

## What Must I Do

### Introduction:

- How can we be a light and guide to the world unless we believe and then act as if we believed?
- There was this bar owner that sued a church
- We, like the young man in today's scripture are often left wonder, "What must I do."

### P1 Mark 10:17-31 (The rich young man):

- V-17 (*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?"*)
  - There is no doubt about it, it is always comforting and frequently helpful to get some advice before tackling something you don't know how to do, or maybe understand the general idea but have never actually done it before. (I know this for a fact and it is why I spend a LOT of time at the Home Depot store when doing some sort of home improvement project.
  - The greater the importance of the task at hand as well as the greater the cost of failure the more important and comforting expert advice becomes.
  - And that was just what this young man was doing. Seeking some guidance, some directions, and maybe a little assurance that he was on the right path.
  - However, it is apparent that he is on the wrong path from the first words out of his mouth. His approach and that of many others is "**ME**" based rather than being "**GOD**" centered. Remember what he said/asked? *What must I do?*
- V-18 (*"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good-- except God alone*)
  - Frequently when I see God and good in the same sentence my mind wanders a little. It occurs to me that Good, is just God watered down with an extra "O"
  - However, this time I think it is right on point. God is perfect, the gold standard if you will. The best that we, his children,, creatures made in his image can hop to achieve on our own is good.
  - And before everyone starts lining up to get a ticket on the poor us train remember what God said in those early verses of Genesis as he surveyed his creation - "it is good and very good"
  - There is nothing wrong with being good and we should strive to achieve that lofty goal, but as we do lets not forget that being good is not the same as being God
  - However, when I first read this passage I was struck by Jesus' response. At first blush it almost sounds as if Jesus is separating himself from God
  - But then as I thought about it, another possibility came to mind. What if instead of distancing himself Jesus was sort of testing the fellow? Perhaps an oddly phrased, "Why are you asking me?"
  - After all, there is little profit in or point to asking someone for advice that doesn't know the answer. (I remember a time a few years ago getting lost just outside St Louis)
- V-19 (*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.'*)
  - Notice where Jesus chooses to begin his answer to this young man. God's commandments certainly seems like a good place to start if you are talking about being good and eternal life
  - Accepting for the moment the premise that there is something (or a group of somethings) that we can do to earn eternal life it is pretty clear that you are not going to get there by breaking the Ten Commandments. And while it is theologically clear that there is nothing we can do to earn heaven, living by God's Ten Commandments is a pretty good way to start preparing for when we do get there.
  - From what he says next it is fairly clear that this young man is well acquainted with the commandments.
- V-20 (*"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."*)
  - This raises an interesting point.

- Why is this fellow asking Jesus what he must do to earn eternal life? He is familiar with the Ten Commandments and has lived by ever since he was a boy. And apparently he had because Jesus does not question or refute that statement. So why is this man asking Jesus what he has to do?
- I think that it was because deep in his heart he knew that there was something more. That his best just wasn't good enough.
- V-21 (***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."***)
  - This is not a verse we are comfortable with and many of us wish it had not made it into the bible. Sell everything you have, give it to the poor and follow me.
  - But hear this verse in context with the young man's story /situation.
  - He knew the laws and had obeyed them. But had he loved?
  - Remember the Good Samaritan story. They obeyed the laws and left a man to die
- V-22 (***At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth***)
  - He had great wealth. We all have great wealth. 99% of all people who are or have ever lived on earth have something that we are unwilling or unable to give up that to one degree or another separates us from God.
  - That was why the young man left.
  - That is one of the two reasons we are afraid to ask God if God is there. Because we would have to make a change.
- V-26 (***The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"***)
  - Here they are, twelve men who have already done what Jesus prescribed for this young man and they KNEW they were still inadequate. So if they, the inner circle that were with Jesus all the time were in doubt, then really; what chance was there for any of us.
  - And I for one am glad that they asked, so that we could hear Jesus' answer.
- V-27 (***Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."***)
  - That's the real answer to the question that young man asked.
  - It is the answer to what the disciples asked.
  - It is the answer to the question that we have asked, are asking, or would like to ask.
  - The answer is that there is nothing that we can do to pay the debt owed or to close the gulf that exists between God and us. The good news is that God has already done it.
  - The real question that we should be asking is not what must we do to earn eternal life, but rather we should be asking what can we do to show our gratitude and to live into the destiny that is ours as the children of God!

### Conclusion:

- What must I/we do? Lead by example.
- Be a light to the world. Proclaim the gospel in thought, word, and deeds. Might deeds done in the name of the Lord our God.
- There was a church.....
- What do our actions say to the world about our faith? Do we believe or are we just going through the motions.