

With Jesus pt8

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With Jesus / Mark 10:17–27

One of the biggest challenges we are going to face in our day and time are the questions that people have in Oklahoma and around the world, regarding Jesus, Christianity, the Bible, faith...you name it. The world we live in now is one built on a lack of tolerance for those who avoid or are afraid of questions. We cannot be those people, even when we know we will not have all of the answers.

The problem we face is that we as followers of Jesus are painted more and more often as people who are afraid of questions or who have trite, unthoughtful answers about real issues people are facing and real questions they have about where Jesus fits into all of this.

Jesus dealt with questions too. And He didn't always give easy answers. So this morning I want to look at one such instance and see what we can learn from the Savior about answering those who have questions of Him.

Turn with me to [Mark 10:17-27](#).

It's the question...what must I do to inherit eternal life?

No big thing Jesus..just eternity on the line here.

In our day and time the questions may have changed, but the seriousness and the stakes have not. Questions about faith and Christian faith and practice are all over the map.

In his book, The Reason for God, Tim Keller took on all comers. All the big questions that people ask:

- Is there one true religion
- How could God allow suffering
- Is Christianity just a bunch of rules
- How could the church support _____ injustice
- How can a loving God send people to hell
- How do you reconcile science and the Bible
- How can you take the Bible literally

Most of those make my head hurt. Highly recommend reading the book if you haven't...and that is just HALF of the book BTW

Why did he do this? Because they made a discovery. People were asking those questions out in the culture, and no one was willing to address them who was a Christian...not a serious one anyway. And, one thing I forgot to tell you about Tim's church...it was in the heart of Manhattan, one of the most secular cities in the US. That's where Tim's church was and these are the questions they kept running into, and they needed a forum to answer them.

So they set out to do something crazy- make themselves available to be questioned and to offer answers. Sound familiar? That's exactly what Jesus did here for this rich young man.

And what Jesus does is He takes the young man at face value. **He gives him the most direct answer to his question.**

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

Jesus further directed the man's thoughts to God by calling his attention to the second table of the Ten Commandments of Exod 20:12–16 and Deut 5:16–20. According to the best attested text, the Commandments are listed in an unusual order: six, seven, eight, nine, and five. The command “do not defraud” between the references to the Ninth and Fifth Commandments is substituted for the Tenth Commandment, “You shall not covet.” Fraud is a concrete example of covetousness and a special temptation of the rich. **Jesus probably limited his reference to the second table of the law, the one dealing with relationships of human beings to each other, because obedience to it provides evidence of obedience to the first table, the one dealing with the relationships of human beings to God.**

He tells him to be perfect.

And the guy says he is.

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

The rich man apparently did not understand what was involved in keeping the Commandments. Alternately, **the “one thing” this man lacked was not understanding of the requirements of the law but radical trust in God, who alone is good**, that would allow him to abandon all his property and follow Jesus

Yikes!

Friends, this is often how these questioning convos go...someone asks a “gotcha” question and we give an honest answer, and the response is dismissive.

That's ok. As long as we aren't dismissive.

See we are not responsible for the reaction of the questioner. **We are responsible for our availability and our demeanor.** When someone trusts you enough to ask you a weighty question, you should treat that trust as sacred and respond with kindness and truth.

Look at verse 21- How does Jesus respond to the young man's claim to be perfect? **He loves him.**

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

The word "loved" in the present context refers to something more than embrace, attraction, or affection. **It refers to genuine love based on need and not merit or response**

Jesus knows this guy isn't perfect. He knows deep down the young man knows he isn't either. That's why he is asking the question. It comes from an honest place even if they guy isn't ready to be honest with himself.

That's another thing we all need to keep in mind when answering questions- even hard ones that seem poised to divide...**someone is asking that question for a reason. And that takes some courage...especially if they think they already know the answer or have you pegged.**

How we respond and see them is as important as the answer.

Notice I didn't say MORE important- because we want to give people the truth, which is why Jesus keeps the conversation going...and gets the to heart of the man's self deception.

Look at v21-22.

He punctures the guy's self deception, and he goes away sad.

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

This is the only example in Mark of someone being called to discipleship but refusing. Not only did the man go away sad, but many of those who have read the account over the years have also been saddened. In fact, this verse has been described as the saddest in the Bible.

Notice he does not go away angry or yelling or threatening a law suit. **Jesus told him a truth he didn't like, but He did it in a way where the answer could be heard, even if it was not accepted.**

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

The one thing the man lacked was devotion to God, as demonstrated by compassion for the needy. Had this man truly trusted in the goodness of God (v. 18), he would have welcomed Jesus' command as God's best for him. The command "sell everything ... and give to the poor" should not be universalized and applied literally to every professing Christian. It pertains to the need of a particular person. It should not be ignored either. **Other persons may have to give up other things in order to follow Jesus: a vocation, a style of life, a sinful passion, or a relationship. The call is not to poverty but to discipleship, which takes many forms. *Discipleship, however, is costly. It involves sacrifice. It involves obedience. It involves following the example of Jesus***

Folks, not everyone who comes with questions is going to be ready for the answer, but **the importance for all of us is to be willing to answer truthfully, but to give the truth in a way that is loving and can be heard.**

I saw in the last year a lot of derogatory remarks about Tim Keller and the description of him as “winsome.” After his death, there were a lot of people who began to label his as weak or a squish or woke or whatever the term of derision is of the day.

Look, if you don’t like winsome (pleasant or kind, desiring to engage with), you won’t like Jesus. For every turn of tables (a single incident) there are 50 quiet conversations with people who are seeking or hurting or confused.

If we are going to be like Jesus, we need to let Him shape our demeanor.

Will there be a time to turn over tables? Maybe. But **every question or honest disagreement or honest rebuke is not a time to turn into the Hulk.** And in our day and time, *we need more winsome and less warrior. More kind and less King Kong. More engagement and less estrangement. More table building and fewer walls.*

And yet, our world has some pretty screwed up mindsets. And some of the questions are going to be answered in some very counter cultural ways. Who then can be saved in a world so shrouded in darkness?

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus’ Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

The teaching of Jesus was nonetheless revolutionary in its time and remains scandalous even today

The disciples ask that very question.

Look at v23-27.

We are not relying on our words or debating skills or superior knowledge. We are trusting God to do the work.

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

The contrast between the largest Palestinian animal and one of the smallest openings is clearly intended to indicate the impossibility of a rich person—or anyone else (v. 24)—entering the kingdom by doing something for himself or herself

And when we see “rich” or “wealthy” in this passage, one thing we need to remember, by the standards of the globe, Americans are among the most wealthy. So He is talking about us, and that makes a lot of sense given our current cultural circumstances. **We have everything we want and access to anything we can dream of by our own hands- to admit we need salvation would be to admit dependency- and only God can reveal that to people who seem to have everything.**

That young man, with those answers, you think that's going to keep him up at night? You think God was done with him?

We don't know, just like the people who asked Tim these questions. But what we do know, is **we shared truth without creating a barrier to the Person of Truth. We loved the questioner.**

Mark (3) The Inquiry of the Rich Man and Jesus' Teaching about Wealth and Rewards (10:17–31)

Inheriting eternal life, entering the kingdom, and being saved are impossible for any human being, but not for God, who is good and desires the salvation of all. Therefore all must depend entirely upon God. Such absolute trust in God makes possible a life of faithful discipleship

That's who we have to be as a church. Ask. Seek. Let's journey to the truth together and let's bring others with us.