



AND when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* 18 And Jesus said unto him, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.* 19 *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.* 20 And he answered and said unto him, *Master, all these have I observed from my youth.* 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.* 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, *Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!* 25 *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, *Who then can be saved?* 27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, *With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* (Mark 10:25-27)

Seeking God

Seeking God is the equivalent of seeking eternal life, for God is Eternal. This young man was seeking the means of eternal life. There are many books that have been written on this subject, and some at great personal monetary profit for the authors; but there is only one book that has the perfect answer to that search, without error or equivocation – the Holy Bible.

In this short text we find a rich young ruler (see Luke 18:18) comes to Jesus seeking the means of salvation. . . . *there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Let us first examine what things this young man did in the right way.

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1. He came to Christ. *There is no other name under Heaven whereby we may be saved.*
2. He came running. This is the manner in which all sinners must approach Christ – no delay, but immediately upon the drawing of the Holy Ghost.
3. He knelt down before the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord requires worship. There is no other way.

In what was the young man in error in his approach?

1. He referred to our Lord as good teacher (Master) instead of by His proper title of LORD.
2. He asked the wrong question: *. what shall I DO that I may inherit eternal life?* There are no works we can do to inherit eternal life. Believing faith is a function of free grace.
3. He told the Lord that he had kept the Commandments from his youth. No one has kept the Commandments from his youth. As our Lord will reveal, this young man had not even kept the very first Commandment without which we can keep none others.

Jesus had gone forth into the WAY – in fact, He IS the Way! This young man comes and kneels before Him with his question. But Jesus, as was His often response, answers with another question of rhetorical nature (I say rhetorical because our Lord does not wait for an answer – it is obvious): *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.* Jesus does not wait for an answer because He already knows the answer. Our Lord is not saying that He Himself is not righteous, but that He is also God – this the young man does not know obviously. Either Jesus is a good teacher, or He is the Good Lord! Jesus is fathoming the depth of this boy's understanding to reveal to him his precarious spiritual condition.

Our Lord then enumerates the Commandments of the Second Table of the Law – those which outline our duties to others. He names six, but the last Commandment He mentions is the fifth which is a transition Commandment between our duties to God and those we owe our earthly parents. The point is this: God is also our Father, so this Commandment divides the Table of the Law between our duty to God (first four + plus fifth one) and our duty to our fellow man (last five + fifth). Jesus is leading the young man to a sober realization of his lost condition. *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

The young man believes himself to be righteous, but our personal opinions count for nothing compared to the Word of God. *Master, all these have I observed from my youth.* This youth is likely a very morally upright person of tender years. His ignorance of his lack of faith and righteousness appeals to the tender heart of our Lord. *Then Jesus beholding him loved him.* Just because our God may love His creatures does not mean that they are accepted in the Kingdom of God. They must respond to that love offered by the Lord. If we love not the Lord, we will not be identified among the called and chosen. Love is the evidence of our calling and election.

Our Lord will now bare the empty heart of the young man to his lost condition. Jesus knows his heart, and He knows that this young man does not keep the first Commandment: *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* (Ex 20:2-3) The Lord knows the heart of man. He knows this young man's heart in every detail. This young man has another god that comes between him and the Father in Heaven. That god is wealth. Jesus says to the young man: *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.*

Jesus is not saying that there is an inherent evil in wealth. God said in another place, *The love of money is the root of all evil.* (1 Tim 6:10) Money cannot be evil. It is simply a medium of exchange and inanimate. It is the LOVE of money that brings the curse back to the soul. This young man loves his money. *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

The young man came to the Lord seeking authentication of his righteousness, but left grieving because, though he would have treasured salvation, he treasured his possessions more. He could not bring himself to sell his prized possessions and give to the poor. He did not want to bear a cross of hurt and deprivation. He did not want to follow Jesus in the WAY. He came to Christ in the WAY, but turned back from following Him in the WAY at this last counsel of the Lord.

As the young man went back into spiritual darkness, the Lord said, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* He did not say rich people cannot enter the Kingdom of God, but that it was a greater challenge for them. Riches have a way of taking over a man's soul unless he is wise in using his wealth in the right way, and in putting God (and His people) above his wealth.

Man is often shocked that men of renown and wealth may not be as righteous as the poor farmer man in the wheat field hoeing away for his dailey bread. Wealth seems to convey a better class of person, but that is almost opposite the facts. There are wealthy men and women who have expended great fortunes sending missionaries to preach the Gospel, but that is not the rule. Many horde their wealth and live lavishly themselves. Even the disciples were surprised at the words of our Lord on riches: *And the disciples were astonished at his words.* But our Lord answered, *Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.* WE must TRUST in God – not riches, or our own righteousness.

I have read of a gate on the eastern wall of Jerusalem (I know not if a fact) called the 'Eye of the Needle'. When merchants approached this gate from the east, it was not tall enough for their heavily burdened camels to pass through without lowering the camels to their knees, removing the burdens, and then allowing the camel to pass through. It is a good illustration regardless, for to enter heaven, we must do so without our earthly burdens of sin. *And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

If we follow Christ in the WAY, we shall be accounted righteous for His sake and not our own, *for WITH God all things are possible.* Without God, rich or poor, nothing is possible!