

July 18, 2021

ASKED & ANSWERED

...Shifting our mindset from expectation to revelation



*"Good Teacher",
he asked,
"What must I do
to inherit eternal life?"*

Mark 10:17

Special Music: "Good God Almighty" Crowder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TzECToPYIk>

Question 3

Mark 10:17 ... "Good Teacher", he asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Answer 3

Mark 10:18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—
except God alone."

GOOD TEACHER

**“Good Teacher,
I have some things to ask.
Important things.
Life changing things.
Questions to unmask
The nature of God things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.”**

“Wait, my child. What did you say?”

**“Again I say, Good Teacher,
I have some things to ask.
Important things.
Life changing things.
Questions to unmask
The nature of God things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.”**

**“hmmm. I see,” replies the teacher.
“And of whom do you ask these things?
Life changing things.
The nature of God things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.
Who do you ask about these things?”**

“I’m asking you, Good Teacher.”

**“You call me good when we all know
That only God is good.
Do you imply that only I
Can speak for God about these things?
These life changing things.
These nature of God things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.
Why do you call me good?”**

“Good teacher, that is not my question.”

**“But it is my answer, child.
You call me good
As well you should.
The answers I bring
To your questions of things
Life changing things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.
Come from one so misunderstood.”**

“But my questions, Good Teacher.”

**“All in good time, first know that I’m
Qualified to answer these things.
Your questions of things
Life changing things,
Wings, strings and King of Kings.
The answers you seek,**

Are standing before you.

I am, I was, I will be.

Any question you ask

Is already answered.

For all that you need

Is to find that you're able

To come sit with me here

At my table.”

“Jesus looked at him and loved him.” (Mark 10:21 NIV)

We live in a world of validation. If you don't believe me, try cashing a check without showing some form of identification. We can't just tell people we are us, without proving to them that we really are who we say we are. We can blame this on any number of things, but the most common reason is that a person is reticent to give us something that is meant for us without asking us to prove that we are who we say we are. Even people that know us well often have to get some identification because their employers demand it.

During the holocaust, Jews were tattooed with identifying numbers so that they could not hide who they were. For the longest time, here in the US, our Social Security numbers were how we were identified to government agents and medical professionals. Most of the time, these days, our driver's license will suffice. Most people don't realize that the law says that your driver's license can only be used for official government business. Now, with the rise of identity theft, we often hear rumors of how the government might tattoo bar codes on us or insert chips under our skin. The future is already here with Iris scans, fingerprints, DNA data, palm prints, and so many other devices used to prove to the world who we are, even if we don't want the world to know who we are. Every time we turn around, we are asked to create a user name and password or change a password for applications on our computers.

Securing our identity has become big business. Companies make a fortune selling products to us for our computers and phones to protect our identities from would be abusers. But often times, we are just fooling ourselves with their comfort blankets, because the identity thieves are often smarter than the identity protection companies. For those on Medicare, medical professionals are not supposed to ask for our Social Security Numbers anymore. They are only supposed to ask for our Medicare numbers. But we still get asked for our Social Security Number all the time.

Unless we have the provenance of belonging to an extremely well-known family or we are considerably wealthy, we can expect to continue to have to prove to the world who we are.

And so, here is Jesus being approached by a man who is looking for an answer to an important question. We don't know much about the man. We don't even know that he is wealthy until after his encounter with Jesus. This man is not alone in his quest. He must feel like something is missing in his life. It's not that he is a bad man. He certainly believes in God. He follows the law of the prophets. He probably attends Temple regularly. And being wealthy, he probably has a front row seat when he goes to Temple. His desire for eternal life is a little out of place for the Jewish faith of the day. After all, the Sadducees taught that there was no resurrection at all, on earth or in heaven. And the Pharisees did not

offer the reward of eternal life either. Both sects taught that if you lived a righteous life that you would be blessed here on earth and if you lived an evil life you would be subject to God's curse here on earth. Which is why if someone was lame, blind, deaf or had leprosy, it was believed they must have done something wrong in the eyes of God.

The inverse was also true. If you were wealthy, in good health, and had wives who had born you sons, then you were obviously blessed by God because you were living right. This man before Jesus falls into this category. If this man had asked any other religious leader this question, he might have heard a diatribe on the question of resurrection, but, more likely, he would have been told that he was obviously blessed because whatever he was doing was pleasing to God or he would not be rich. Why worry about eternal life when he had it so good here on earth? Which was a way of avoiding something the religious leaders did not want to talk about. After all, those same religious leaders weren't looking for answers about eternal life because, for them, it wasn't really addressed in the scriptures.

We can talk about David mentioning eternal life in the 23rd Psalm, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." But most of the Jews believed that the scriptures were only the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). All the other books were

considered important, but they weren't scripture. I have to believe that among the Jewish people there had to be some reference to eternal life, even if it was just in the Psalms because, if this man is looking for eternal life, he must have thought someone had the answer, and Jesus just might be the one with that answer.

