

Salvation: Impossible with man, but not with GOD!

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Mark 10:17-27

As we consider this story of the rich young ruler, I would like to speak this morning on the subject of: **"SALVATION: Impossible with man, but not with GOD!"** This story is also in the gospels of Matthew and Luke and we will borrow from those accounts to help us here with the one in Mark. We are given quite a bit of detail in this story that we can glean some important features or elements regarding salvation. I'm sure all of us at some point in our lives have ask this importance question to our own conscience, yea to our own soul. We have entertained the thought, how can I get to heaven, or will I go to heaven when I die. This is basically what this young man is asking our Lord Jesus Christ, what can I do to get to heaven or have eternal life? There four things I would like to present to you this morning:

- I. **A SHARED DECEPTION.** (vss. 17 -20)
- II. **A SOVEREIGN DISCLOSER.** (vs. 21)
- III. **A SINFUL DEFICIENCY.** (vs. 22)
- IV. **A SOVEREIGN DECLARATION.** (vss. 23 -27)

The first thing we want to look at is: **I. A Shared Deception.** In verses 17-20 we see a deception that is shared by all of us. We all have this same deception and we are bound in this universal and familiar misconception that it totally blinds us to the truth regarding eternal life. Perhaps we can say that we are all spiritually delusional regarding salvation, until of course when God saves us and removes the blinders from our eyes. We all share in this deception, we have eyes but we cannot see, because when we are a lost estate we are spiritually blind. This is why Jesus told Nicodemas, who was very religious; except you are born again you CANNOT SEE the kingdom of God. So it's not like we are going to pick on this poor young man that came to Christ seeking eternal life, were it not for the grace of God those of us who are saved would still be like this young man. There are interesting features regarding this young man; that again teaches us, you don't have to be rude, ugly, mean, debased or a degenerate immoral perverted person to be lost. You can be an outstanding obedient citizen with good morals and respectful and still be lost. Look at some of the features:

- He was enthusiastic and earnest in his actions: "...*there came one running ...*" Oh to God that some in this auditorium would be just as zealous and would run to God this morning inquiring about salvation!
- He was reverent in his demeanor. "...*and kneeled to him ...*" Both Matthew and Luke do not include this action, but it shows that he was very respectful to Christ. Oh to God that one in this auditorium would bow the knee to Christ and own Him as their LORD!

- He was polite and very courteous. *"...and asked him, Good Master..."* He acknowledged that Christ was a good person, one sent from God, like Nicodemus. He didn't address Christ as the "the man upstairs," or "hey dude," or "ah like listen man..." or that phrase that is used by many, sad to say even professing Christians, he didn't, "oh my god, its Jesus." What respect and honor given to Christ, he addressed Him as GOOD MASTER. Oh, to God that no one in this room ever addresses God as the man upstairs or other disrespectful language, or use the phrase "oh my god," else you are guilty of breaking the Third Commandment, Ex.20:7, *"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."*
- He was concerned about eternity. *"...what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"* Oh to God that some in this auditorium would be concerned about their souls and eternity.
- He seemed to be a very decent and moral person, as least regarding his outward deeds and manners. When Christ confronted him about his lifestyle his answer was better than perhaps the best in this auditorium this morning, verse 20 says, *"And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth."*

I mean when we look at some of his characteristics we are like wow, this seems to be a fine young man who has interest in the things of God. But none of us has the power that Jesus had who could look at his heart. We can only look at the outward appearance, but Jesus can look into depths of every person's heart. You can deceive this poor preacher, but you will not deceive Christ. This is why I said earlier that this young ruler has a deception that is shared by all of us. He has a common delusion that every man has had since the awful fall of Adam and none are exempt. You see this rich young ruler was also poor, he was spiritually poor in the sense he was deluded by his own self-righteousness and conceit. This is the problem of all lost men and women in all ages whether it is found in religion, philosophy or secular humanism, it is a delusion that has damned many people to hell. Why? Because everyone thinks that they can do something to obtain eternal life. They deny the need for grace; they deny the truth that God has everything to do with salvation. People are so blind to believe that they in themselves can do something to obtain eternal life. They are not only blind in themselves but also have been blinded by Satan, *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* 2 Cor.4:3-6. This is man's biggest problem, no not the economy, the health care issue, not the war in Afghanistan, though these things are real, they will pass, but the biggest problem with man is the issue of their blindness. Why you ask? Because blindness begets self-righteousness! This poor, rich young ruler

sought to in his own eyes, to establish his own righteousness and in doing so was ignorant of the true righteousness of God. This man was deceived in thinking that he could keep the commandments of God. Romans 10:2-4, *"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and **going about to establish their own righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* This was the problem of this young man and all those outside Christ, they go about to establish their own righteousness and therefore will not submit to the righteousness of God, and thus, they look to their own good works, their good deeds, their religious rites and ceremonies even to the keeping of the law as this young man sought to do to get him to heaven. How sad that man is so delusional about this, when the Bible makes it very clear how to be saved. Quickly to our next point:

