

Only One Who Is Good

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[0 : 00] If you'll please open your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 19. We want to look together at the Word of God there, Matthew 19, verses 16 through 30.

Again, Matthew 19, verses 16 through 30. Let's read together. And behold, a man came up to him saying, Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?

And he said to him, Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments. He said to him, Which ones?

And Jesus said, You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The young man said to him, All these I have kept. What do I still lack? Jesus said to him, If you would be perfect, go. Sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.

[1 : 30] And come, follow me. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, Truly I say to you, Only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven.

Again, I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, Who then can be saved?

But Jesus looked to them and said, With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Then Peter said in reply, See, we have left everything and followed you.

What then will we have? Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, to the new world, excuse me, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my namesake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

[2 : 46] But many who are first will be last, and the last first. Let's pray together. O Lord, we again ask for your Spirit's help as your word is open, that we would understand this passage, and Lord, that you would really drive it home in our hearts, that you would make it clear, that you would apply it.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. As you've seen from what we read, we've come to what's known as the story of the rich young ruler. It's one of the best known stories in the Gospels. You may have seen in our part, it tells us that he was young, but verse 20 of our text tells us that he was young. And then Luke 18 is where it actually says that he was a ruler.

In the parallel passage, it's kind of combined that we often say the rich young ruler. It's also interesting as we think about what we've just seen in verses 13 through 15.

Last week we looked at, let the children come to me. Jesus was encouraging the children, and here we have this rich young ruler. And we don't know exactly what his age is. He must be a man of great ability as he's become a leader.

[3 : 54] But he's young, and we have this connection here. These bring, let the young people come to me. And now we have here this young man coming to him to speak to Jesus. And his encounter with Jesus begins well.

He comes to Jesus to understand how he can have eternal life. So he's realized to some extent he needs eternal life. He's realized he doesn't have eternal life, and he needs eternal life.

And he knows where to go to get it. He goes to Jesus. And so it begins really well. He believed there's eternal life.

He believed it was needed. He believed Jesus knew how he could obtain it. And we will see the problem is that he believed that he could earn it by his own good deeds. He's looking to himself and how he can earn it.

So let's look together at our text. The first point I want you to see from our text is that there's no one good but God. And that's really the theme of my sermon. My goal is to split up the passage into two parts.

[4 : 57] We're going to continue next week to look more of what it means for the rich to enter the kingdom, and in particular the disciples leaving everything to follow Jesus. What does that look like?

But this morning I'd like for us just to look at the first half of this passage and really focus on this idea of what he says about there being no one good. And so in Luke and Mark, let's just start going back to our passage, verse 16.

And behold, a man came up to him saying, Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life? Now in both Luke and Mark, the word good here describes Jesus.

So when we see, behold, a man came up to him saying, Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life? In Mark and Luke it both says good teacher instead of good deed.

Now again, I don't think this is a mistake. Some of you may have the King James Version. The King James Version actually combines it and has good teacher what good deed. But in all likelihood, the King James probably is guessing rightly that that's what was originally said by Jesus, but Mark and Luke include it in reference to the teacher, and Matthew here includes it in relation to the deed, because they're focusing really on different things that they have it different ways.

[6 : 19] But you can notice even in Jesus' response. But Jesus said, I'm sorry, I went too far back. Verse 17, he said to him, Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good.

And so we see Jesus there answers him in relation to goodness. He makes it personal. There's one person who's good. He doesn't directly address the deeds, although I think that's implied in what he says.

And so this understanding of him, at least from Mark and Luke, knowing that he called Jesus a good teacher, helps us to understand Jesus' answer that there's only one good.

But I remember back when I was a teacher in Atlanta, I taught Bible. And we read through this, and I don't remember if it was in Mark or Luke, in my Bible class.

I remember I had a student who really struggled with this. And I think to this day is not a Christian. But she really struggled with this passage because it says, Good teacher.

[7 : 21] And Jesus' response is, There's only one who's good. And her whole argument was, Well, wait a minute now. Jesus is acknowledging he's not good, that only God the Father is. He's making this distinction.

He's trying to specify that. And what I want you to see is that that's not what's happening in this passage at all. And to some extent, my thinking of this, even as I look at the passage, just reminds me of how I just regret that I couldn't bring this home.

