

Grace to you and peace from Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to God. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. It is certain.

Two week sermon series:

Mission Impossible: Gaining Eternal Life

Mark 10:17–22 We lack what we need (10/14)

Mark 10:23–31 We cling to what we don't need (10/21)

“Who then can be saved?” (Mark 10:26)

Mark 10:17–22 (NKJV) — **17** Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” **18** So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. **19** You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’” **20** And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.” **21** Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.” **22** But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Jesus, Priceless Treasure

We pray: ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise. Amen.

In Jesus name, fellow redeemed,

A dozen roses, \$19.95 ... A diamond ring, \$2,300 ... The answer “yes” – PRICELESS. Perhaps you’ve seen these credit card commercials. The idea is that the consumer would consider roses and a ring to be minor expenses in comparison to the reaction when she says “yes.”

What is truly priceless to you? Is there anything in this world for which you would spend any amount ... for which you would make any sacrifice? As we ponder this question we begin to get a sense of where our true treasures lie. What is there in your life that you simply could not put a price-tag on? What is there for which you are willing to pay any price to gain it ... for which you would refuse any alluring offer rather than lose it?

Righteousness – purest love for God ... **Holiness** – complete separation from sin ...
... **Lacking the true riches of the Law**, but receiving all this through the **treasure of the Gospel** – **PRICELESS**. In the words of our hymn of the day: **JESUS, PRICELESS TREASURE**.

1. We LACK the true riches of the Law

What makes gold so valuable? It won't keep you warm. You can't eat it. What makes gold valuable is its beauty and its rarity. Gold is priced according to how difficult it is to attain and the level of demand for it. Outside of this, there is little practical purpose for it. Isn't that just the way the world operates? On the basis of outward beauty and the desire to possess something that other people don't have, we determine monetary value.

Along with the man in our text we so often look at God's Law in the same way – valued only according to outward beauty and possessing something that others lack. What we miss in this thinking is how much we are really lacking ourselves. We **LACK THE TRUE RICHES OF THE LAW.**

“What must I do?” is his question. “What is there that I can do to inherit eternal life?” Any approach to eternal life that begins, continues, or ends with me is a request for the Law. This is a request for God's legal requirements by which we may gain eternal life. v.19 – do not commit adultery, do not murder, steal, defraud, or bear false witness; honor father and mother.

(v.18) How we understand the value of the Law, the true meaning of “what must I do?” really depends on our definition of “GOOD.” The man in our text, who Luke refers to as “a certain ruler” – perhaps a Pharisee – calls Jesus “good.” He does so not because he knows Him to be on par with God, but because He is just another teacher that has some good sayings. “All these things I have observed” he says. His definition of good was a man-made value. It is the illusion of gold – to possess something we feel is better than what the next person has. It is a value determined only by the market of man – only as valuable as the value we assign to “good.” But there is no real understanding of GOOD apart from God. Jesus alludes to **Deuteronomy 6:4–5 — 4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

Here is the true riches of the Law – determined not by the market of man, but by the richest goodness of God. There is no other God besides Jehovah, the LORD who created the heavens and earth. There is no other God but the ONE who has been since the beginning, sustaining us with breath and life. No other has or can truly define what is “good” – He alone deserves that we serve and love Him with our whole heart and soul. Anything short of this “good” is not “good.” Anything lacking in love and devotion to Him alone is corrupt. Jesus alludes to another Old Testament passage from **Psalms 14:2–3 — 2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. 3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.**

Only one is GOOD – God.

(v.21) Jesus extends the call to repentance and faith. This is a call to abandon sinful attachment to the things of this world. The man leaves “sorrowful.” The refusal to sell all that he possessed was a lack of LOVE FOR GOD. His inability to give all this to the poor was a lack of LOVE FOR his NEIGHBOR. What the ruler lacked was not to refrain

from physically killing someone, or physically committing adultery. While we can make ourselves look outwardly “good,” our works still lack the true riches of the Law – LOVE.

Romans 13:9–10 — 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The true riches of the Law is to love. What must I do? Love perfectly. Express complete selflessness – not just those who are easy to love, but those who have wronged you. ... as Jesus says in Matthew 5, **Matthew 5:44 — 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.**

When someone cheats you, this love simply accepts it. When someone treats us meanly, this love responds with forgiveness and holds no grudge.

Deuteronomy 10:12 — 12 “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Love would serve God with a complete detachment from any earthly attachment including self. Love would offer not just part of our heart, but the whole heart in every thought, the whole soul in every work.

