

Mark 10:17-27

Pentecost 21; October 13 & 14, 2024

We have a God who delights in the impossible. Here are just a few times when God has done the impossible.

- The parting of the Red Sea after being led out of Egypt
- Daniel in the Lions' Den.
- Walls of Jericho come crashing down with trumpet blasts and shouts
- Jesus walks on water; Jesus calms the storm
- Feeds 5,000 from 5 small loafs of bread; 2 small fish
- Keep the ten commandments perfectly in his life.
- Forgives the sins of the world on a cross.

Jesus wants this man to see how God does the impossible in his life. Mark writes: **“As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** It was an honest question. I think that sometimes this young and rich man has gotten a bad reputation. This was a pretty good guy. You would be proud to call him a brother. If you were the father of this son, you would be proud at what he all had accomplished in his young life. If he asked your daughter for a date, you would be okay with her dating him. What more could you ask from him? He was morally upright. He lived and breathed the 10 commandments. He was polite and respectful. You had never heard a hurtful word come out of his mouth. He was intelligent. He was hard working. He had already amassed a significant amount of wealth. Yet, even though he had done that, you never got the feeling that he thought any less of you if you did not have as much as he had. He was most likely only about 30 years old. Yet, he had been given the responsibility of being the ruler of the synagogue. He was given a position of some serious authority in the local synagogue. They would not just give that position to just anyone. For this position to be given to him at such a young age, it shows just how much people respected him. Some people have wanted to paint this man as being stuck up, of being arrogant. Yet, he wasn't. He is not trying to trip Jesus up by asking this question.

Yet, he realized that something was *missing* in his life. Even though he was a good man, even though he tried with all his heart to keep God's commands, there was something missing. He couldn't put his finger on it. Maybe he was struggling with something today is called: *Imposter Syndrome*. It's a belief that you know you are pretty good at something, but you're not perfect. Even though you are pretty good, it needs to be perfect. Therefore, if I can't do it perfectly, then people might think that I'm an *imposter*. I don't want anyone to think that about me, therefore, it's just easier to not do something. Yet, if I don't do, it seems like something is missing in my life. Have you ever thought like that. You go around and around thinking should or not do something. So, what does he do? He falls on his knee before Jesus and begs him: **“Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** Tell me what I must do to inherit eternal life!

Good Teacher. He calls Jesus **good**. How do you define *good*? Jesus says to him: **“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”** His response: **“Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy.”** He looks at his life and he thought that he was a pretty good person. I've really tried. I think we look at ourselves and think that we are pretty good people.

Jesus responds to him and says: **“No one is good – except God alone.”** Jesus says that *good* means perfect. You are not, but I am. If I'm perfect, then I am God. *Almost* and *close* don't count. *For the most part* is a phrase that means *close*. Ask someone if they had a good vacation, they might respond: *For the most part*, the trip was relaxing. In other words, there we times that it wasn't relaxing at all. You come back home after the grandparents have been babysitting your children. You ask them: *How were the kids tonight?* They answer: *For the most part*, they were pretty good. So, what did they do that wasn't *close*?

This man was asking the right question, he just had the wrong answer. **“Jesus looked at him and loved him. “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.”** The point of Jesus' answer is not really about money. It's about forgetting the 1st commandment. He tells Jesus that he has kept the commandments from the fourth commandment up. The first command is what governs

everything in our lives. God says to his people: **“You shall have no other gods before me.”** For this man, it meant that instead of the wealth he had, he should love God even more.

Jesus wanted this man to see that God does the impossible. The answer to the man’s question, **“what must I do to inherit eternal life?”** is: *You can’t.* Jesus’ invitation is simple, come follow me. Whatever your sin is, that invitation is for you to. You can follow Jesus by trusting that his life and his death have atoned for all of your sins. No matter what sin is dwelling in your heart, no matter what sin your hands have committed in the outside world can see, Jesus is a greater Savior than you are a sinner. Come follow him. Trust that he has died for you. And that because of his death and resurrection. God forgives you and loves you.

It sounds so easy, doesn’t it? It sounded too easy for this man also. There has to be more. He had worked hard to get what he had. Therefore, in order for him to get the missing piece in his life, there needs to be more. The Son of God came down from heaven and paid the price of sin for me. **“What must I do to inherit eternal life?”** *Trust me.* God has done the impossible. May you and I find comfort that we have a Savior who forgives all our weaknesses. He does the impossible. He saves us when we can’t save ourselves. It is Jesus who does make everything good for us. Amen.