I couldn't help her to understand that. And maybe it's the Spirit's working that's needed for anyone to understand that. But what Jesus is communicating, I think, is a clear message. Not that Jesus isn't good. But that this man's not.

That none of us are good. That God alone is good. Jesus being God incarnate is good. His point is simply to say that only God is good. And if only God is good, then there's no hope for the rich young ruler, is there?

But if only God's good, there's also no hope for any of us to attain eternal life based on our goodness. You understand that this really is the question you ask. Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?

[8 : 27] I think, isn't that the question of so many people in our day? Even people, if they will acknowledge that there's a God and they acknowledge there's some afterlife, what must I do to get there? What good deed can I do?

How good must I be? We've talked about this even before in our community here in Hazleton. Even amongst many who are Catholic or nominally Catholic, the idea that our good deeds have to outweigh our bad deeds.

Right? If I've sinned a lot, then I confess my sin, and then I go do good things. If I do enough good things, it will weigh more. And so I've talked to you before about this idea that some people believe they have to be 51% good.

You know, as long as you slightly outweigh the bad stuff, you're okay. Do whatever you want to do. Just do an extra good thing. And, you know, keep it all in balance. And this man's asking a similar kind of question.

How good must I be? What good thing do I need to do that I may have eternal life? Romans 3, 23 tells us, verses 23 and 24 say, For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are justified by His grace as a gift to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 40] So even before we get deep into the text, let's just start with that as a basis. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. All of us are sinners. And how do we obtain redemption?

We are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So our salvation is always, we are always justified by His goodness as a gift to us, not our goodness, nothing that we can do.

We've all sinned and fallen short of His glory. And then Romans 3, just before that, in verse 10 says, None is righteous, no, not one. And again, this is a passage that would have been very helpful for the rich young ruler.

None is righteous, no, not one. We see His understanding of righteousness as the narrative continues. And I would argue that this is what Jesus sets out to prove in this whole interaction. And so especially what we're going to look at in this first part, Jesus' desire is to show the rich young ruler that He's not good. And so Jesus is going to say things to Him and you're going to see this.

[10 : 46] If you look at it through this perspective, I think it's going to be clear what Jesus is saying. He's testing the rich young ruler. He's trying to bring Him to an understanding. It's really, in some ways, what we might call good counseling or good teaching.

He doesn't just say, which is my tendency if you've ever taught with me, my tendency would be to say, well, Romans 3 wasn't there yet, but to say, wait a minute, no one's good. No one's righteous. Stop it, you know. Come on, get it together. What are you thinking? That's not what Jesus does. What Jesus does is really, He lobs him some softballs. He toys with him a little bit. He gets him thinking and answering questions to the point that the rich young ruler realizes he's not getting in the kingdom.

He sees his sin. I think that's what Jesus is setting out to do, to expose his sin and expose the fact that he's not righteous and not able to get into the kingdom. So, secondly, I want you to see God's standard.

What is God's standard? And God's standard is perfection. This rich young ruler comes to Jesus seeking a works-based salvation.

[11 : 54] I don't know another way of saying it. What good deed must I do to be saved? And I would argue that he's accurate in terms of religion apart from Christianity. I've studied world religions.

I'm convinced there's not another religion that isn't based on works. Every other religion is based on what must I do? What good thing must I do?

What sacraments must I do? What are the seven pillars that I have to complete that I can, whatever, have eternal life? And so he approaches in what we might judge a very religious attitude for today.

What do I need to do that I can have eternal life? And Jesus' answer is basically this. Just keep the law. That's all. That's it.

Just keep the law. And you're going to see by this man's answer just how far he is and why Jesus is starting there. But Jesus' answer is, you want to have eternal life? That's it. Just keep the law.

[12 : 55] Simple. If you desire to enter the kingdom through your words, this is the way. If you want to get into the kingdom based on what you do, here's what the answer is.

Here's how you get into the kingdom based on your words. Keep the law. And I think this man responds rightly. I mean, he asks a very good question. But what I want you to see is, before we even look at his question, perfect obedience to the law is what's commanded of us.

If you want to enter based on your words, just obey the law perfectly. I think that's why Jesus says in verse 21, if you would be perfect, if you would be perfect, go and sell.

