

One Thing Missing

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[0 : 00] Well, we can turn back to our reading in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10. Our main focus is on this encounter of Jesus with the rich young man, as he's called.

We can read verse 18 and verse 21. In verse 18, we see the question that the rich young man had. And in verse 21, we see part, at least, of the response that Jesus gave.

So verse 18, Jesus said to him, sorry, verse 17, we see the question. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

So there we see the question of the rich young man. Then verse 21, Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, You lack one thing. Go sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven and come, follow me.

You lack one thing. Imagine you had this opportunity to be before Jesus and to ask a question of him.

[1 : 12] What question would you ask? One opportunity with Jesus before you. What question would you ask? Well, that's the opportunity that this rich young man had.

As he came here this day, he met Jesus. And he had an opportunity to ask him a question. And what a great question he asked.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? This man is described as a rich man. And you might think, well, being rich, he had everything that he needed in life.

And in some ways, perhaps he did. But the problem is, like him, we too can think, well, all our answers to all our problems is found in being rich, in finding wealth.

That's what the world strives after so much. And you often hear so many people pinning their hopes on winning the lottery.

[2 : 20] And you hear people who win big in the lottery. Just a week ago, a man in the UK won 26 million pounds on the Euro millions.

And you think to yourself, I'm sure there's a little envy in you. Oh, what would it be like to have that much money? It would answer maybe so many of my problems.

It would help me in so many ways. What you could do with that kind of money. But would it answer all your problems?

You see it time and time again. Wealth in whatever amount so often leads to tragedy. We find it throughout the scriptures.

You find it in the Gospel of Mark. You find it earlier on in this Gospel in chapter 6, where you see King Herod. And he had great wealth. But he allowed pride and wrong decisions to come between him and knowing Christ.

[3 : 24] And left, as far as we can see, without hope. And here in chapter 10, we have these trappings of riches again before us, but in a slightly different way.

In this chapter, we see a man with a great and an eager desire to meet with Jesus. But he too is rich. But he comes to Jesus with this question.

Now, just before we come to look at the man, I want you to see in verse 13 to 16 the contrast that we see there. Because in verse 13 to 16, we see many people bringing young children to Jesus.

And the disciples are rebuking them to say, Don't trouble the teacher. Don't trouble Jesus with these children. But Jesus rebukes them and says, Let the children come to me.

Because to them belongs the kingdom of God. So there were those who were eager to bring their children to Jesus. They were being turned away. But Jesus says, Let them come.

[4 : 29] And you find that then, later on, in what we're looking at with the rich young man, we're told there that you must be like a little child to come into the kingdom of God.

And so you see a link here. And what you find is, as you come into the rich young man account, and him coming to Jesus, no one rebukes him.

No one tells him, You can't come. He's rich. And maybe they're thinking, Well, if we get this man alongside, that might help answer some of our problems. We could do so much more if this man shares his wealth with us.

He's not turned away in any way. But he's told, too, that he must find the kingdom of God. And that is what there should be a desire in us all to know.

The kingdom of God. And what it is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And this man, he comes with an earnest desire.

[5 : 36] He maybe had everything in terms of wealth. A good home, plenty food, and plenty comforts in life. Probably plenty friends who are eager to be around him if he's got so much money.

People willing to help him out in any way they could in hope of benefiting from him. Yet Jesus says to him, One thing you lack.

Perhaps this man had never been told these words before. He was lacking in nothing. But he's told here by Jesus, You lack one thing. And how easy it is to think that we have everything we need in life.

How easy it is to feel comfortable. Or how easy it is to think that, Well, if only I can find an answer in life through gaining in this world, everything will be fine.

And yet we, too, lack this one thing. We lack the most important thing when we don't have Jesus. And if we lack him, we have nothing.

[6 : 51] And so the question this rich young man asked is a question for ourselves today. To ask of ourselves, What must I do to inherit eternal life?

And we're going to see three things from this passage as we look at it. We're going to look at it firstly under the question itself. Then secondly, we're going to see the answer that Jesus gives.

And then thirdly, we'll see the response of both the rich young man, but also the disciples' response as well. So we've got a question, an answer, and a response.

And under it all, we're asking, Is there something missing in my life today? Am I lacking in this sense as well?

So firstly, we see the question. As you go through the Gospel of Mark, and as we maybe say often, it's a fast-moving Gospel. In the sense that you're just moving from one incident to another.

[8 : 00] Jesus is among many different people in many different situations. He's helping people, looking out for people, teaching people.

People are coming to him, large crowds or individuals. They're gathering around him in many different situations. Last week, we were looking at Mark chapter 4.

We saw Jesus with the disciples in the storm, crying out, Do you not care that we perish? And Jesus showing them the power that he had when he's able to speak a word that brings calm.

And you find that throughout this Gospel, up to this point, Jesus encountering with many different people, helping in many different situations. But perhaps this is the point where you come to see a real great earnest desire for the things of God when this rich young man comes.

He comes with these powerful questions. And you could almost say that not even his disciples up to this point had had this earnest desire that we can see in this Gospel.

