the social ladder had failed to give him what he wanted most: peace with God.

II. v. 17b-20 **STOOD ON HIS SEARCH**

A. v. 17b **His Concern** – This guy had a lot going for him, but he knew that he was missing the most important thing of all: a saving relationship with Almighty God.

This man sees his need and he desires to do something about it.

He came “***running***” to Jesus, this shows us that he senses the urgency of his need.

He “***kneeled***” before Jesus; this shows us that he understands that there is something special about Jesus.

- He comes while Jesus is in “***the way***”. That means that Jesus is in the middle of the road when this man comes and bows down before Him. This shows us that he is not ashamed to admit that he has a spiritual need.
- He came pondering the issues of eternity. He wants to know how he might “***inherit eternal life***”.

(Note: This young man has a lot going for him. He had it all! Yet, with all his power, his possessions and his privileges, he still does not know the answer to the greatest of all questions.

He knows a lot of things, but he is forced to admit that he does not know the way to Heaven! He comes to Jesus with thoughts of Heaven on his mind.

You don’t find many people who are thinking about eternity! Most people are so wrapped up in themselves and their lives that they have no time for thoughts of God, Heaven, Hell, or where they will go when they die!

Most folks are just like this young man. We have it all! We live in one of the wealthiest societies in the history of the world. We have so much here that the thoughts of natural men and women hardly ever turn to the matters of God.

We live in the midst of one of the most sophisticated and intellectually advanced cultures the world has ever known, yet people still do not know the answer to the most basic and important question of all. People do not know how to be saved. Man can split atoms, put men on the moon, harness the power of the sun, wind and rain, but he does not know how to get to Heaven!

B. v. 17b **His Confusion** – Let’s give this young man his due! He is concerned about the ***right issue***, in the presence of the ***right Person***, **John 14:6; Acts 4:12**. He comes at the ***right time***, **Isa. 55:6**; and he came in the ***right way***, **1 Pet. 5:5**. This man gets a lot of things right in his encounter with the Lord. But it is the things he gets wrong that cause him all his trouble.

He thinks salvation can be earned - He is looking for a “**Do**” oriented salvation. He wants to have a hand in it. He wants to be involved. He wants to get his salvation like he has gotten everything else in his life: he wants to earn it for himself.

He thinks salvation is a reward - He seems to think that if he can just do enough good things, then God will give him eternal life as a reward. Salvation is not a reward for faithful service; it is the free gift of God’s grace!

We could never do enough to reach a place where God would reward us with salvation. Salvation is not a reward for service, but it is the gift of grace, **John 10:28!**

Note: Many people still believe that salvation is based on “**do**”. They believe that they have to “**do**” something to be saved. Be it join a church, get baptized, teach Sunday School, preach, give, become a moral person and stop sinning and the list could go on forever!

The Bible tells us that salvation is never about “**Do**”, **Eph. 2:8-9**
 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast”

GIFTS ARE RECEIVED NOT EARNED

Salvation, through Jesus Christ, is always about “**Done!**” When Jesus died on the cross, He said “***It is finished!***” He did it all and there is nothing you and I can do to add to it or to get it on our own.

Salvation was achieved by Jesus when He died on the cross and rose again. It is received by us when we accepted what He did by faith! Salvation has never been about what we can do, but it has always been about what He did!

(**Note**: The Philippian Jailer had the same questions for Paul and Silas in **Acts 16:30**, “***Sirs, what must I do to be saved?***” Paul’s answer to him was that there was nothing more to do but to believe, “***Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ***”, **Acts 16:31!**)
 Nothing has changed! If you want to be saved, you must rest in “**Done!**” and forget about “**Do!**”)

C. v. 18-19 **His Challenge** – When Jesus hears what this man believes about salvation, Jesus challenges him in two specific areas.

· **Concerning the character of the Savior** – The man had called Jesus “***Good Master***”. Jesus reminds the man that “***there is none good but one, that is, God.***” When Jesus makes this statement he is calling this young man out. Does he believe that Jesus is a good man, or does he believe that Jesus is God? Obviously, this man considered Jesus to be merely a great teacher.

Note: Before anyone can be saved, they must come to a correct understanding of Who Jesus Christ is. He is not just a good moral man; a teacher sent to show us the way. No! He is far more than that! He is God in the flesh

Concerning the condition of his soul – When Jesus gives this young man a list of commands, it isn't to say that salvation comes by keeping the Law, **Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5**. Jesus is trying to get this man to see that he is a sinner. Jesus is attempting to get him to be honest about his spiritual condition.

Apparently, this young man believed that salvation was just something else he could add to his resume. Jesus wants him to see that he is a sinner and as a sinner he has no ground upon which to stand before the face of God. Jesus wants him to see that regardless of what he may possess materially, he is morally and spiritually bankrupt.