The cost is more than “good enough.” Possessing the outward beauty of all the gold in this world is valueless, for we need what is PRICELESS – the love of God. Because we lack **THE TRUE RICHES OF THE LAW**, Jesus enters to fill the gap. Jesus loves us by loving for us. Jesus fulfills the riches of the Law so that **He can give us THE TREASURE OF THE GOSPEL. He is our PRICELESS TREASURE.**

2. So Jesus GIVES the treasure of the Gospel

In the midst of the great depression, Americans were found burning money because the paper dollar was worth more as fuel for the fire than it was spent on food. In a deep depression where you struggle to find food to eat or clothes to keep warm, what value does gold really have? All the outward beauty it gives off is meaningless if you has no value as trade. We have seen the deep depression of our sinful nature. Our works have no value to barter with God. What ever we offer up to gain God’s praise is only an outward show, a market comparison of man’s devising. Jesus calls – “Follow Me.” In Jesus is found the riches we lack. **JESUS, our priceless treasure, GIVES THE TREASURE OF THE GOSPEL.**

(v.18) Do we call Jesus Good? Yes. The correct definition of “good” is the absolute absence of evil. And only One has possessed this. Only One is Good, God. Only One is Good, Jesus. Both are true because Jesus is the sinless Son of God. He is our “Good Teacher” not because He has a few good sayings, but because has in our place performed all that is good. **Hebrews 4:15 — 15 For we do not have a High Priest**

who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

“Jesus loved him” it says in v.21. This man who did not even know what “good” was – Jesus loved. We too, despite all our weaknesses, and all our earthly attachments are loved. Despite our lack of love, despite our selfish choices, and me centered theology, Jesus loves us.

Ephesians 2:4–5 — 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Jesus has fulfilled the true riches of the Law – perfect love for those who hate Him. For all people He died. When we would reject and crucify Him, He loves. When we would complain about job or family, He loves. In Satan’s final temptation in the wilderness, he came to Jesus offering Him the kingdoms of the world. For that which the world would consider the greatest treasure, He responds – **Matthew 4:10 — 10 “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”**

The true treasure, the gospel, the good news is Jesus Himself, our PRICELESS TREASURE.

“What must I do to inherit?” is the wrong question. Rather ask, what has Jesus done that I may inherit? An inheritance is just what the word implies – something we receive for which we have not labored. To be an heir means that by no work of your own you are given rights, honor, treasure – a gift.

Titus 3:6–7 — 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(v.21) With the Lutheran Reformers, we reject the idea that this is a call to more works and merit. We confess ... “The poverty of the Gospel does not consist in the abandonment of property, but in the absence of greed and of trust in riches. ... Since the abandonment of property is therefore merely a human tradition, it is a useless service. ... Perfection consists in that which Christ adds, ‘Follow me’” (Ap. Art. XXVII. 46ff).

The call of Jesus is to repentance and faith, not to more works. It is the call to “follow” Jesus, who goes before. “Why do we call him GOOD?” “Follow Me” is a call to faith-detachment through Christ. We are detached from earthly attachments by the Lamb of God who takes our sins on Himself. He detaches what has made us poor and attaches what makes us rich. We are the richest beggars the world will ever know – repentant, deserving nothing, yet receiving everything – the treasures of heaven.

Matthew 5:3 — 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

However, this is no easy path. To follow Jesus is a daily battle against the ways of our flesh. It is a daily putting off of the sins that have plagued us and putting on the riches of heaven through the forgiveness of sins and Christ's righteousness.

This is the road to Calvary. Jesus will soon after this account warn His disciples – **Mark 10:33–34 — 33 “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”**

This is where we go with Jesus. We go to Jerusalem. We go to accept betrayal. We go to receive all the blessings He has won there on that cross. We live not for what this world has to offer – not gold, not retirement, not all the earthly security in the world – because we know the treasure that awaits.

Whatever your struggle, look beyond. With Jesus, look beyond suffering, beyond death. Look to the resurrection. Beyond the cross is the resurrection of all GOOD. Beyond the cross is the eternal riches of a new life, a new creation, a full restoration of the true riches of God. By faith the cross is ours now. We follow Jesus to the cross where we receive all those treasures now – the hidden treasures of forgiveness, love and faith, a resurrection of what is good within us. In coming to church, in gathering around the word in your homes, in personal devotion, Jesus is giving you the treasures of heaven.

Outwardly our lives can be quite ugly. To the world we Christians are discarded, worthless, following things of no real earthly value. Yet inwardly God works His greatest beauty. In Jesus you lack nothing. You have the true and lasting riches of heaven.

... a LOVE that does GOOD to even those that persecute you and hate you – PRICELESS ... a LOVE that serves expecting nothing in return – PRICELESS ... a LOVE that clings to nothing but the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ – PRICELESS. This is the treasure of the gospel – all the riches of the Law given to you through the gift of the gospel. A LOVE that follows the risen Savior, carries the faith of the cross, and reaches out to those in need is your PRICELESS TREASURE.

2 Corinthians 8:9 — 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

JESUS, PRICELESS TREASURE, BE OURS FOREVER AND EVER. Amen.