If you want to be perfect, why do you have to be perfect? Why does perfection matter? Because that's the requirement. Now, before we go much further, let's think back to what we saw in Romans 3.23.

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So if all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, how many people are getting in based on perfection? Not on their perfection.

[14:03] No one, right? But what Jesus is saying isn't untrue. If you were perfect, there'd be no need of redeemer. There'd be no need of a savior. No one would have to die for your sins if you were perfect.

But all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, so none of us are getting in that way. But Jesus says to him, just keep the law. And again, I love the man's response. He says, which ones? This is great. Give me a checklist. Right? Jesus says, just keep the commandments. Okay, which one of the commandments does I have to keep? You know, aren't we like this so much? Just make me a checklist. Tell me which ones. If you can narrow down the Ten Commandments to maybe two, and maybe he's even thinking broader to the Levitical law. You know, there's a lot of stuff in there.

Can we just simplify this a little bit? God, make your moral law as simple as possible. Which laws do I have to keep? And I've said this before, but I think people do this all the time.

[15:02] I've done just confrontational. You go up and meet someone, you share the gospel with them. And one of the questions I oftentimes would ask is, do you believe when you die you're going to go to heaven?

Now, a lot of this happened in the South, and the answer is always, yes. Of course I'm going to heaven when I die. Oh, really? Why? And I mean, I don't know what the percentage was. Maybe 90, 95% of the time, what's the answer they give?

I've never murdered anyone. Well, there you have it. You're getting it, right? I mean, this is the same mentality as the rich young ruler. Which laws do I have to keep? If you just tell me it's that murdered one, I got that covered.

Really, you know, but Jesus doesn't stop with just the murdering one, does he? I think the rich young ruler believes I can keep the commandments, some of the commandments just specify for me which ones I need to keep.

And I really think we probably all treat the law and obedience this way. Tell me what I got to do and I'll do it. I think what we don't like is the implications of the law, what all it means.

[16:08] I think even as we think of this as Christians, don't we kind of categorize which laws we're going to keep and which laws we're not going to keep? If we disagree with the law, I'll be the first to confess that I'm diligent in trying to keep the law except for speeding.

I mean, the speed limit just seems like a recommendation to me. Probably not to the state trooper if he pulls me over. But some of you are looking at me like, wow, I can't believe he does that.

Right? None of the rest of you do this, I'm sure, right? Don't we quantify which commandments we're going to keep, which laws we want to keep? I don't like this law. Let's just be honest that, I mean, I think I'm not alone in imagining that many of us aren't real thrilled with the course our government has taken in demanding, infringing upon our freedoms and demanding that we wear masks as a law.

And don't we sometimes say that's just a recommendation and we're just going to do what we want to. And look, we were diligent to be careful in looking at what the church is allowed to do and in here trying to keep those rules and even seeing that we don't, aren't the ones to police that.

But don't we kind of make our own standards about which laws we want to keep? And here's this rich and ruler, Jesus, tell me, which laws do I need to keep? Just give me a few and I can do it. We can keep some of the law well and feel like we're doing a great job in obeying God and honoring Him.

[17:40] And don't you realize that as a Christian, part of the sanctification process is that you begin to see things as sin that you didn't see last year, five years ago, ten years ago. And so you're beginning to realize that back ten years ago when you thought you were doing really great, you come to find that you were really sinning in a lot of ways you'd never even realized.

Well, Jesus lists out five of the six commandments in the second table of the law. Jesus doesn't touch the first table of the law at all. I can speculate that I imagine that He doesn't do this because there's a spiritual dynamic and I think there's probably a realization that there's no chance in the world that the rich and ruler has been keeping the first table of the law.

But He focuses in on the second table of the law and He gives five of the six commandments to Him and says, do these. And then He adds to that the summary statement that you guys are probably

well familiar with that Jesus says elsewhere.

He says, to love your neighbor as yourself which really summarizes the whole second table of the law. Remember the tables of the law are summarized love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.

That's the first four commandments and the last six commandments. All ten commandments summarized. And so Jesus says five of the six commandments and then He summarizes a summary of all of them. Love your neighbor as yourself.

[19 : 03] I thought it would be good trivia just to ask you which one of the commandments from the second table of the law does Jesus leave out? Don't answer that out loud but just see if you caught which one He leaves out.