II. A Sovereign Discloser. (vs 21)

In verse 21 we see how our Lord Jesus Christ beheld this man. *"Then Jesus beholding him loved him..."* Here we see the compassion of Jesus Christ. I will not get into the arguments between the Arminians and Calvinists regarding this verse. What a sovereign discloser, showing the love of God for sinners. I may not say to a person in particular God loves you, but I can say that God loves sinners. Now, we are not talking about a mushy mushy sentimental love in the flesh, no this is an HOLY love. Does this mean that God loves every single person alike? If so, then how do you reconcile there verses? Ps.5:4 & 5, *"For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. 5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."* Ps.7:11, *"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."* Ps.11:5, *"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."* Romans 9:13, *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* These are only a few verses that show that there is a sense that God does not love everyone alike. I don't understand all this but I do know that the love of God along with the application of the death of Christ does not fall upon the issue of possibilities but upon the essence of actual procurement, that is, the love of God is effectual. If the love of God is effectual then we can have no doubt that this man was converted later, though at the present moment he would chose the world over Christ. Then Jesus beheld him, He beheld him with compassionate eyes, with merciful eyes, with loving eyes, Jesus beheld everything about him. If Christ loved him, He loved him from all eternity, with immutable grace that would love him to the end. Because Christ loved him, the Son of God was going to tell him the truth regarding his soul which leads to our third point.

III. A Sinful Deficiency. (vss 21b & 22)

"...and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions." Jesus pointed out his sin of

covetousness, riches were his idol. Jesus got right to the core of his sins and He does the same with us. At some point of your life God will meet you at the place of your rebellion. John Gill has something to say on this, *"He was so far from keeping all the commandments, that he had not kept the first; 'thou shalt have no other gods before me': there was more than one thing wanting in him, but Christ takes notice of this as the first; and there was no need to mention any other; this touched him sensibly, and fully tried, and sufficiently exposed the vanity of his boasted perfection...Finding that he must part with two things his heart was set upon, his idol of self-righteousness, and his mammon of unrighteousness; the bladder of his pride was pricked, and his vanity and self-conceit were exposed...which were sadly mortifying, and exceedingly disagreeable to him."*

When we first see this young man, he seems respectful and courteous and his question seems very noble. But as we see by his response to what our Lord answer him, he loved his riches more than eternal life. You see the problem with this young man is a sinful deficiency. This young man's heart was not humbled with the sense of sin, but proud in his self-righteousness. He was rich in money but was wretched in his soul. He thought he could meet whatever requirements were needed for heaven, he thought too much of himself and too little of the Son of God. Christ told him, you lack one thing and then told him what he had to do. But this man showed forth three sorrowful sinful deficiencies.

- a. He was ignorant of God's holy character.
- b. He was ignorant of his own sinful nature.
- c. He was ignorant of who Jesus Christ was.

Before God saves us, He shows us these 3 important things:

- He shows us our sins:
- He shows us who He is: He is a HOLY GOD!
- He shows us that Jesus Christ is the only savior of sinners:

The young rich ruler's ignorance of these things made him a very self-righteous person and no sin is more deadly that keeps sinners away from Jesus Christ than the sin of self-righteousness. Notice again what Christ said to him, *"...and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.'" The young man basically asked Christ, what must I do, to go to heaven? Christ must have missed the class on evangelism 101, because He did not tell this young man, just repeat this sinner's prayer or just repeat these words and I can assure you of heaven. No, Christ demanded that this young man, come to Him, take up the cross and follow Christ! I tell you this morning if you want to have treasure in heaven, come to Christ, take up His cross and follow HIM. This is what Christ demanded of this young man and this is what Christ demands of you this morning; give up what is the darling sin of your heart and come to Christ and follow*

