**WHAT MUST I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE**

**Mark 10:13-31 (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?”**

It is the hope of every Christian, of every man and woman, rich or poor alike, to enter the kingdom of God and inherit eternal life. It is in everyone’s heart to search and find eternal life. To the religious, many devote themselves to customs and laws with the hope gaining this eternal life. To those who are not religious, they also search for it by chasing money, fame and acceptance in the community. This is the void that is forever present in everyone’s soul, and can only be filled by finding the kingdom of God, and eternal life. The kingdom of God is free of sin. In this kingdom, God reigns with love and supreme power. All those who are in His kingdom enjoy this eternal blessing where all the heartaches of sin are no more. A rich man ran up to Jesus, and fell on to his knees. He asked “what must I do to inherit eternal life”? This question is very important. I am sure we would have asked this question. In today’s passage, we will understand that to inherit eternal life, we need to have a child-like faith in Jesus. There is absolutely nothing we can do to inherit eternal life. Our righteousness will not inherit for us eternal life. Money and our possessions cannot buy us eternal life. However, with a child-like faith that, simply trusting in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, one will inherit eternal life. Moreover, to inherit eternal life has nothing to do with us, but has everything to do with Jesus. It is a tough ask to inherit eternal life. Yes, it is impossible with man, but very much so possible with Jesus. May God bless His word, that we receive it with a child-like faith. Amen.

Let us then look into the passage. **13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them**. People brought little children to Jesus . This was with the hope that their lives be blessed to live for God and His kingdom. However, the disciples rebuked them, stopping these little children from coming to Jesus. How did Jesus respond? Look at verse 14. **14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”** Jesus was disturbed, and in turn rebuked the disciples for hindering the little children from being blessed by Jesus. The kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Yes, those who receive the kingdom of God like a little child will enter it. Those who have a child like faith will inherit eternal life. Of course we are not little children, however, with a child like faith we can be blessed to receive the kingdom of God. Do you hope that Jesus place his hands on you to bless you? Do you hope that Jesus recalibrate your spiritual life and set you to inherit eternal life? Then, come to Jesus with a child like faith. It is the will of Jesus that we receive eternal life.

What is a child-like faith? Little children are completely dependent on their parents. Little children observe carefully what their parents do, and in turn, they copy and do what they have seen. We are also informed by science about the incredible learning capacity of a little child. With language for example, a child is able to be taught English even though his parents are Tswana. A child is able to learn and speak isiZulu even though the parents are English. So what can we say? A child like faith is the attitude of fully trusting and depending on Jesus, learning His word and obeying it. A child like faith is the one that clings on Jesus; what He says and what He does. It is the promise of God that the kingdom of God belongs to such people as these little children. Yes. It is the promise of God that anyone who receives the kingdom of God like these little children will indeed enter it. Unbelief is our biggest hinderance. We often believe what makes sense to us. Using our experience or our own intelligence, we tend to only believe whatever that has ticked this box. However, this is not the way to belief. We need to receive the kingdom of God like a child, without any reservation, but simply holding on to what the word of God says.

Look at verse 16. **16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them**. After all these have been said, Jesus affirming the truthfulness of His word in having a childlike faith, took the children in His arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them all. This is Jesus revealing His heart, and His willingness to help us all that we receive eternal life. I pray that we come to Jesus with a childlike faith, Amen!

Now, let us see who came to Jesus. Look at verse 17a. **As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him**. What do we know about this man? This man seemingly lived a religious life. To a certain degree, he has kept the laws of Moses. You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your father and mother. All these laws he has kept, he declared. He seemed to be quite confident in his righteousness. Also, this man was rich. **“Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” 22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth**.

Why did he come to Jesus? Why did he run after Jesus, and fall on his knees? This man asked, “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Let us note the contrast between this rich man, and the little child. This rich man believed there is something he could do in order to inherit eternal life. He must have been informed by his life experiences that he would ask this question. Yes, we can see his deep desire to inherit eternal life. Indeed, this is the hope of all man that we experience the kingdom of God, and the life eternal that comes with it. As a man who kept the law, he was confident that the kingdom of God is his because of his righteousness. He believed that he is good, and therefore worthy of inheriting eternal life. As a rich man, who amassed great wealth, it was quite tough for him to notice his spiritual lack. To him, he lacked nothing. He was worthy of it, all that’s needed was for Jesus to simply give him eternal life.