[9 : 10] And the question he comes with is a great place to start with Jesus. But the important thing isn't how we start with Jesus, but how it ends.

And that's what we'll see as we go through this passage. But it starts in a great place with this great question. And I'd love to be a teacher at this point and to say to everyone here, pick up your pen and paper at this point and write down the answer to this question right now.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? How do you answer it? You've got two minutes to write down your answer.

What do you write? What do you say to this question? What must I do to inherit eternal life? Well, you can think about that question and we'll come back to it at the end as well with another challenge to you.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? This rich young man is coming, as we would call today, as a seeker. He is seeking Jesus.

[10 : 26] He is looking for some meaning in his life. He may have everything materially, but there's something still nagging away at him.

Perhaps he's one who has inherited his wealth. And that's why he's got this question. Well, what can I do to inherit eternal life? The thing I hear so many people speaking about, the things maybe he's heard Jesus teach about, this idea of eternal life.

How can I get it? So he is seeking. And he is seeking after an answer to this question. Everyone in life is seeking for something.

Everyone here, we're all seeking for something. Every day we're looking for something more in our life. But the important thing to ask ourselves is, are we seeking for what is right?

Are we seeking for what is good? The world grabs our attention in so many different ways and tells us, this is what you need.

[11 : 34] This is what you must have. There's so many temptations put around us. And some things we do need. Of course we do. But it's asking, what is the most important thing?

Jesus taught that in the Sermon on the Mount. You read in Matthew chapter 6, verse 31, he said, Jesus said, It's about what is important.

What is our priority? What is it that we're lacking in that sense at the moment? The rich young man is seeking after the kingdom of God.

And in the truest sense of what faith is, that is what we are seeking, should be seeking after. The kingdom of God. All that belongs to God.

All that God is giving to his people. And that includes eternal life, salvation, forgiveness of sin. All of these things. The kingdom of God is powerful.

[12 : 59] It is mighty. And so we are to seek first the kingdom of God. And if you're looking for something, you've got to be looking for it in the right place.

There's no point going looking for petrol at the butcher. You've got to go looking in the right place. You've got to know where to go.

And this rich young man, it's as if he knows where to go. He knows to come to Jesus. But it's not just coming to Jesus, but how we come and how we go away.

And we think of church in that sense as well. When you're coming to church, what are you looking for? What is it that's drawing you here today?

We pray it is to find and know more of Jesus. So there's not just coming to meet with others. Not just coming to be here for the sense of being here.

[14 : 08] But coming because you know this is where we can find Jesus. Because we find Jesus in God's word.

Under his truth. Romans 10 verse 14 makes that clear for us. How then can they call on the one they have not believed in?

How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? Faith comes by hearing.

And hearing the word of God. And so this man, rich young man, he comes to Jesus. He comes to the very source of life.

But there's a problem. And although his question was a great place to start, the emphasis he had was all wrong. He says, what must I do to be saved?

[15 : 11] Now there's a sense that's a good question. Because we know, well, we are told to seek the Lord. That's something that we are to do. But what must I do here?

There's more to it than that. He's thinking, what can I do myself? And you see that in how Jesus responds when he starts answering about the commandments.

You can see that Jesus is seeing this man's heart. And he's seeing deeper. And he knows the thoughts that he's got. He's probably been able to do things in his life just by his money and his power.

His wealth gives him so much. And so he thinks, I can sort this problem myself. But immediately Jesus points him away from that kind of attitude.

And he points him towards God. In verse 18, Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. And so in his question, Jesus is immediately starting to point him away from himself and towards God.

[16 : 19] And that's the kind of question that we need to have as well. To see that what we need is not, what can I do? But where can I find the answers to the things that I have no power over?

The things I cannot do. And these answers are found in God. And so this rich young man comes with a question.

But his knowledge of God isn't there. Because he thinks he can do it himself. And so what's our view of God as we come? We believe in God in some way.

We have our own gods. But is it the true God that we read of in the Bible? Or is it an idol of our own making? In Psalm 135 that we sang in verse 15, The idols of the nation made of silver and of gold are by human hands created with a hammer or a mole.

We have so many idols, so many gods in this world that are of our own making. But we have to see that when we're thinking of eternal life and this burning question, the answer is to be found in coming to the source and coming to God.

[17 : 41] And so we've got this great question, what must I do to inherit eternal life? But then we want to see, secondly, Jesus' answer. When Jesus looks at this man, he sees something in him.

It says he loved him. There was something about him. And so he starts to probe into this man's heart. And he uses the word to probe.

And that's what the word of God does. It probes deep into our hearts to see, well, what is important? And so the answer to this question, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Immediately, Jesus, in bringing an answer to him, is showing him the word of God. And it's almost initially like he challenges his heart and thinks, well, you say that you can do.

Let's see, what have you done? And he names the commandments to him in verse 19. You know the commandments, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.

[18 : 52] Now, if you know the 10 commandments, you realize they're not all there. Jesus begins with the commandments, but it's all the ones that focus on ourselves in one sense.

