

Matthew 19:20

The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

In today's devotional, this is the story of a rich young man who wanted to know how to "earn" eternal life.

† **Matthew 19:16** *Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"*

But when we read Jesus' response, we may be a little surprised how Jesus answered him, because Jesus didn't say, "Dude, you can't earn your salvation, only by believing in Me can you be saved." No, Jesus did not point out that this young man's thinking was wrong by him wanting to earn his salvation. Instead, Jesus answered his question of, "*what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*"

It's actually a good question, because it shows that someone who asks that, actually believes in God, and in heaven, and wants to be there when they die, and that it is usually an honest question.

So, with the question, Jesus obliges him and tells him what he must do, and actually if you read Jesus' response, it's a list (Oh how we love lists of things to do) of six things.

† **Matthew 19:18-19** *He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "*
'You shall not murder,'
'You shall not commit adultery,'
'You shall not steal,'
'You shall not bear false witness,'
'Honor your father and your mother,'
and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "

The commandments that Jesus told this young man all had to do with how you treat others. The young man said that he kept all six of them, yet Jesus showed him that he actually didn't keep any of them. We know that with both Jesus' response, as well and the young man's actions.

† **Matthew 19:21-22** *Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

I love how this same story is put in the book of Mark:

† **Mark 10:21** *Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."*

Did you catch it, "**Jesus, looking at him, loved him**" which shows that Jesus was not mad or upset with the young man's question, or even his response. But rather, Jesus knew this young man's heart, better than he knew his own heart, because Jesus knew that he could not keep all those commandments, and neither can we. That's why Jesus came to this earth, to die for all of us, including this young man, so that we can have eternal life with Jesus in heaven.

These are good reminders for us when we are talking to people, and we think, "How can they not understand that you can not do enough to earn salvation?" The key is that they actually want salvation.

We too had to come to that point in our lives as well, because we all had that way of thinking one time where we thought that we were ok with God, because we had a good day and didn't do anything wrong (at least in our minds), so we felt that we earned our salvation by our own goodness. Until the next day comes around and we have a bad day and realize that we are sinners and cannot get to heaven by any works, but only by what Jesus did on the cross for us all.

This rich young man walked away with his head hung low "**But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.**" because he didn't listen to Jesus and His instruction on truly how to have eternal life. "**If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.**"

We all have, or need to come to that point in our lives, even as Christians when we truly need to, if I may use the popular phrase, "Let go and let God". For some, it may not be money that you have to let go of, like this rich young man had. But for others, it may be something, or someone else that the Lord has been asking you to give up that you cling to so tightly, because you are afraid that you will lose it and you have made it or them more important than the Lord in your life.

† **John 12:25-26** *He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*