

What Am I Still Lacking?

Matthew 19:16-26

Introduction

- If I were to take a survey here, and ask everyone, “do you want to please God?” — How many of us would say “yes!”
- Or, if I were to ask, “does everyone here want to go to heaven?” — How many of us would say “yes!”
- And lastly, if I were to ask, “what are you willing to give up to get there?”, how many of us would have a ready answer? — This last question may take some thought.
 - What do I NEED to give up for God? What has gotten in my way? This can sometimes be a tough thing to identify.
- This last question I just asked you, is a question that Jesus LOVED to focus on with those whom he encountered.
- In fact, we will be reading a story today where Jesus does this to someone.

Read Matthew 19:16-26

The Text

Vs 16 — This is a good question

Vs 17 — I believe Jesus here is showing himself to be deity. But I would like to focus on the latter part of this verse. “keep the commandments”

Vs 18-19 — “which ones?”, These — do no commit murder, adultery, steal, false witness, honor father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.

- What a full list, but a good list nonetheless!

Vs 20 — “All these things I have kept” (“from my youth up” Mk. 10:20)

- **“What Am I Still Lacking?”**
 - Perhaps this question of his, was more important than the first question he asked.
 - In the other gospel accounts, it will record Jesus tells him the one things he lacks.
 - But in here lies a wonderful question. This man knows, as well as Jesus, that although he is following the commandments of God, there is still something holding him back.
 - He knew, and Jesus did too.

- I'm not exactly sure what kind of answer he was looking for. Maybe "oh, just tip your waiter a little bit more" or "be nicer to people"
- But let's examine how Jesus answers this question:

Vs 21 — Okay! Here it is! This is what this man **MUST** do.

- The way the conversation has played out we can only understand that if this man will just **DO THIS** — He will have treasure in heaven! Here is your answer!

Vs 22 — His response is very telling. "he went away grieving" — He knew in his **HEART** that this is something that he is unwilling to do.

- Here is something we must observe as we stand looking at this encounter of Jesus and this young man: **In identifying the "one thing this young man lacks", what Jesus is really doing, is identifying what idol is set up in this young man's heart.**
- Jesus knew what he was doing when he answered this question.

Vs 23-24 — Truly, how hard it is for those that are rich to enter. For those that are rich (all of us here are by the way). It can create in us a heart of short sightedness and instant gratification.

- When we want something, we can have it in a drop of a hat!
 - Amazon Prime, Tv streaming, Food
 - If this quarantine has taught us anything, I believe it has taught us how rich we really are.
- But with all of these earthly possessions in front of us, it can be all too easy for a rich person to look at his stuff, and not look at God.
- And so yes, what Jesus said is true.

Vs 25 — They might be just as shocked as we are reading what Jesus said here. But their question is also misguided and perhaps uninformed.

Vs 26 — Man cannot save himself, only God can. God can even save a rich man, we'll talk about that more in just a moment.

Applications

1.) Identifying the One Thing You Lack

- As we emphasized already, what Jesus has done for this young man is identify the idol in his heart.
- We must do the same thing. When we come to Jesus and His Word and ask, "what thing do I lack", we are not going to hear what we want to hear. We are going to hear the honest truth.

- And when we hear that word “idol” don’t think of a golden Buddha statue. Think of something that is displacing God in your heart.
 - Something that you prioritize over ALL ELSE.
1. **What am I preoccupied with? (What is the first thing on my mind in the morning and/or the last thing at night?)**
 2. **How would I fill in this blank? “If only _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure.**
 3. **What do I want to preserve or avoid at any cost?**
 4. **Where do I put my trust?**
 5. **What do I fear?**
 6. **When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger, or depression?**
 7. **Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?**

Some possibilities of an idol:

A.) Riches & Possessions

- Like this man here!
- Every waking moment of my life I am trying to figure out how to get more and more and more.
- Let me ask you if this is it for you: does it ever get tiring?
- Rockefeller was once asked “how much money does a man need?” — “just a little bit more”
- Does money really EVER satisfy us? We may fool ourselves into thinking that it gives security, but does it really? Just look at the great depression!
- 1 Timothy 6:6-10 (NASB) *But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*
- You can’t take it with you! Let go of it. Stop letting it control you. “You never see a funeral hurst pulling a U-Haul”

B.) Pride/Arrogance (ourselves as an idol)

- Maybe it is our own image that we have made an idol.
- We wake up thinking “what can I do today to make myself look good?”
- Or have we ever found ourselves in a conversation thinking “how can I insert myself into this conversation?”
- Have you ever thought about how that looks to God? When we talk ourselves up and there is constant competition among His people? (cockroach illustration)
- Romans 12:3 *“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”*
 - Sometimes we think WAY too much of ourselves. I have really been learning that with this whole house thing. Finishing the floors.

C.) Lust/Sexual Immorality

- This could exhibit itself in a number of ways. It could be passive glances at women or men in a way that is impure.
- It could be an addiction or the use of pornography.
- Or it even could be acting out sexually in a way that does not please God. Fornication.
- But this is certainly an idol that gets in the way. It would be the one thing we lack.
- Matthew 5:27-30 (NASB) 27 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.*

Whatever your idol may be, we must realize this part of the story once the “one thing you lack” is identified:

It was more than just give all you have to the poor or letting your idol go, it meant to come follow Jesus. Or in other words, let Jesus provide for you. Let God save you!

2.) God Can Save Us

- Replace “rich man” in vs 24 with “prideful man” or “lustful man”. As long as God is not our priority and what we serve: THEN IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD!
- If we have idols in our hearts, then we may well ask the question “then who can be saved”
- With people, it is impossible. WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES!
- But with God, all things are possible with Him.
- And here is why:
 - When you are seeking God, He will help you prioritize Him. His word will give you the guidance that you need to put Him first.
 - His word will help us put the riches in perspective. The lust. The pride. The greed. etc...
 - But only if we are willing to cut those things out, give them up, and follow Him.

Conclusion

So the question remains for us. What will we choose? Will we go away sorrowful because we won't give up our idol?

Will the passage in your life read “So and so went away grieving, because they wouldn't give their idol up”

Or will we make the decision to follow Christ? Will our story end and begin with “and so and so went away rejoicing, because they are now following Jesus”

If we make that decision we must:

Follow in His foot steps. Crucifying ourselves. Being baptized and having sins washed away?

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