And as you think of that well I'll answer out loud He leaves out coveting. Why does Jesus not say that one? I think answering that question will help us understand what Jesus is doing in His interaction with the rich and ruler.

Why does He not mention coveting? Again, I think He's tossing softballs to this guy. Do you know what I mean by softballs? Easy to hit.

He's throwing easy questions to them. I'm going to give you some that you think you're doing really well at. Now the reality is He's not but we'll see that. But He's throwing in ones that He thinks He's already keeping. And we have these interactions that Jesus has and it's hard for us to comprehend that He's fully God and fully man.

And it's evident sometimes that in His humanity He doesn't know the future or what people are thinking. And then there's other times where He knows what the disciples are saying when He couldn't possibly have heard them.

[20 : 10] And here I think we have an example of Jesus asking or telling the rich and ruler do these commandments because He knows the rich and ruler believes He's already keeping these. And He leaves out one that I think hits home as we're going to see.

And so He lists them out and gives a summary statement. And again what a great answer from the rich and ruler. You may have even heard it in how I read it earlier. The young man said to Him all these I have kept what do I still lack?

I mean I see Him like shoo that's it? Yes! But somehow He knows He doesn't have eternal life yet. So what do I still lack?

Look I've done all those things what do I still lack? And I wondered how many of us would have given the same answer to Jesus' question? If I came to you and said look if you want to get into heaven just keep five of the ten commandments and I'll list out the five that Jesus lists out here how many of you would have been like got it nailed it I've got those five no problem is there anything else?

I mean this is the response of the rich and ruler he's like no problem I've got those covered and I think before we go further in looking at our text let's just analyze these for a second think back of what we saw when we looked at the Sermon on the Mount and what Jesus said so let's just ask the question start with where Jesus starts and make it as easy as possible have you ever committed murder?

[21 : 48] I'm going to try to help you guys get into the kingdom of God eternal life by your words here we go have you ever committed murder? I'm really concerned that one of our elders is back there nodding his head okay we can talk about that later Paul here's what Jesus says Matthew 5 21 through 22 you've heard that it was said to those of old you shall not murder and whoever murders will be liable to judgment but I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire and so lest we wonder is Jesus really saying you're breaking the commandment he actually includes at the end you're headed for hell if you do any of these three things so here's Jesus' preaching on the law his commentary and I'm sure this is why Paul was shaking his head have you ever been angry with someone else?

Jesus' commentary on the law is this on the commandment not to murder if you've ever been angry you've broken this commandment some of you have committed murder this morning right before you ever got to church today he goes on and he says whoever insults his brother or says you fool which is really probably an expression of insulting him so if you've ever said something bad about someone else that was an insult we could grant that there could be times in which you actually communicate something that's true for the sake of protecting people whatever but let's just say

have you ever called anyone a name insulted anyone else ever then you've murdered you've broken God's law and before we go any further into the law you may remember we did this in Sunday school some time ago but we worked through all ten commandments and said with all the commandments there's positive and negative parts of the commandment that are implied by God's law and so here we're touching on the negatives it's not just that you can't murder you also can't hate people and be angry with them and call them names right none of us pass that test but positively we can even go beyond that and say if we're not allowed to murder and be angry with people and call people names then there's also a positive commandment upon us to preserve life if possible to save people we talked about that then even

I think one important example in our culture is abortion I mean what can we do how can we stop murders from happening what about do we feel a personal responsibility if we're in a store somewhere and someone draws a gun on someone else they're threatening to kill someone they're going to hurt the clerk of the store we're in isn't there the part of us that wants to save our own life and say wait a minute I'm just going to hide back here and wait for this all to be over we'll leave this to the professionals and yet I think there's a positive command for us to try to protect and save life if we see someone attacking someone do we step in I think the uproar that was in our nation over George Floyd and that death which I think was tragic and wrong but it's police officers doing it and people are standing by videotaping so at what point do we see that we have to step in but my point is that none of us are living up to the standard are we not one of us has kept even that commandment how about adultery