Do not do this. And the rich young man, it's almost like he has hope. He says, all these I have kept from my youth. Perfect in this.

All these laws I have kept, none of them have I broken. Whether that's true or not, I doubt. But in himself, he's feeling, I have kept all of these. And so he's able to see, I'm sure for a moment, he's thinking, all this I have done, does that mean I have eternal life?

How easy it would be for us to justify ourselves in just keeping these laws. And to say, I'm a good person.

Is that enough for eternal life? I have not sinned. Well, none of us can say that. A minister went to visit an old lady once.

[20 : 01] She wasn't a believer. And as they were talking back and forth, the minister raised the subject of sin and how we are all sinners.

And the lady's response was this, my dear, how can I possibly sin? I never leave this house. And there's this sense, well, I can't possibly sin.

I'm not able to do anything. Therefore, I cannot break the law of God. But that's not the way it is. We sin in thought, word, and deed.

In what we do and what we don't do. And so, we are sinners. And what you realize here is that Jesus, as he's getting to the answer, is putting these commandments before him.

And he's saying, well, these have I kept. But then Jesus goes further, and he says, there's more. Because he's getting to the heart, and he's going to show him now the first commandments.

[21 : 18] And he reveals it to him in this way by saying to him, you lack one thing. Sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me.

In his response there, he's getting to the first four commandments. He doesn't name them, but he gets to the heart there by saying, well, who is your God?

Because the first four commandments about who God is, and you will have no other gods before me. And so, the challenge of the rich young man here is, who is your God?

Who is your idol? And this is the tipping point for this young man. Because look at the way that he responds. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possession.

It's heartbreaking. The rich young man is there before Jesus, who has the answer to the question of eternal life, but he goes away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

[22 : 33] Jesus probes deep. That's what he does to you and to me today. He probes deep, and he says, you lack one thing. And what is that one thing in your life?

What is it that is keeping you from God, and from faith in Jesus? And you may go away sorrowful, because you just cannot let it go.

But there is a cost to following Jesus. We think of what Jesus has done to redeem our life is costly, none sufficient price can pay.

Where is the answer for that price being paid? It is in what Jesus did at the cross. He gave his life, that we might have life through him.

So is there one thing you lack today? Is there one thing that keeps you from coming to follow Jesus? Well, it's got to go.

[23 : 38] That's what Jesus is making clear here. You want to follow me? Then give your treasure up. But you will have treasure in heaven.

But blinded by the riches of this world, he goes away sorrowful. So don't go away sad. Don't go away sorrowful.

Think about what needs to go. And if there's something that's coming between you, you ask, is it more important? So important like the young man who went up Mount Fuji a second time to get his mobile phone and nearly perished a second time.

There are things that we just have to let go. One thing you lack. That's Jesus' answer.

So then we finally see the decision. The decision. There's a sense of a turning point here. But it's both for the rich young man and for the disciples.

[24 : 52] Because they come in at this point too. The rich young man, he shows which way he's going. He's going away from Jesus. He goes away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

But what about the disciples? Well, they were amazed by what they heard as well. In verse 23 downwards as well, Jesus looked around and said to the disciples, how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

Disciples were amazed. It's easier for a camel to go through of the iron needle than the rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus then says that we're astonished.

And their question then is, then who can be saved? But there's also a response. He says, with man it is impossible, but not with God.

For all things are possible with God. And so we are to come like little children to him.

[26 : 06] To come and follow him. Because Jesus assures that the cost of following him might seem great in our eyes. to give up on many things in this world.

But the cost of naught is even greater. To perish for eternity. To be lost for eternity is the price to be paid for rejecting Jesus.

But if we come to him, we find there eternal life. Go back to the question, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

How do you answer? Do you love Jesus enough to give up anything else that's keeping you away and come follow him?

The disciples were told, no one who gives up everything to follow me will be disappointed. And no one who ever has has ever been left disappointed.

[27 : 25] And it's not to expect great wealth in return. It seems like it might be when you read there in verse 29, And you think, well, where is all the blessings?

Where is all the wealth? But that's thinking about it in the wrong way. You see, we gain when we come into the family of God. We gain sisters and brothers in the Lord, fathers and mothers in the Lord.

We gain homes in the Lord that are ours to come and go from. And to make it clear that it's not just about wealth, he says here, with persecutions.

There's a challenge. Will you come and follow Jesus through even the persecutions? There's lots to be gained, there's lots to suffer, but then he says, and in the age to come, eternal life.

Because it will all be worth it. Give up anything that is keeping your way and come and follow him.

[28 : 46] The question, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Go home today, take out a piece of paper and start to write down the answers to these questions.

What must I do to inherit eternal life? What am I doing to inherit eternal life? And a third question, what needs to go?

One thing you lack. One thing kept this man from the kingdom of God. Don't let one thing keep you. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we do thank you that your word is what we need and what we are given.

We thank you that it always brings us closer to you to recognize you as a holy God, a just God, and yet a God who is mighty and powerful.