How did Jesus respond to his question? Look at verse 18. **18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone**. Perhaps the rich man wanted to appease Jesus in order to get a favourable response. He called Jesus “Good teacher”? However, Jesus refused to be called a “Good teacher”. Why? Jesus was a good teacher, in fact a great one. However, Jesus had detected a defect in the man’s concept about righteousness. Not that He viewed Jesus as good, but rather that He himself believed that he is good. He was that good, that he could even identify Jesus as a good teacher? However, is this true? Not at all. To help the man see that He is not good, and need to change his concept about goodness/righteousness, look at verse 19. **19 You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’[d]”** And how did the man respond? **20 “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”** Is it true that indeed he has kept all these laws? Jesus came and taught about the high standard of the law. However, if one uses his own understanding of righteousness, it is so much easy to fall short to thinking that “all these I have kept”. For example, Jesus taught that **21 “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder,[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ 22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister[b][c] will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’[d] is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell [Mat. 5:21,22]**. Also Jesus did teach, **27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’[e] 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart [Mat. 5:27, 28]**. Did the man really not commit adultery? Did he really not murder according to Jesus’ standard? As a rich man, perhaps in his own eyes he was good. However, it is virtually impossible for one to become rich without defrauding someone. The whole outcome of being rich means that somewhere in the process as certain individual was defrauded, deceived. At this point, the rich man was still confident in his own righteousness. However, Jesus was patient, and had compassion for Him. Jesus humbled him to see what he lacked, to see that indeed, he fell short of obeying God’s laws, and as a consequence, not eligible to inherit eternal life by his filthy rags of his own righteousness. **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.”** We thank Jesus who at all times is able to saves us from the delusion of our own righteousness, but to see how truly sinful we are. This man was humbled. He was convicted of his sin. **22 At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.** His face could fall because he saw that he has fallen short, and indeed not worthy to inherit eternal life. He also received Jesus’ teaching as a rejection instead of a correction. He went away because he was confident in his own righteousness. Since it was not proven that his righteousness is nothing but filthy rags, he went away disappointed. However, if he had a childlike faith, he would have repented, and received eternal life. A childlike faith is not offended by Jesus’ rebuke nor correction. Rather, it welcomes Jesus’ correction and obey unconditionally. Yes, a childlike faith so much trusts in the Father Jesus and all His ways and instructions, without any reservations. It believes and clings on the lead and guide of Jesus the great shepherd. I therefore pray that when we are blessed to see how sinful we are, how useless are our goodness, that we are not offended to walk away from Jesus like this man. Rather, I pray that we humble ourselves before Jesus in repentance, to receive His correction and trust in Him as a child would do.

The rich man was greatly disappointed, and went away from the very source of his salvation. Jesus also pitied him for missing this. He further taught about why it is difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. **23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is[e] to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”** Yes, it is indeed hard, if not impossible, for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Why is that so? There could be many reasons, however one is that a rich man is blinded by the delusion of his possession. To him, he lacks nothing. To him, he is good, and therefore needs not ‘one thing’. A rich minded person is unaware of his sin. Filled with the corruption that comes with the great wealth, pride forever rules in his heart. How can such a person come to repentance? Jesus said, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [Mat. 5:3]**.

The disciples were greatly discouraged. It has dawned upon them how difficult this is to enter the kingdom of God. Look at verse 26, 27. **26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” 27 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”** Indeed, to enter the kingdom of God is impossible with man. However, all things are possible with God! Yes. One can enter the kingdom of God with Jesus. It is impossible to do so with man as all are sinful, not even one is righteous. Because of sin, there will always be one thing we lack. However, we can enter the kingdom of God with Jesus. This is not out of our goodness but rather the righteousness of Jesus.

In conclusion, this has been Jesus’ intention from today’s passage, to show us that on our own, it is impossible to inherit eternal life. However, we need Him to be saved. Just as child would need the parents to be guided, raised well and taught about how to live, so do we need Jesus to enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus is our victory, our only key to inheriting eternal life. Let us be rebuked and be brought to repentance by the actions of this rich man. Let us hear the voice of Jesus that is constantly calling us to Him for our salvation. When the rich man was blinded by his self-righteousness, Jesus opened his eyes to see how sinful he is. When the rich man was so confident in his richness as though lacking nothing, Jesus showed him that he lacks a lot. It was the intention of Jesus to humble this rich man, and then come to Him with a childlike faith to be saved. When the disciples were themselves dejected, greatly discouraged about this mammoth impossible task of entering the kingdom of God, what did Jesus do? He again encouraged them it is possible for them to be saved, with God. Yes, they have left everything that matters to follow Jesus; hoping that they too can enter this kingdom of God. Jesus encouraged them, **29 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life**. Yes, indeed, those who genuinely left all for Jesus, following Him and with a childlike faith trusting in Him, will not only be blessed beyond what they sacrificed in this present age, but more so eternal life in the age to come. What shall we say then to this Jesus who is calling us to Him? Let us give thanks to Him. Let us be encouraged to trust in Him all the more – where we are rebuked, like a child that is receiving discipline from the father, we humble ourselves and welcome God’s correction through repentance.

I pray to God for this eternal life. I don’t think I have ever been this frustrated in my life. If I am not complaining about my finances, I am complaining about my job were I feel I need more, to be paid more. I am frustrated about my stagnation in life it seems, more so because I need some sort of stability in order to prepare for marriage life. Even this has been extremely difficult; worrying about the right partner, if I am ready to head my family in the Lord. My heart is also a mess because of sin. There is just too much going on, and lacking quite a lot. I see myself searching and looking for a break, eternal life where I can be at peace from all these thorns of sin and the world. I am encouraged by today’s word. It is impossible with my own strength, but indeed possible with Jesus. Amen!

I also pray for you all, as we are nearing the end of the year. Exams are in motion, and those working would like to close on a high for a good performance. Above all, we might be wearied by our own sins and the struggles of life. However, we are indeed encouraged by today’s word, that it is possible with Jesus. Let us then come to Him with a childlike faith. The good news todays is that there is eternal life so save us from our sins, to save us from whatever void we are struggling with. It is impossible alone. It is impossible with our own strength. But it is possible with Jesus through a childlike faith.

So then, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” = It is impossible with man, but possible with God. I inherit eternal life with Jesus.