

## TEXT – Mark 10:17-27

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good--except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.' " <sup>20</sup> "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." <sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" <sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." <sup>26</sup> The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" <sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Introduction: Many of us are familiar with the song, "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." The reason we know, as the song goes, is because the Bible tells us so. The Bible tells us that Jesus loved us so much he even died for us on the cross to take away our sins. Now hearing that is not new news. It's good news, but not new news. We've heard it many times before. In fact, singing the song "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know" gets a little tiring when our little son, daughter, or grandchild wants us to sing it with them over and over again. But they love it. They love to sing it because they know it's true. Jesus loves me. The Bible says so. Their little hearts are filled with such faith and love for their Savior. What could be better than to sing about the fact that Jesus loves me? Sometimes it's these simple truths that elude us. We get so caught up in our day to day lives that we forget the most important thing – Jesus loves me this I know/ For the Bible tells me so/ Little ones to him belong/ They are weak but he is strong/ Yes, Jesus loves/ Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me/ The Bible tells me so. Living that credo every day would make our days much easier because we know that Jesus loves us, and when we are weak, he is strong. In our text that simple truth is once again emphasized as Jesus speaks with the rich young man. Remember, JESUS LOVES YOU – 1) He loves you enough to tell you the truth, and 2) He loves you enough to do the impossible.

### I. He loves you enough to tell you the truth

- A man ran up to Jesus, it seems as if he is trying to justify himself as one worthy of heaven. Matthew says he was a young man and Luke tells us that he was a ruler. He had power, prestige and money. He had it all, worldly speaking.
- This rich young ruler also thought he had it all before God. It seems as if he was seeking Jesus' approval of his good life, that he had indeed earned life in heaven by his good works.
- But he wanted to be sure. It was as if he was asking Jesus, "If there is something I missed, good Teacher, just let me know and I'll do it so that I can be confident that I have earned eternal life."
- Even when Jesus enumerated some of the commandments, this rich young ruler declared that he had kept them all since he was a little boy. Jesus did not even present the first table of God's law dealing with love for God.
- Jesus mentioned only the commandments of the second table of the law that speaks of loving our neighbor as ourselves. 4<sup>th</sup> – honoring our father and mother, 5<sup>th</sup> - not to murder, 6<sup>th</sup> - not to commit adultery, 7<sup>th</sup> - not to steal, 8<sup>th</sup> - not to bear false witness against our neighbor, and then an application of the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment in not defrauding our neighbor.
- It's the seventh commandment and Jesus' application of not defrauding or cheating one's neighbor that would have a special bearing on this rich young ruler. Did he ever not pay someone properly for work they did for him? Did he ever take advantage of someone less fortunate than him? Did he ever fail to give to the poor in their need? In all his riches and wealth had he ever not shown love to his neighbor?
- Jesus quickly gets to the heart of the matter with this rich young ruler. Was their greed lurking in his heart? Was there love for his money more than love for his fellow man? Again Jesus doesn't even need to address his lack of love for God since he will be able to show this wealthy young ruler that he can't even love his neighbor as himself.

- Then Jesus put this man's own righteousness to the test when he asked him to sell everything he had and give to the poor. The man's hopes for heaven were crushed. His face fell, his heart sank and he went away sad because he couldn't do what Jesus had said. He did love his money more than his fellow man.
- How sad. Why did Jesus have to hurt his feelings so badly? Mark gives us the answer – "Jesus looked at him and loved him." Jesus loved this rich young ruler. He would suffer and die for this man's sins. Jesus knew how much this young man needed to see his sin. He needed to see how desperate he truly was for a Savior.
- Jesus told this rich young man the truth about his sin by using the mirror of God's law to reveal how spiritually poor he was. This man like all sinners lack the righteousness God requires and that is perfection. Jesus says, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."
- Jesus loves us too. He knows what we need to hear. We too need to hear God's law that points out our sin. We need to hear about the greed and materialism in our own hearts. We need to hear that in many ways we are living beyond our means. God is still generous with his blessings, but we have been poor stewards and managers of those blessings.
- Also like that rich young man, we too would have a hard time giving everything we have to the poor. We have trouble distinguishing between what we truly need and what is a luxury that is not necessary and can easily be done without.
- Yet, remember that Jesus loves you. He tell us what we need to hear. Jesus doesn't really want nor does he need our money. He wants our hearts completely and undividedly devoted to him. When our heart is in the right place, given over to him, everything else including our time, talents, and treasures freely flow from a heart that belongs to Jesus.
- Our Savior reminds us, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." Jesus also reminds us, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
- Jesus is our greatest treasure. He was slain and with his blood he purchased us for God. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. We have it all in Jesus. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

Transition: Jesus loves you and me. He loves us enough to tell us the truth, the truth about the greed and materialism in our hearts that hinder our complete love and devotion to Jesus. Our Savior also loves us enough to do the impossible, to fix the problem.

