

## HOW TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE

Mark 10:17-31 (Key verse 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."*

As always, I want to start today's message with a question. What must you do to inherit eternal life? Think about it for a while? I am sure, that many of you answered that you must believe in Jesus. Or as we learned last week, we have to receive the kingdom of God like a little child. You are right in saying so. But still.....it does not answer the question – what must we do to inherit eternal life. In today's passage we will learn, from a rich young man, that to inherit eternal life, we must first give up our earthly treasures. Then, follow Jesus. This does not sound too difficult, right? Yet, as we will see with the rich young man, by nature we are all strongly attached to the things of the world. So we need God's help. This morning, let's learn from the rich young man's mistake! Let's give up our worldly treasures ....in our hearts.....so we can wholeheartedly follow Jesus. And inherit eternal life. Amen!

Let's look at verse 17. After Jesus blessed the little children, he started on his way. When all of a sudden, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before Jesus. The question is, who was this man? Well.....according to various verses in the bible ....this was an extraordinary man. Firstly, this man had great wealth (not just wealth...but great wealth).....which means he was extremely rich. (22) Secondly, the man was still young....probably in his twenties.... Like most of you here today! (Matthew 20:22) Thirdly despite his age.....the man was a ruler..... a man of standing in society....and with power and authority. (Luke 18:18) Lastly, the man was a morally upright person. He kept the law of God from a young age. (19-20) Sjoeee....What an impressive person this young man was; don't you think? Seriously.....He had everything in this world: wealth.... youth.....social standing....and power. Wow!! He had so many good things going for him in this world!

Look again at verse 17. This man ran up to Jesus and fell on his knees before him. (Out of breath)..... (Hands in prayer position)....."Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life? Woowwww....This man seems really keen to inherit eternal life from Jesus. It seems, that somehow he knew only Jesus could tell him how to inherit eternal life. But this was not the case at all!!!! Look at verse 18 Jesus asked him: "Why do you call me good? No one is good—except God alone. Jesus knew that this rich young man was not as humble and ignorant as he pretended to be. In fact, his heart was very proud before Jesus and filled with preconceived ideas about how to inherit eternal life. Especially, relating to the standard of goodness that God required.....because instead of looking at God as the standard for goodness.....this man looked at human standards. And according to human standards.....this man viewed Jesus as a good teacher.....just as he viewed himself as a good man.....I mean he was successful...his wealthy.....he was respected and powerful.....and kept God's law from a young age.....indeed....if these were the standards for measuring goodness in the world.....then this man was not just good.....but excellent!!!!

But there is a huge problem here!!!!!! If human goodness is the standard by which we can inherit eternal life, then this man merely came to Jesus to book his ticket!! Right? To get Jesus approval and be on his way. However, the standard for goodness.....by which someone inherit eternal life.... is not determined by us. No! It is determined by God. And do you

know what God says about all of us? God says, there is no one who does good.....not even one.... All have turned away, [you] have together become worthless (Rom 3:12) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom 3:23). This means that based on God's goodness and holiness no one makes the cut. Not even this impressive rich....young.....successful....and morally upright man. And if he doesn't make it, then no one can ever be good enough to inherit eternal life on their own merit. We need a saviour! We need God's mercy to inherit eternal life.

That is exactly why Jesus quoted the Ten Commandments to the man. Look at verse 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.' Jesus wanted the man to see himself through God's standard of goodness. So that he might be conscious of sin. (Rom 3:20) This then is the first step to inherit eternal life. Because, when we are conscious of sin, we have no choice but to rely on God's mercy to forgive our sins. And give us eternal life based on His wonderful love and grace.

But this rich young man did not get it. He was full of preconceived ideas – thinking that he was good enough to inherit eternal life. Look at verse 20. (Proudly and arrogantly) "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." It is indeed possible that outwardly this man obeyed God's commandments. Yet, it was impossible for him to keep the law internally. Jesus said that even looking at someone with lustful desire is tantamount to adultery. Also being angry with someone is akin to murder (Mt 5:22,28). Yet, this man ignored God's standards.....he ignored the evil thoughts that came from his heart— the sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. Like everyone else, all these evils came from inside this man and defiled him. (Mark 6:21-23) Yet, instead of responding to Jesus' reference to the law as -"There is no way I have kept or can keep the law of God completely. He proudly proclaimed "all these I have kept since I was a boy." His heart was closed to inherit eternal life, because of his preconceived ideas about him being good enough in the eyes of God.

Then how could Jesus open his heart. Let's read today's key verse together. Verse 21. (Can we all read it together) 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."

