

**Preaching Christ....
...by the power of the Holy Spirit
...and the authority of the Word of God**

Date: 10th October
Services: *Across the Diocese*
Series: Questioning Jesus
Title: What must I do to be saved?
Passage: Mark 10:17-31
Outline:

6 surprises:

- 1. What must I DO!**
 - 2. No one is good**
 - 3. He's kept all the commandments**
 - 4. Sell everything!**
 - 5. How hard for rich people? Impossible!**
 - 6. Compensation package**
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INTRODUCTION

- Do you know the greatest contender for the role of god in my life? The idol that most comes before the one true God?
- **Me!**
- I am the god I am most likely to serve when I'm not serving the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
- **I am my idol!**
- But one of the *other* great gods in society today – especially in **western society** – a god which gives people temporary **comfort**; a **false** sense of **security**, the **delusion** of **power** and **control**... of **self-sufficiency**... that god is...// **wealth! //**
- And it's fascinating to see how Jesus reacts to the young man in our passage who was obviously **very** wealthy... and **unwilling** to **part** with that wealth...
- This is one of those passages which is full of **surprises**... and at first, raises more **questions** for us than it **answers**...
- So I have **six surprises** to share with you – **one** at a **time**. The first is when the man asks:
1. What must I do?
- ...to be saved.
- And the surprising thing about this **question** is the **answer //**
- I've spent the last 20 months reminding you that inheriting eternal life is **not** about what we **DO**, but rather, what has been **DONE** for us – in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- So when this man asks 'what must I do to inherit eternal life, Jesus' **answer** is **surprising**...
- Jesus doesn't come back and say – well look young man – you have to understand that eternal life is not about what you **DO** but what is **about** to be **DONE** for you in my **death** and **resurrection**...
- ...no, Jesus goes on to talk about keeping the **commandments**... to talk precisely about what this man must **DO**...
- Why does he do that? Let's park that for moment...
- ...here's **another** surprise... in Jesus' response to the man. Jesus says

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2. No one is good

- Have a look with me at v18 – “*why do you call me **good**?*” Jesus answered. “*No is good – except God alone*”.
- Jesus is challenging the young man to think **carefully** about who he is talking to...
- “Do you **see** what you are **saying**? – if no one is good but God **alone**.... are you calling me **God** in calling me **good**?...”
- This is **so relevant** all these centuries **later**.
- How many people **today** will acknowledge that Jesus was a **good man**... but then **deny** the **implications** of who he claimed to **be**...?
- how **good** can he be in fact, if he **claimed** to come from **God**, but **didn't**? // He was NOT a good man in that case – he was a liar – a **fraud**!
- But there's another challenge for the man. As well as challenging him as to who he is talking to he is also pointing out that **no one** IS **truly good**!
- we don't **like** being told that do we?
- And when we think of plenty of good people we know – some of them not even Christian - and we **want to ask** – **really Jesus**....? // **NO ONE** good?? Not **ONE**??
- Well again - just **park** that thought **there** while we move to the **next surprise**... the claim from the young man that:

3. He's kept all the commandments

- Have a look with me at v19 – *you know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother.'*” 21 **All these I have kept since I was a boy, he said.**
- Why did Jesus **raise** these at **this point**?
- **Surely** to **ILLUSTRATE** the point that no one **IS good** but God **alone**!
- You know the **commandments**... and **no one can keep them**...! – **no-one** is good but **God alone**!
- But the man responds in the **same way** that most people do **today** – **Teacher** – all these I have kept since I was a boy! // Give me a bigger challenge – if you like!
- What was Jesus' reaction? V21 - Jesus **looked** at him and **loved** him. /
- ...as if to say – oh man – if only you knew. If only you knew what your answer is revealing about yourself...
- ...if only you knew the ignorance you are displaying.
- I want to love you – I want to embrace you...
- **What** stirred Jesus' emotions for that man that day...?
- I have honestly felt that **same way** for people who are **honestly believe** that they are doing all that is **right** to make it to **God**...
- they haven't done **anything** major **wrong**..., I keep the ten commandments (even if I can't tell you what they are...!)
- they are **good citizens**....,
- they have good hearts, good wills... my heart goes out to them – for the best will in the world...

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- they do not understand that what they're on about is not what Jesus is on about...
- they are on about eternal life as something they must DO to get...
- but eternal life – is in **inheritance** – it's **gift** – you don't earn an inheritance... it's something people must **receive**.... But you can only **receive** it when nothing comes between you and God...
- And Jesus puts his finger **right** on this issue in our **fourth surprise**:

