

## What Lack I Yet?

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:17-31

This story is also presented to us in Matthew 19:16-30 and Luke 18:18-30. It is an important meeting between a rich ruler and our Savior concerning how to have eternal life. It has a sad ending for the rich ruler. The story is designed to help us not have a sad ending for ourselves. It also will help us to help others, so that they will not have a sad ending to their lives. In our eagerness to lead people to the Lord, we can be guilty of trying to make it so simple and easy that we don't tell people the truth. The Gospel confronts us about the idols in our life. Ambition, pride, and lust compete with the plain truth that we are supposed to love God supremely and then love our fellow man, caring for them as we would care for our own self (Matthew 22:35-40). It sounds so simple, but we need God to reveal to us our true self, as Jesus did with the man in this story. Then we should conclude that no man can be saved from sinful self without a divine work of grace. See I Peter 1:18-25; I John 3:14-21; 4:7-21; 5:1-5.

Let's glean a few things from this story.

**Mark 10:17** – The man came running and then kneeled. Luke tells us that he was a ruler. We also know that he was rich. It was not common for rich and influential people to run, let alone kneel before someone. That was for servants. We see evidence, then, that this man was sincere, eager, and humble as he approached Christ.

**Mark 10:17** – He asked, *“Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”* Jesus took issue with the subject of goodness. Since the man was addressing Him as a rabbi – not as the Son of God, Jesus did not accept the title of Good Master. Matthew tells us that the man asked, *“What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life.”*

**Mark 10:18-20** – Jesus wanted him to realize that salvation is not about just doing some good thing. God wants us to yield a life of loving obedience. The Law of God reveals what that looks like. But achieving it is not within the abilities of natural man (Romans 3:9-20). When Jesus pointed out the commandments, He purposely pointed Him to the rules that addressed loving other men. This man sincerely had tried to keep these commandments but didn't have any peace or assurance (for good reason). Matthew 19:20, tells us the man asked, *“...What lack I yet?”*

**Mark 10:21-22** – Mark tells us that, as Jesus looked at the man, Jesus loved him. This was not a religious teacher trying to trick Him – not a hypocrite who was trying to justify himself. Rather he was a sincere person trying to do well. Jesus was not stern with this man. He lovingly showed him that his problem was that love for his riches was greater than his love for God. Please note that giving all your money to the poor is not the way of salvation (I Corinthians 13:3 cp. I Timothy 6:17-19). Jesus didn't always tell people to give up their possessions. He confronted different people with different issues – wherever people crossed the line with God, that's what Jesus would address. See John 4:6-18; Luke 9:57-62.

**Mark 10:23-25** – Jesus now had to address everyone present with the truth that the desire for earthly security and worldly riches is a great interference to knowing, loving and serving God. See Matthew 16:21-26; Luke 12:13-21 (12:22-40); I Timothy 6:3-11; James 4:1-3. Please note that when the Lord mentions a camel going through the eye of a needle, it is **not** a reference to any gate called “*the eye of the needle.*” **Nor** is it a reference to a rope that might be misconstrued with the word “*camel.*” It is a simple hyperbole – an intentional exaggeration.

**Mark 10:26-27** – The disciples realized that it is not natural for a human to love God in that supreme manner. Jesus confirms this and lets them know that Salvation is only by the grace of God. “...Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah 2:9 cp. Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:3-7; John 3:3; Galatians 2:20; I Corinthians 6:9-11; II Corinthians 5:14-17; I John 4:7-19).

**Mark 10:28-30** – Jesus assures the disciples of the rich rewards to those who yield themselves to the Lord's will:

- Rewards in this life – which will also continue to have its share of sorrows and persecution. See John 16:33.
- Rewards in the next life – where there will be no sorrows. See Revelation 21:1-7; 22:1-5).

**Mark 10:31** – Jesus closed this discussion with a sobering thought: “*But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.*” Many look at physical and material prosperity as evidence of God's approval of their lives. Popularity, power, and wealth can be deceptive to man. Many who are considered insignificant in this life will be highly exalted by the Lord, as Jesus confesses them before the Father and the holy angels – many surprises are coming at the time of judgement! See Mark 8:31-38; Matthew 10:32-33; Luke 6:20-26; 12:8-9; I Corinthians 1:26-31 (cp. Psalm 37; 73).