Jesus said to man: "Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. But why!!! This young man had from a young age began to build up his worldly treasures. He studied hard at school and got good grades.....Then he went to university and with sheer dedication....and commitment....overcome all the obstacles to graduate Cum laude.....then soon thereafter became a very successful business man and ruler in the land.....His wealth was his dream came true...his success was his goal.....and his treasure.....that he valued more than anything in life. Why did Jesus say he should now sell everything? It was to open his heart to inherit eternal life.

The problem was, because of worldly treasures...he did not have any space for God in his life. Yes, he might have gone to church....yes, he might have kept the law.....yet it was all very superficial .....and only instilled pride, self-righteousness in his heart.....along with a lot of head knowledge....to the point where he declared..... all these I have kept since I was a boy. But the reality was, he did not know God at all.....moreover, he did not care as much about eternal life as he cared about his worldly treasure. In this sense, the man' worldly treasures was a huge obstacle for

him to inherit eternal life. In fact, it closed his heart to Jesus. Therefore, it closed his heart to eternal life. So Jesus said, sell everything!!!.....Now at first, it sounds like this guy is losing so much. However, look carefully at verse 21 again.....by selling everything on earth....Jesus promised the man would have treasure in heaven. Wow!!! We can be certain that the treasures in heaven is far more valuable and precious and beautiful than any treasure we may have in this world.

But do you know what the greatest treasure in heaven is? It is Jesus Himself! In Jesus there is forgiveness of sins and transforming power. In there is resurrection and eternal life. In there is true freedom and joy. In Jesus there is living hope and eternal glory. In Jesus there is everything we need; both here on earth and eternal life. If we have Jesus, even if we lose everything in the world, we are still okay....because Jesus is with us give us everything. But if we do not have Jesus, even if we have everything else in the world, we have absolutely nothing.

There are many believers, who think they can have both worldly treasures and heavenly treasures at the same time. But as we can see here, earthly treasures close our hearts to Jesus and eternal life. While heavenly treasures, open our hearts to God and eternal life. That is why we must give up our earthly treasures. So we can inherit eternal life in our deep our hearts. Amen. The questions is, what do we have to do after giving up our earthly treasures? Look again at verse 21. Jesus said, then come, follow me. This was Jesus gracious invitation to the man, to come and establish a personal relationship with Jesus. By listening to Jesus. By seeing what Jesus did. And personally learning from Jesus. The truth is, to follow Jesus is the only way to inherit eternal life.

Then how did the man respond? Look at verse 22. At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Sadly, this man valued his worldly treasures more than inheriting eternal life. And missed a great opportunity to follow Jesus. The truth is we all have worldly treasures....they can be things that provides us security....or comfort....or pleasure.....or meaning in life.....yes things like money.....our careers.....our studies .....or even our loved ones... And like this rich young man, we think that we can have both – worldly treasures and eternal life. Yet, this is not possible. Like this rich young man, if we truly want to inherit eternal life, we need to make a choice - between holding on to our worldly treasure .....which only closes our hearts to Jesus.....or letting go of it to sincerely and deeply follow Jesus to inherit eternal life. Sadly, the rich young man made the wrong choice and chose his worldly wealth over Jesus and eternal life. But I pray with God's help, we do not make the same mistake. But rather follow in the footsteps of the disciples. Unlike the young man, the disciples left everything to follow Jesus (v28). For them Jesus gave the promise that they will never fail to receive a hundred times as much in this age and in the age to come (v30). However, even though the disciples pursued heavenly treasure and followed Jesus, Jesus still warned them to guard their heart. Because many who are first will be last and the last first (v31).

#### In conclusion

There are many people, even among believers, who value worldly wealth and success as their treasure. They too just like the rich young man, have a worldly value system. Yet, also like the rich young man, want to inherit eternal life. The truth is, this is not possible. In today's passage we learned that the way to inherit eternal life is to first let go of all our worldly treasures.....to receive and embrace Jesus as our greatest treasure in heaven.....Then, as a new life direction....we must follow Jesus. This means, we must sincerely learn from Jesus as we study the scriptures. And not only learn theoretically, but imitate Jesus in our own lives. Though Jesus is the Son of God, he denied Himself to obey God's will for Him to

lay down his life for us on the cross. We should do the same as Jesus, and deny ourselves to obey God's will for our lives. Jesus physically took up His cross and endured much suffering in to obey God's will. Likewise, we must learn from Jesus and embrace suffering as we follow God's plan for our lives. This is what it means to follow Jesus.....it is to die to oneself and embrace the way of the Christ – as we live in this world.

1. I pray that we all give up our worldly treasures. They only close our hearts to Jesus and eternal life.
2. I also pray that we may embrace Jesus as our greatest heavenly treasure.
3. Lastly, I pray that we follow Jesus with all our hearts.

This is the way to inherit eternal life. Amen!