4. Sell everything!

- Have a look with me at v21 *“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.”* ²² *At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, (he went away did you notice?) because he had great wealth.*
- Jesus had **brilliantly** put his finger on what was keeping this man from **eternal life**.
- It wasn't a matter of him keeping all the **commandments**... for **no one can**...!
- No, Jesus had pierced right to the **heart** of this young man's life, and had **shown** him that he was owned by **another god** – in fact – **enslaved** to another god.
- He had in fact **failed** to follow the ten commandments at the most **critical point** – commandment no 1 – **no other gods before Me**.
- It's interesting isn't it that this man who had anything that **money** and **power** and **youth** could give him // **nevertheless** had wanted **MORE**.
- There was **something** his wealth **had not** been able to **deliver** // **eternal life!** //
- And he was **sad** because he was faced with a **choice**... he could **indeed** have what money could **never buy**, but it would **cost** him his **money**... and at **this stage** he wasn't prepared to **part** with that. //
- Now let me ask you – do you think Jesus asks **everyone** to part with their **wealth** when they come to him... when they want to receive **eternal life**...?
- Of course NO – otherwise none of us would actually own anything – have anything! – live anywhere.
- He does not ask people to do that unless... **wealth** is their **GOD!** //
- He **would** ask us to part with **anything** that has **become** god – so that we can serve him **first** and **only**.
- **Anything** that would come **BEFORE** Him must **GO**.
- Anything that would draw us **AWAY** from him must **GO**.
- there must be **radical action** on **anything** that would **keep** us from **God**... for **THIS young man** – it was his **WEALTH!** /////- Well – the man went away **sad** – for he wasn't prepared to **pay** that price! ///
- Notice Jesus didn't run after him and say – look – I may have been **overstepping** the **mark** a little – I've overstated the case... it's OK if you just sell a little bit – would that be OK?. ///
- Oh **no**...! he doesn't do that... there's no **compromise** here / and Jesus is prepared for him to walk **away**...! (We don't know what may have happened later in this man's life!)
- And that leads Jesus to say (and this is our fifth surprise):

5. How hard for rich people? Impossible!

- Have a look with me at v23 *Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”* and then v25 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.”*

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- Before we explore **why** it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God // – we need to be **clear** – that by **any world measurement** – **WE** are the rich being **referred to here!**
- I think we often look at this passage and think – oh those **poor rich people** – they get so **caught up** in their **wealth... //**
- But any world scale **friends... WE ARE the rich... //**
- I visited a web site some time ago, where you can put in your **annual income** and it tells you where you come in the world... // my annual income puts me in the top **5%** of the **world** of the world's richest people. **95%** of the 7.5 billion people in the world have **less than me!**
- So what is it about **riches -- money, wealth, affluence --** that make it so **hard** to enter the kingdom?
- Wealth creates a concern for **secondary values.**
- **Rich people** (like us) are not worried about where our next **meal** is coming from; we worry about what it will **taste like**, and what the **setting** will be.
- We're not concerned about whether we will have a **roof** over our **head** and **clothing to wear**; we are taken up with **fashion** and **style** and **décor...**
- and **money** gradually **enslaves** those who are attached to it.
- It builds an increasing **dependence** upon **comfort**, upon "*the good life*," until people reach a point where they **cannot** give it up.
- And it **destroys** the **humility required** to examine their lives and to see the **truth** about **Jesus.**
- **That** is what was **happening** to this **rich man**; // it's what is **happening** in much of the **western society today.... //**
- And that sparks a question among the disciples... perhaps it's **your** question too... have a look with me at v26 *Who then **can** be saved?*
- Then Jesus' reply in v27 *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."*
- **impossible** to enter the kingdom – **impossible** for **men and women.**
- As **impossible** as putting a **camel** through the eye of a **needle. //**
- But **not** with **God.**
- **God** can break that **enslavement** to **riches //** and he **does.**
- ... most if not all watching **today** – **have** in fact entered – **despite** our riches...entered the Kingdom of God... he has opened our eyes to the false promises wealth makes and he's drawn us away from that false god of wealth, to **himself!!**
- **That's a miracle** of God's **GRACE //**
- What was impossible for us, God has done!!
- **By his great miraculous power, he's opened our eyes to Jesus, won us over and brought us into his kingdom.**
- **Praise God! //**
- *What is **impossible** with man, is **possible** with **God.***
- And that brings us to the **final** surprise – the

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6. Compensation package

- Have a look with me at v29 *“no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel³⁰ 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...”*
- whatever we have walked **away** from to give our **allegiance** to **Christ**... we will **gain** much **more** of – both in **this** life – and in the **life to come**.
- So **had** this man given **up** his wealth // then his wealth in **relationships** – his wealth in **blessing** – his wealth in **family** – would be **far greater**, as he enjoyed all that it means to be in **relationship** with the **Lord Jesus** and with **God’s people**.
- My prayer is for any **here** today – for whom **anything** or **any ONE else** is more **important** than our great **God**... // ...that by **God’s grace**, you would **give it up**...
- // ...and walk **away** – and come **receive** the **kingdom** and **all** its **blessings** which the Lord has prepared for you...
- Well six **surprises**... and now six **questions** with which to finish:

1. What must I DO

my **question?** – have you come to understand that inheriting eternal life is not about what you **DO**, but trusting in what has been **DONE for you** by our **Lord Jesus**?

2. No one is good

have you come to understand that **no one is good** but God **alone**... not even **you**? – and that Jesus is **good** because he is in fact, **God**?

3. He’s kept all the commandments

have you come to understand that **despite** this man’s **claims**, no one but **Jesus** has kept **all** the **commandments**...? // Which is why we must surely **rely** on what Jesus has **done** for **us**?

4. Sell everything!

Have you come to understand that this man’s **problem** was that his **wealth** was his **god**? Is there any other **god** in your life before the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** in your life?

5. How hard for rich people? Impossible!

Have you come to understand that **WE** are the rich of this world – and that only by God’s **grace** have **WE** been released from wealth’s **hold** on us, along with all its **false promises**, to trust **entirely** in **Jesus**? – a miracle of **God’s grace**!

6. Compensation package

have you come to understand that whatever it is **YOU** may be called on to give up to follow Jesus... you have received **way more** in **return** – both in **this** world and the **next**...?

Praise be to God!