

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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November 20, 2022
Why Do You Call Me Good?
Mark 10:17-22

“How has God been good to you?” Let’s not leave this question; instead, let us keep this question close to our hearts throughout the morning.

We are standing here on one of our favorite Sundays of the year. It is a whirlwind of the goodness and kindness of Christ on display. Your cars came loaded down with turkeys, Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes have been flooding in all week, HOH toy drive items are being collected, and stocking items for Agape Women’s Center fill main street. And then we come into this room and remember and celebrate the goodness of God over the past year. Even in the greatness of this day, I believe there is something that will make it even greater next year.

It hit me that our stories being lived out today, some wonderful and some excruciatingly hard, will become the testimonies of God’s goodness at next year’s “He Has Been Good” service. To the degree we believe God is good today, will be the degree to which we will declare “He Has Been Good” this time next year. It is my prayer that our study this morning will help us see His goodness in a fresh and deep way.

Our passage this morning is Mark 10:17-22. Let me set the scene. Jesus is in the final year of ministry on earth. The cross is in his sight, and he will not turn back. This is why He came. Everyone, but Jesus, struggled to comprehend the meaning, necessity, and freedom of the cross. The parables He used, the truth He taught, and the questions He asked just could not be fully understood because “His death so that we may live” made no sense to them. Many were exposed to the teaching and miracles of Jesus as He traveled throughout the four directions of Jerusalem.

Mark 10:17-22 is about one man who connects something that no one else had until this point. This man saw that Jesus held the secret to Eternal Life. This passage is included in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Pulling descriptions from the three gospels, we call this man “The rich, young ruler.”

Mark 10:17-22

17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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 mother.’” 20 And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” 21 And 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.” 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

As you can see, Jesus was the master of asking questions. In fact the Gospels record over 300 questions of Jesus. Jesus didn’t ask questions because He was lacking knowledge; He asked questions so that his listener would know the condition of their own heart. Not only is Jesus the king of asking questions, He is also the ultimate revealer of truth because

He is truth! Let's start with the most straightforward truth that Jesus clearly says in this passage.

Mark 10:18 (ESV) And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

1. GOD ALONE IS GOOD

I don't want us to rush through this truth. It sounds so simple and it is. But without it, the whole of the Gospel falls apart. Without God being good, we no longer have "Good News."

- God is ABSOLUTELY good
 - The perfection and completeness of His Goodness has no Achilles heel, no chink in the armor, and no crack in the foundation.
- He is FOREVER good
 - "He has been Good."
 - "He is Good."
 - "He will forever be good."
- He is IMMUTABLY good
 - His goodness never changes. It is never greater or lesser at any point in time.

James 1:17 (NASB95) 17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

- He is IMMEASURABLY good
 - His goodness has no length that ends, no height that is reached, no depth that bottoms out.
- He is SUPREMEPLY good
 - His goodness overpowers every evil, every time, in every way.

If this part of God's character is so magnificent and the best news we could possibly hear, then why is it the hardest one to believe in our daily life? I've thought a lot about that question all week long. Why can I so willingly believe that God is Sovereign but in the hard days, struggle to believe He is good? To believe God is Sovereign is to believe He is all powerful, all knowing, and has all authority. To believe God is good is to believe God's intent is benevolent toward me. He is for me and not against me.

Bottom line: When hard things happen, I can't blame God and believe He is good at the same time. Our flesh wants to blame God for our pain. We blame Him for His seeming delay, allowance, and silence. But believing God is good invites God's grace and mercy to meet every fear and tear.

Believing God is good helps me to have faith to walk through the shadow of death, hope to hold every promise of God and love to extend to my enemies.

The rich young ruler probably believed God to be good but what he didn't believe was our second belief statement of the morning. The rich, young ruler did not believe that...

2. JESUS IS GOOD BECAUSE HE IS GOD

He could not see Jesus as the promised Messiah. His own pride kept Him from seeing the Son of God who stood in front of him. It wasn't that he was lacking a zeal, earnestness, and respect toward Jesus.

Mark 10:17a (ESV) 17 And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him...