(Note: This is where most people are isn't it? They take an external, superficial, inventory of their lives and think they are alright. They say, ***"I don't beat my wife. I don't abuse my children. I don't run around. I don't drink. I provide for my family. I am a pretty good person. And, after all, compared to some people, why, I am almost a saint!"***

A sinner may turn over a new leaf and look good outwardly. He may be a moral, clean, hard-working person, but he is still a sinner at heart and he needs a Savior. That is what Jesus wanted this young man to know

- D. v. 20 **His Confession** – The man responds to the Lord's challenge by telling Jesus that he has kept all of those commandments since his youth. And, he probably had! Jesus didn't rebuke him for his claim. But there is something else that we need to consider.

You can be moral, religious and decent. You can treat others with dignity, respect and tender care. But, none of that will make you right with God. To be right with God, you must come to Him through His Son.

1 Tim. 2:5. ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

3. v. 21-22 **HIS SORROW**

v. 21 **The Lord's Requirements** – When Jesus hears his response, the Lord reaches out to this young man. He tells him in very clear terms how to be saved.

To demonstrate how he was lacking this one thing, Jesus gives him three tests.

The Lord's Compassion – We are told that Jesus “*loved him*”.

In spite of his sins and in spite of his improper understanding of the things of God.

“Loved” is from the Greek word Agapao, which literally means, “to be fond of”, but also carries the implication of a selfless, sacrificial love.

The Lord's Confrontation – Jesus gets right to the heart of the matter. This fellow had a lot going for him. But Jesus saw things as they really were. Jesus knew that he still “*lacked one thing.*” This man needs to get rid of the gods he already has before he can receive the true and living God. His gods are his wealth and his self.

1. He was tested by his earthly possessions

He is told to sell what he has and give it all away. This will guarantee him riches in Heaven. By these acts, he will demonstrate that he had no other gods before the Lord; and he will be reaching out to his fellow man.

COL 3:5 "Live as one who has died to every form of sexual sin and impurity. Live as one who has died to the desires for forbidden things, **including the desire for wealth**, which is the essence of idol worship."

The Lord's Call – The second test is the cross. The Lord says to the young man, "take up the cross."

Jesus calls this man to die to himself and totally commit his life to the Lord Jesus. Jesus is saying, "***Turn your back on everything but me and you will be saved.***" The verb phrases "***take up the cross***" and "***follow me***" are both in a tense that suggests a "***once for all***" action.

Have you willingly released your grip on everything else and reached out to Him by faith? Jesus is calling us to make a once for all commitment to follow Him by faith.

There was something he was asked to give up; something to take up; and Someone to follow.

B. v. 22 **The Man's Rejection** – This man was looking for an easy fix. He wanted salvation, but he wanted it on his terms. He wanted to keep all the things he had. He wanted to add Jesus to his resume.

When he heard the Lord's demands he was "***sad***". The word means "***to be under a cloud.***" We are also told that he was "***grieved***". This word means "***to be thrown into sorrow.***" This man is broken hearted. He came to Jesus with Heaven on

his mind, but he walked away with Hell as his destination! It did not have to be! But that's how it turned out. You see, in that one moment of time, this rich, young man made two heartbreaking decisions.

- **He Made an Earthly Decision** - He chose his possessions over Jesus! He loved his money more than he wanted to be saved.

Jesus will allow you to make the same choice. It may not be money. It may be pleasure, some sin, your family, your independence, etc. If you want it, He will let you keep it! But, ask yourself this question: "***Is it really worth more than my soul?***"

- **He Made an Eternal Decision** - One day, this man's youth faded and was gone. He retired from his prestigious position down at the synagogue. Finally, age and disease overtook him and even his vast wealth couldn't prolong the inevitable, and he died. When he did, he found out that his religion and his moral lifestyle were not enough

The third test is a rejected Christ; for the Lord says to the young man, "follow Me." Are we prepared to identify ourselves with One who is hated and rejected by the world? Are we ready for the same treatment?

The one thing the young man lacked was single-hearted devotedness to Christ. So he "went away." The disciples with all their ignorance, their weakness and their many failures, were drawn to Christ in affection and so left all to follow Him.

How often, since that day, has the history of this young man been repeated. Is there anything sadder than to look back and remember how many young men made a good start, and seemed to promise well, but where are they today? In spite things such as earnestness, sincerity, and zeal, they turned back to the corrupt religious world; and the reason is plain, they lacked the "one thing" — that single-hearted devotedness to Christ, that sets Christ before the soul as *the first and supreme Object of the life.*

If you could choose one thing to be known for, one thing that would distinguish you from everyone else, what would it be? There was one thing that was going to set Israel apart in Exodus 33:14, "My presence will go with you and I will give you rest"