But Jesus wasn't considered to be a religious leader (at least to the other religious leaders of the time) and he had no pedigree or training that would allow Him to speak as a religious leader (at least according to the other religious leaders). He didn't go to the right school, run with the right crowds, attend all the appropriate parties, schmooze with the right politicians. He wasn't wealthy or ambitious. As far as those other religious leaders of the day were concerned, He was an embarrassment and certainly in no position to disseminate truth.

When the man comes to Jesus, looking for an answer, He is coming from a place where his own religious teachers have not addressed His question and would probably have told Him that this two-bit, poor, untrained, flash-in-the-pan religious zealot from Nazareth, where only the scum of the earth lived, would not have an answer for him either. And if He gave him an answer there could be no truth in it because Jesus was unqualified to offer an answer.

When we examine how Jesus answers the man, we have to look at the man through Jesus' eyes. We have to see what He sees or none of this makes a lot of sense. The man starts with saying, **"Good Teacher"** before he asks his question. Although it does not state it specifically here, I believe that this is his way of validating that Jesus is a possible source to answer his question. And Jesus points this out. The man "qualifies" Jesus and Jesus leans into that qualification by saying **"Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone."** In other words, Jesus is acknowledging that the man has acknowledged Him as a resource from God, since only God is good.

If the man did not believe that Jesus was qualified to answer the question, then there would have been no point in asking the question because there would have been no truth attached to the answer. And the man is willing to accept Jesus's answer, even though that answer brings him sadness.

Jesus continues by asking:

You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'

Jesus is not sitting in condemnation here. He can see into the very soul of this man standing before Him. Jesus knows that this man is doing everything that the religious leaders have told him to do, in order to lead a good life. He is striving to follow the commandments. The man believes in his heart of hearts that God has blessed him with wealth because of the things that the man has done. The man is simply concerned about his eternal presence, just like so many people in the world. It's a question like "What is the meaning of life?" The man tells Jesus that he has kept the laws since he was a boy, but I believe he could see in Jesus' eyes that Jesus already knew that. That he would probably be unable to hide anything from Jesus.

If you take nothing else away from this sermon, please listen to what happens in verse 21. So often when we read this verse, we focus on the second half where Jesus says **"One thing you lack, Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."** We so want to pick on this man because we know he is stuck between worlds. We know that his love for his wealth is greater than his desire to know God. We know that he struggles on a daily basis with one foot on the planet and the other searching for a step into heaven. But his footing is firmly set on this earth while he explores his options for eternal life. We want to him to do what Jesus asks, but we know that he is not going to.

And it is fairly transparent to us, that Jesus knows the man is going to walk away. But seldom do I hear the first part of this verse quoted, and it is so integral to our own relationship with God. The beginning of verse 21 declares: **“Jesus looked at him and loved him.”** Knowing that this man was going to choose the wrong path, was going to walk away, was going to not be able to resolve the conflict that is preventing him from eternal life, **“Jesus looked at him and loved him.”**

How true is this in our lives. How true is it that when God speaks to us asking us to step up and step out, to change the world (at least our small corner of it), when God asks us to intercede for a brother or sister, when God asks us to feed the hungry, heal the sick, give water to the thirsty, when God asks us to make a difference. When God looks us in the eye after having given the life of His Son to cleanse us from unrighteousness and we look back and either say no or we just walk away. Jesus looks at us and loves us... Jesus looks at us and loves us...

Doesn't that speak volumes about who we are, who Jesus is, and the depth of God's love for us with all our blemishes, misconceptions, and rebellious natures? Jesus looks at us and loves us... even when He knows we are going to either ignore what He is asking or simply walk away.

This man was rich and the verse that everyone seems to memorize is verse 25: **“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”** We preach how our wealth comes from God and needs to be shared and we hold this man up as a shining example of how wealth can contaminate us. But all too often we can’t even find the time to help our elderly neighbor carry in their groceries. But we’ll pick on the rich guy because he walked away. We turn a blind eye and shut our ears when we choose not to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. “I’d really help if I had more time.” “I’d help if I had a little more money in the bank.” “I’d help if I just wasn’t so tired.” And Jesus looks at us and loves us...

The disciples were so confused by this. If a rich man who God obviously loves, because he is blessed with riches, who sits at the front of the temple, who obeys the commandments, who is an exemplary Jew, cannot be saved, “Who then can be saved?”

And Jesus responds with another well quoted verse, verse 17: **“With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”** You cannot be saved through your own works. But God can save even this rich man who walked away. God can even save us, when we walk away. God can even save us when we are disrespectful, belligerent, obstinate, uncaring, apathetic, cruel, prejudicial, argumentative, greedy, despondent, judgmental, overbearing,

obnoxious, and deceitful. And Jesus looks at us and loves us... Jesus looks at us and loves us...

Jesus hangs on the cross, beaten, bruised, blood dripping from His hands, feet and side. Jesus looks at us and loves us... **“Father forgive them, for they do not what they do.”**

That is how much God loves us. That is how much Jesus loves us.

As Paul tells us in Romans 8: **“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

AMEN

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