- He ran to him with zeal
- He knelt before him in earnest
- And He addressed him respectfully

Yet he did not see Jesus for who He really was. Listen to His question again. **Mark 10:17b (ESV) 17 ... "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"** Matthew's account says it this way, *Matthew 19:16b (ESV) 16 "Teacher, what (one) good deed must I do to have eternal life?"*

Did you catch that? The rich, young ruler is seeking the one good thing to do so that he could inherit eternal life. There are several things wrong with his question. First, an inheritance doesn't come from doing it comes from being. Secondly, he saw Jesus, not as the Son of God, but as the one who knew the secret of what that "one good thing" was to do.

Jesus responds in a perplexing way. Finally, someone is asking about eternal life! The table is set for Jesus to say to him, "I am the Resurrection and Life. Believe in me and you will have eternal life." But Jesus doesn't say that. Instead, He asked the question, "Why do you call Me good?" In the question, Jesus is really saying, "God alone is good. You call Me Good Teacher, but can you not see that I am good because I am the Good Shepherd who is the Son of God?"

Let that sink in. Does it seem sometime in your prayers that Jesus isn't hearing what you are saying or asking? Often it is because we are addressing Jesus as who we want Him to be instead of who He says He is. Jesus did not come to become our idol! He came to be our Lord and Savior. Jesus will never concede to being anything less than a part of the God Head Trinity. Because Jesus Christ is the Son of God, He alone is Good.

But in light of the goodness of Christ, we can see something about eternal life that the rich young ruler couldn't. We see our third belief statement of the morning...

3. DOING GOOD WILL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH TO MERIT ETERNAL LIFE

The rich young ruler had his list, checked it twice, and was convinced all boxes were checked.

Mark 10:19–20 (ESV) 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 mother.' **20 And he said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.**

His mind was convinced he had done everything required. Yet, his heart was not convinced. His heart told him there was something more. His heart concluded that eternal

life was still not his. But His unbelief had him stuck on trying to earn eternal life and not receiving it as an undeserved gift.

Everyone in this room can identify with the rich, young ruler. Our flesh and our enemy demands doing, demands measuring up, demands pay back for missing the mark. The truth is that it is impossible to do enough good to pay back or overcome sin's debt.

To every rich young ruler in this room or viewing online who is asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life? Listen to your freedom: *Ephesians 2:8–9 (ESV)*. *8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Your freedom from sin and to God is found in Christ alone, by grace alone, and through faith alone. If you don't know Christ as your Lord and Savior, would you confess Him as Lord and believe in your heart that He died, and that God raised Him from the dead? If you will, God promises that you will be saved. The inheritance of eternal life is yours in Christ and an abundant life now is promised. But the rich young ruler did not make that choice. How do you think Jesus looked at this young man who was blinded by his unbelief?

Mark 10:21 (ESV) 21 And 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."

Jesus looks at us in the same way...with love. In His love, He invites us to a life of freedom that is only His to give. He wants to be our only treasure. He wants us to follow Him so that His goodness and mercy can follow us every day of our life. Mark 10:22 ends with the rich young ruler not able to choose the treasure in heaven over the possessions of earth. His heart chose the glitter of gold instead of the goodness of God, so he was...

Mark 10:22 (ESV) 22 Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

For those who don't know Christ, please don't leave here disheartened and sorrowful. You might have come in this room that way, but you do not have to leave in heart-broken without hope. Look to the goodness of Christ, trust and follow Him with all your heart. The empty place in your heart can only be filled by Him.

For those who are believers in Christ, we are not here in great sorrow but instead we are here in great joy and peace. Why? Because of the goodness of Christ. From His goodness He has given us His gifts of life, hope, and peace. And from His goodness He has forgiven every sin so that we stand clothed in His righteousness and fully accepted by God.

Jesus is asking us today the same question he asked the rich, young ruler, "Why do you call Me good?" Would you let that question prepare your heart for communion? Fill your heart with thanksgiving upon thanksgiving with the goodness of Jesus.

The cup and the bread are our reminders that Jesus did the one good thing that would give us eternal life. The one good thing was giving His life for ours so that we could be made right with God. He did what we could never do for ourselves. His blood satisfied the payment of sin once and for all. His death and resurrection secured an eternity with Him for all who will believe.