Matthew 5 again Jesus says you have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart oops it's not the physical act that gets you in trouble but God judges even the heart the thoughts the motivations behind the things we do and Jesus specifies looks at a woman but let me say that adultery and lust isn't limited to men alone there's not one of us who measures up to the standard how about have you ever stolen anything I didn't go and try to add anything to this I thought there's probably not one of us that hasn't probably at some point taken something that wasn't ours have you ever lied again all of us have followed by have you always honored your father and mother and again as we expand the commandment I think that commandment applies to those in authority over us have you always honored those in authority over us what about when you disagree with the president or the political leader that's over you how do you speak about them is it in ways that are honoring them it doesn't take much for us to realize that none of us have kept can I be as bold as to say none of us have kept any of the commandments it's not just that one commandment nails us every one of them has us none of us have kept any of these and if we could imagine any of us could answer all these standard

Jesus summarizes by saying have you loved your neighbor as yourself as yourself has there been that kind of love for not the person next door to you but the people around you do you love them with that kind of love that's what fulfilling the commandment is that's the positive aspect of fulfillment of the commandment that we love other people not that we just avoid doing things right maybe we can imagine we can lock ourselves up in jail somewhere isolated that we don't have to talk to people and maybe we can avoid lying to people or murdering them but our thoughts would condemn us and then positively are we loving other people the way God's called us to and so none of us measure up to these standards and this really reiterates that God's standard is perfection you don't have to be good you have to be perfect even as your heavenly father is perfect and so if you want to get to heaven based on your goodness just be perfect that's all just perfectly keep all the commandments positive negative all the implications of the commandments

[28 : 05] Matthew 5 48 this is Jesus after we just looked at Matthew 5 and Jesus is talking about the commandments he's giving commentary on the commandments this is how Jesus summarizes his teaching on the commandments you therefore must be perfect perfect as your heavenly father is perfect that's Jesus summary of the law you therefore must be perfect now how are you doing on that I think it's safe for me to say you could raise your hand now if you've been perfect so far just let us know well if you raise your hand you'd be lying with you oh then you break that perfection streak so what Jesus is doing I think is again he's tossing softballs he's trying to give him things that he knows he believes and can answer affirmative answer to but then in verse 21 he really nails the idol and exposes the man's sin look at verse 21

Jesus said to him if you would be perfect go sell what you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me so what is Jesus dealing with here I think it's the sin of coveting I think if we understand that we understand what Jesus is doing don't we Jesus has intentionally given him things he's going to answer yes to and Jesus has drawn him into the conversation he's exposed what this man's hope is yes I've kept the law I've kept all these things what else do I need to do well there's one commandment I left out coveting get rid of all your possessions give them to the poor and come follow me now let's even deal with this by asking a subsequent question is salvation contingent on poverty must you be poured into the kingdom Lord willing we're going to talk about that more next week when he says how difficult it is for a rich man but let me say it another way does

Jesus require you to get rid of all your possessions before you can come into heaven no right that's not a requirement in fact we actually see people in the Bible who were obviously believers Abraham men like Job who are financially blessed by God who use their financial blessing in ways that honor the kingdom money doesn't keep you out of the kingdom money can keep you out of the kingdom it doesn't automatically keep you out of the kingdom wealth doesn't mean you're automatically not in and we'll talk more about that Lord willing next week so then why does Jesus give a requirement upon this man that he must sell all his possessions if he's going to enter the kingdom why what is Jesus doing here if Jesus doesn't require everyone to sell their possessions why do some have to sell their possessions to enter into the kingdom I think what Jesus is doing is actually giving a concrete example of what he said in the Sermon on the Mount again this is from Matthew 5 this is verses 29 through 30 remember

