

We Can Learn A Lot...

Mark 10:17-23

November 7, 2021

Welcome again to worship. So glad you made it this morning with all this silly “change the clock” stuff. Of course, you know what this means?

I saw this meme this morning, and I had to share it:

MEME: PASTOR, DON'T FORGET YOU GET AN EXTRA HOUR TO PREACH.

All Saints Sunday is one of those days in our lives as a community of believers that is bittersweet. This morning, we have remembered 10 people, but for those who have lost a loved one in the past, we remember them as well. They are now with the Lord, no longer suffering, like Tom, like Richard, so they rejoiced in their day of homecoming, and we are happy for them being with the Lord. But we are still sad. We miss them being with us here on earth. Our hearts are sorrowful when we look at the chair they used to sit, or remember the way they used to laugh, or how they helped us each and every day to go through life.

All Saints Sunday is a story of two seemingly conflicting emotions. It is only found amongst Christians. Outside faith in Christ and the belief in the resurrection, the memorial of the death of a loved one is one full of pain and sorrow. But for those whose loved ones belong to Christ, it is a both/and day: sorrow, yes, but also rejoicing.

Today, I want to look at a passage of Scripture that tells of an encounter with Jesus that could have gone so differently. So, if you are in the sanctuary, I invite you to turn to page 6 in your bulletin, or if you are watching online, take your spiritual journal and open your Bible to Mark 10:17-22.

As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked. “Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. You must not cheat anyone. Honor your father and mother.’” “Teacher,” the man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.” Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. “There is still one thing you haven’t done,” he told him. “Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” At this the man’s face fell, and he went away very sad, for he had many possessions. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!”¹

Here is the story of a man whose outcome could have been so different, but instead, we, like him, are saddened.

Matthew’s account of this story tells us that the man was young,² while Luke’s adds that he was some kind of ruler, religious or otherwise.³ All three Synoptics say he was rich.

¹ Mark 10:17-23 (NLT2)

² Matthew 19:22

³ Luke 18:18

Typically, when we read this story, we jump to the end and the man's failure, but we can learn a lot about how the man came to Jesus. He shows us how we should come to the Lord.

First, he came running.

The young man was full of excitement to meet Jesus.

I'm sure you've done this: run to meet someone... or at least walked very fast. Even if you don't run or walk fast anymore, you still have the excitement as the young man did of meeting someone important.

The young man ran to meet Jesus. He came running. He was deeply convinced of the importance of meeting the rabbi from Nazareth, and was seriously determined to seek so as to find.

This is how we need to come to Jesus: with excitement and determination.

Second, he came kneeling.

Back to verse 17:

*As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down...*⁴

You see the reverence here. There must have been an amazing thing to see: a rich, young aristocrat falling at the feet of the penniless prophet from Nazareth, who was on the way to being an outlaw, a criminal, fit to be crucified for His crimes.

The young man's kneeling showed his humility and offered himself only to mercy.

How do you come to Jesus? How did you go to Him when you first met Him? I still believe that kneeling is the best way – the only way – to come to Jesus. It shows our humility and recognizes that we come only through Christ's mercy.

Third, he came asking.

*As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked...*⁵

He came in the spirit of a disciple, a seeker, desiring to be taught a matter of the utmost importance to him.

He called Jesus, "Good teacher."

Look at Jesus' response in verse 18:

*"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked. "Only God is truly good."*⁶

Have you ever wondered why Jesus said this? What did He mean? Why does Jesus question the man's description? Is He checking to see if the young man is a believer?

When Jesus asked this question, He was saying, "Do you really know the one to whom you are talking?" Because only God is truly good, the man was calling Jesus "God," whether or not he realized it.⁷ So, Jesus was not denying His own goodness but was forcing the man to recognize that his only hope was in total reliance on God, who alone can give eternal life.⁸

When you go to Jesus, when you pray, when you think of Him, do you realize Who you are going to? He is not simply a man that once lived. He is not simply a Jew

⁴ Mark 10:17 (NLT2)

⁵ Mark 10:17 (NLT2)

⁶ Mark 10:18 (NLT2)

⁷ Life Application Study Bible, Mark 10:18

⁸ NIV Study Bible, Mark 10:18

from a backwater village called Nazareth. He is God. Everything you see around you comes through Him. John 1:3 reads:

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*⁹

The rich young ruler knew he was going to someone important. He possibly understood Jesus to even be God. Today, we know He is God, and we need to come to Him with that knowledge.

Fourth, he came in the spirit of obedience.

We don't know what he did for a living to become rich. Maybe he inherited some of it. He was probably from around Jericho, which to this day is a rich agricultural area.

Either way, he had wealth. He had money and was young, yet clearly, he found no purpose in it.

Back when Governor Dewine was handing out a million dollars to people who had gotten the vaccine, Myra and I thought about how we might spend it. We would, of course, tithed, probably to the mortgage, which would have taken 28 months off our payments and saved \$54,000 in interest. The government would have taken half, so we would be down to \$400,000. Pay off our house, give our boys money, buy a car, and do a few other things would not have left any money for an airplane, but still, it would have been fun to try.

This man was already rich, yet he found no purpose in it. He knew enough to know that his money did not make him happy. So, he asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do..."¹⁰ He was still willing to work, provided he can have a prospect of succeeding.

We must come to Jesus in the spirit of obedience. "What must I do, Lord" should be our desire.

Finally, he came with a purpose.

One more time from verse 17:

*As Jesus was starting out on his way to Jerusalem, a man came running up to him, knelt down, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"*¹¹

He came with the universal question. "How shall I be saved?"

When John the Baptist came preaching his message of repentance, ordinary people, tax collectors, even soldiers asked, "What must we do?"¹²

The Philippian jailer, who had listened to Paul and Silas sing and praise God in their prison cell, asked the same question: "What must I do to be saved?"

The rich young ruler asked, "What must I do to have eternal life?"

Ultimately, this is the most important question that any soul can ask of God. Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..."¹³

My friends, this is the most important thing of this passage: asking "What we must do to be saved?" Have you accepted the answer: to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved?"

⁹ John 1:3 (NIV)

¹⁰ Mark 10:17 (NLT2)

¹¹ Mark 10:17 (NLT2)

¹² See Luke 3:10-14

¹³ Acts 16:31 (NIV)

One time, there was a man who was fishing beside a river. Suddenly, he fell into the water. He was not very good at swimming, but he found a log to hold onto. The log could barely keep him afloat, so he held on tightly for dear life. Unfortunately, the river was about to go over a huge waterfall. The man could hear the roar of the water and see the mist from the falls.

Right before he reached the edge, someone on the side of the river threw him a rope. The man had two options. He could hold tightly to his log and go over the falls to a certain death. Or he could let go of the log and grab the rope and be pulled to the shore.

This is the same choice we face with Christ. We can hold tightly to our old life and hope that we will stay afloat, but the reality is that we are headed toward destruction. Or we can let go of whatever gives us “false hope” – money, family, self-reliance – and reach out to Christ for salvation.

The rich young man asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”¹⁴ We know from the rest of the story that he did not follow Jesus, instead walked away very sad, clinging to his old life.

This story could have ended so much better. Still, it teaches us how to come to Christ. And that is the most important thing, else when our day to die comes, our story, like the rich young ruler, will end on a sad note, instead of the triumphant shout of being welcomed into heaven by Jesus.

Come to Him today – running, kneeling, asking, wanting to obey, seeking the universal question – then believe on Him, and your story will end in glory.

¹⁴ Mark 10:17 (NLT2)