Him! The one thing this young ruler lack was the most important thing and that was faith in Christ, i.e. trusting Christ for all his salvation. But that sinful deficiency in his life caused him to walk away from Christ, because this young man trusted himself more than Christ. Verse 22, *"And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."* What sin will cause you to walk away from Christ this morning? What sin is worth spending an eternity in hell for? Though you might not have great possessions, yet you are willing to walk away from the greatest possession of all, JESUS CHRIST, the pearl of great price! Notice a few things our Lord Jesus Christ said to this young man:

- Christ demanded '**Capitulation,**' (submission) that this man give his all to Him: *"...sell whatsoever thou hast..."* Luke 18:22, *"...sell all that thou hast..."* Christ demands that you give of your all to Him. You must sale all that you have, not monetarily, but what is in your heart.
- Christ demanded '**Conviction,**' (faith) that this young man come to Him. *"...and come ..."* Christ commands you to come to Him this morning! Matthew 11:28, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*
- Christ demanded '**Confession,**' that this man would: *"...take up the cross ..."* That is, to go forth and testify of Christ, to profess Him, to confess Him and to live for HIM! Christ demands that you take up His cross this morning!
- Christ demanded '**Commitment,**' for this man to: *"...follow me."* He demanded that this man give up his life and follow Christ. He commanded this man to be obedient. He commands you this morning to FOLLOW HIM!

This is what God demands of all of us:

1. '**Capitulation.**' (Submission – sell whatever thou hast)
2. '**Conviction.**' (Faith - come)
3. '**Confession.**' (Take up the cross)
4. '**Commitment.**' (Follow Him)

Hebrews 11:6, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

This leads us to our last point:

IV. A Sovereign Declaration. (vss. 23 - 27)

"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter

into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible." What significant statements does our Lord Jesus Christ make here! He makes a statement regarding the essence of riches, that is, there are very few rich people in heaven. He does not say that there are none, but hardly some. As though riches and grace seldom mix. Isn't it ironic, that this is what man seeks after; this is what man lives for; that is, riches and this is the thing that keeps many from heaven. People crave and covet riches not knowing that it can destroy their souls. The Bible is quite clear in teaching that money in and of itself is not evil, but it is the love of it that leads to greed, pride and self-indulgence by loving the world. 1 Timothy 6:10, *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."* I believe it is very clear that that few rich men shall find new life in Christ. Notice the point Jesus makes regarding this, *"And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."* It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Wow, that is profound! A camel can go through the eye of a needle easier than for a rich man to be saved! That is powerful. The one thing myriads of people covet is the one thing will keep them out of heaven. You think this teaching by Christ blows your mind; the disciples were astonished out of measure! Like wow, then who can be saved was their conclusion. Verse 26, *"And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?"* Now, the Bible tells us that there were some rich men who were saved, Abraham, Solomon, David, Job, Hezekiah and others. Yet, grace turned and changed their hearts to follow God wholeheartedly. The disciples ask the one most important and difficult question, then who can be saved? Herein, we have the sovereign declaration, with man it is impossible, but with God it is all POSSIBLE! This is why Jonah would declare boldly, salvation is of the LORD! Jesus is teaching us to look away from ourselves and look solely to God and God alone. The grace of God is powerful to bring any sinner through the needle's eye of faith. God grace can save the richest man in the world and God grace can save the poorer man in the world, their in nothing impossible with God. This is why you must look away from yourself and look to Christ for salvation, you cannot make it to heaven by yourself, but God can save you to get you to heaven. This is why you must look away from everything and look solely to God, because salvation is in His hand, because salvation is POSSIBLE with Him, but impossible with you. Turn away from everything and everyone and trust Christ alone for salvation.

Where are you this morning? Do you love the things of this world; do you seek the riches of this world and have no interest in the things of God? If you are not saved it is not because there is no hope for you. If you are not saved it is not because there is no

way to be saved. If you are not saved it is not because Christ is not able. It is not because Christ will not save. If you are not saved, it is because you lack one thing. If you are not saved, it is because, "*Ye will not come to Christ, that you might have life.*" Don't die with that one thing lacking in your life. Come in repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Come as the hymn writer says:

**'Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling!
Naked come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace!
Foul, I to Thy fountain fly,
Wash me Saviour or I die!**

Come to Christ this morning:
Come and take up the cross of Christ this morning:
Come and follow Christ this morning:

Come in Submission – Faith – Confession - Commitment!
Look to Christ alone this morning!