Jesus said if your right eye causes you to sin tear it out and throw it away for it better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell if your right hand causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away for it is better that you lose one of your members than your whole body go into hell so I believe what Jesus is doing with this man is saying let me just show you for a second your right eye and your hand here are the things that are keeping you out of the kingdom it is your stuff it is your possessions it is all these things that you covet and here we see we are told to tear out our eye and throw it away for it is better that you lose your members than your whole body be thrown into hell and we can say to this rich ruler it better that you lose your wealth than that you keep it and get thrown into hell and so what Jesus is saying is this is the one thing that he knows will keep this man out of heaven if you don't get rid of it you're never getting in and so Jesus is exposing what that one thing is and that one thing is different for all of us it may be true that there are some of us that are in the same position as the rich and ruler who has to say I just can't keep stuff I gotta give it away or it becomes my idol but it may not be stuff there are all kind of things that can consume us and be idols in our hearts that can keep us out of the kingdom it may be alcohol it may be food gluttony it may pornography there could be all kind of things but whatever it is Jesus is exposing in this man that he loves his money more than he loves God and he's so close he knows he needs eternal life he goes to Jesus for eternal life but if it requires that he give up his idol to follow Jesus then he's not willing to do that and so it's not wrong for me to there's some interest in [33 : 20] Jesus maybe some even love for Jesus as a teacher maybe it was a man sent from God but he doesn't love him more than his stuff and so he doesn't get into the kingdom he loves it so much that it's condemning him to hell and keeping it and keeping him from grasping eternal life which he also desires I think it's evident by what we see in verse 22 when the young man heard this he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions he doesn't want to give it up because he's got so much and he leaves sorrowful I think that implies he doesn't leave with eternal life you leave with eternal life you leave joyful but he leaves sorrowful because he leaves without that eternal life he chooses to hold on to the stuff rather than to follow

Christ he makes that choice and for all of us in this room that same choice is presented to all of us and again Lord willing we'll talk more about this next week but Jesus is calling us to follow him are we going to choose to follow him or not maybe there's some of you in this room who imagine that more money right oftentimes we think of coveting as a poor man's problem right people covet it because they don't have and if they just had they wouldn't covet here's the rich young ruler he has power he has authority and he has wealth and it's the coveting that's got him got a hold of his heart and I think what we see is the more money you have the more you want to spend it it's easy for it to become your idol so sometimes we think coveting is an income problem if we could just increase our income then we wouldn't struggle with wanting stuff that we don't have no we get the stuff we

want now and we want something else that we don't have we want to upgrade more and more and so this man's great possessions actually calls them to become an idol in his heart if we rightly understand that we can also understand that sometimes

God doesn't give us things that we desire because he knows that we can't handle them that they would become idols in our heart and so it's the grace and mercy of our Lord not to give us things that we want sometimes because he knows that and so what I see in this passage is that Jesus has patiently taught this man that he's not perfect very patiently he's caused the man he didn't have to say you're not perfect he's caused the man to say he's not perfect because he's exposed that there's one sin that he's holding on to and so exposing this sin and his lack of perfection he's shown that this man cannot enter eternal life or gain eternal life by his good deeds there's nothing good that he can do that's going to get him into the kingdom this is actually one of the primary purposes for the law this is one of the reasons why God gave his law oftentimes we look at the law of God and we think God's given the law so we know how to get into the kingdom and God's word tells us those who are under the law so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God for by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin so the law is given why one of the primary reasons is so you know that you're a sinner there can be no doubt left and that's exactly how Jesus uses the law with the rich and ruler to show him you're a sinner and that you can't be justified on your own again Galatians 3 10 through 14 and verse 23 say for all who rely on works of the law are under a curse for it is written cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them now it is evident that no one is justified before

God by the law for the righteous shall live by faith but the law is not of faith rather the one who does them shall live by them Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us for it is written curse is everyone who is hanged on a tree so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith before faith came we were held captive under the law imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed so here's what the law does it holds you captive it binds you it exposes the fact that you can't do it why for a glorious purpose to point you to the Savior to make you realize that there's a place you can to drive you to faith in Christ and true and real justification so rather than being justified by keeping the law we're justified by faith in the person and work of

[38 : 46] Christ again Galatians this is chapter 2 verse 16 we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ so we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law because by works of the law no one will be justified there it is repeated over and over again by works of law no one will be justified so what's our only hope well Jesus says to the rich and ruler go sell all your possessions give them to the poor you'll have treasures in heaven and come follow me it's our only hope I'm thankful for the testimonies we heard earlier and I'm also humbled by the fact that one of the acknowledgments was that what helped them was the question of must you be perfect and I think there's ways that let me speak personally there's ways