## II. He loves you enough to do the impossible

- Jesus' encounter with the rich young man led him to make a very strong statement about rich people getting into heaven. He told the disciples that it was difficult for those who have wealth to enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus would make an even stronger statement.
- The disciples were amazed at the first statement concerning the difficulty of wealthy people being in heaven. They like many people today thought of riches as a sign of God's favor, maybe even as a reward of some sort. How could people so blessed by God not be in heaven?
- They like many people today forget that riches though certainly a blessing from God are also a serious test of faith. The danger with any blessing that comes from God is to love the blessing rather than the one who blesses. Smart people take pride in their smarts. Athletes praise their athleticism. Musicians glory in their musical talents. So how easy it is for the wealthy to love their wealth rather than the one who gave it to them.
- It is so difficult for a rich man to enter into heaven that Jesus says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. In other words it is impossible for rich people to be in heaven.
- Like the disciples we are probably wondering who then can be saved. If there will be no rich people in heaven, then who will be in heaven? That's exactly the point Jesus was teaching. No sinner can be in heaven. It is impossible for rich, smart, athletic, musically gifted, poor, clumsy, tall, short, skinny, rotund – any sinner to be saved.
- Paul states it very clearly in Romans 3, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." No one has earned the right to be in heaven. Money certainly can't buy you heaven.

- Jesus' point is that rich people because of their sinful love of money, because they like all sinners are not perfectly righteous and holy in God's sight cannot be saved. It is impossible for them to save themselves.
- However, Jesus reminded his disciples, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." Will even rich people who are constantly tempted to love their money and take pride in their possessions be in heaven? Yes, but only by the grace of God who through Jesus the Savior of sinners forgives their sins and credits them with his righteousness because he never loved money. Jesus always feared, loved and trusted in God above all things.
- But money is still a real temptation for all of us. Paul told Timothy, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."
- It's sad to see a man crying because he won the lottery and commenting that this was the greatest day in his life. He thinks that millions of dollars will solve all his problems. When in reality it will cause many, many more problems. Numerous lottery winners have had their lives ruined. Billie Bob Harrell Jr. who won 31 million in the Texas Lotto in 1997 said, "Winning the lottery is the worse thing that ever happened to me." He committed suicide.
- Here's what the wealthy think about money: I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness—John W. Rockefeller. The care of \$200,000,000 is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it—W. H. Vanderbilt. I am the most miserable man on earth—John Jacob Astor. I was happier when doing a mechanic's job—Henry Ford.
- The writer of Proverbs reminds us, "Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death." Christ's holiness and righteousness is the only thing that delivers from eternal death in hell. Jesus' love for sinners did the impossible. He saved sinners from an eternal fate they deserved.
- Only through faith in Jesus will anyone be saved. Paul writes in Romans, "For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Even miserable rich people will be saved by turning in faith to Jesus, their true Savior.
- Jesus loves rich people, poor people, and middle class people. He loves those who struggle with wealth and those who struggle just trying to make ends meet. Jesus loved all of us enough to achieve the impossible and lay down his life on the cross for all our sins so that even greedy people like us could one day be in heaven with our Savior.

Conclusion: Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Sometimes it's hard to tell people what they really need to hear. Jesus has no problem doing that because he loves us so much. He loves us enough to tell us when we are sinning, when we are letting something get in the way of our total devotion to him as our Savior. It may be money or possessions. It could be a spouse or a child that we love more than Jesus. It may be our talents and abilities. It could even be sinful pleasures and desires. Whatever it is, Jesus loves us enough to tell us that because of our love for other things it is impossible for us to be saved. But he loves us still more. He loves us enough to do the impossible and save us from our sins. Jesus lived for us and died for us and rose again from the grave to prove that he had won the battle with sin and death and hell. Now he lives and reigns forever in glory and honor and we will too. This is all because he loves me and he loves you. And we know that because the Bible tells us so. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. May we never get tired of hearing and singing that simple yet profound truth. Amen.