I probably communicate that as a parent and as a dad and there's ways I probably think in those kind of ways even as a Christian that I've got to be perfect that I've got to obey the law perfectly as Christians our hearts desire ought to be to obey the law to honor our father to please our heavenly father but we must never confuse the fact that that doesn't justify us that earns us nothing in heaven that's not going to some way commend us in some way we're not contributing a percentage law and that's what Jesus is pointing out to this rich and ruler why do you ask me about what's good there's no one good there's only one who's good there's none good but one that's God and in particular we see this in the person of Jesus Christ that he lives out our obedience to the law he fulfills the righteousness that we cannot fulfill and then he gives it to so let me ask you what are you hoping in today to get you into heaven if

I asked you that question I mentioned earlier if you died today would you go to heaven what would you answer if you answer yes what is your basis for assurance of that how do you know you're going to get into heaven if it has anything to do with something you've done you're wrong that's not going to get you into heaven your salvation if you're saved is based on what Christ has done and maybe we're going to say well I would answer I believe in him I trusted in Jesus Christ well good but again we saw earlier faith is a gift from God it's not something you've done it's something you received and so I'm a recipient of God's grace I've been given faith truly is a Christ I'm trusting in

him remember again what Jesus says in Matthew 5:48 you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect there's no hope there is there none of us are good enough to meet that standard instead we're called to leave behind our sin whatever that may be it may be wealth it may be something else and again acknowledging we can't be perfect we're not going to talk more about this next week as we talk more about wealth but

I think a common mentality here in America is that Jesus is a great addition to the American life we've got it good in America we're wealthy probably beyond any standard ever in the history of the world and Jesus just makes it all that much sweeter but what I want you to see is that Jesus isn't an add-on he's not something just to benefit what's already good Jesus kind of challenges that American mentality and says it's him or nothing and next week we're going to see leaving family behind that call again to take up your cross and follow Jesus but do we want Jesus more than whatever else you love most what do you love most in this life and do you want Jesus more could you with Paul say I count it all rubbish compared to knowing Christ Jesus my Lord the best things in this life the greatest things he's given us that we love the most do we count them as rubbish compared to knowing Christ Jesus putting that sin to death is a lifelong process that we call sanctification that

God's working in us to put to death that sin and so again we're not going to be perfect before we come but do we want Christ more than we want our idol whatever that idol is maybe it's our idols our sin whatever those sins may be maybe another way of asking this would be to say what do you love in your life more than you love Jesus maybe what do you love so much that's keeping you from following Jesus you're not willing to give it up to follow Jesus if and this isn't going to happen in these ways particularly but if Jesus were to say to you give this up and follow me entering my kingdom would cost you giving this up would you give it up would you be willing to Jesus is calling you to leave behind those things and follow him now what is following him I think this is important this is really what

[44 : 36] I want to end on today what does it mean to follow him well following him is knowing that you're not perfect and thus not good enough for eternal life and not good enough to be with him forever in heaven to be with God forever in heaven but instead trusting in Jesus goodness trusting in Jesus good deeds and not your good deeds trusting in his righteousness alone for your salvation that's what following Jesus is and so Jesus goes through this whole conversation to expose the idols of the rich young ruler and my hope is that the sermon God will use the same way in your heart what are those things that are keeping you from wanting to follow Jesus and I want to be as clear as possible what does that look like it's realizing you're not good that you can't measure up but knowing that Christ has and putting your trust in him and not in your good deeds my hope is that all of us who leave here today will realize there's no hope in anything that we can do the question is not what must

I do what good deed do I need to do that I can obtain eternal life maybe we could say the question is who must I trust in to have eternal life whose good deeds must I trust in that I may have eternal life and my hope is that it drives you to Christ let's pray together dear heavenly father we every one of us were humbled by your standard we pray that if it's not already evident by what has been said and what's been seen in your word that it would be that all of us have sinned and none of us measure up to that standard but Lord we also cannot blame you for that standard you are holy and that which is not holy cannot stand in your presence but Lord our heart's desire is to be in your presence and so there's a major problem that we have but we thank you for the gospel we thank you for

Christ for the solution to that problem that you sent your son to die to cover our sins to wash away all the bad that makes us not measure up and give us all his good that we might have the righteousness required to be in your presence and so we pray that our hope would be in Christ and Christ alone Lord the rich and religious responses common to us we all want to be good enough but Lord help us to trust in Christ and not in ourselves we don't want anyone who's here who's listening today to fail to enter the kingdom because they thought they were good enough or they tried to be good enough may our hope rest in Christ alone we pray this in his name amen