

The Daily Bread of Life

Feed your household with the bread that endures to eternal life.
Feast on the words of God and works of Jesus.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Text

Mark 10:17-27

¹⁷ 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?”

¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.” ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

17-19

Keys to Understanding

Inherit eternal life This shows that the man’s attitude was that he would get to heaven by living a good life. This popular religious idea was as prevalent in Jesus’ time as it is today.

No one is good—except God alone. Jesus is not denying that he is God. Rather, to a man who did not understand that Jesus is God, Jesus is introducing his point: No human is without sin— not even the religious teachers.

Keys to Applying

The man ran up to Jesus because of the chance to a popular, famous teacher. Jesus’ reply makes it seem that this man didn’t understand that Jesus is the Son of God, but that he did consider him a great teacher. He ran up to Jesus and fell on his knees, probably out of respect. Running up to Jesus indicates his urgency, along with the question. Asking what he should do to be saved seems a little strange, since the teachers of the day filled volumes with things that one ought to do to stay in God’s good graces. This man’s questions seem strange also, because unlike other questions that people asked Jesus, this one seems to be truly sincere. He was not trying to test Jesus. He was truly concerned about his salvation. Jesus’ question calls attention to the real problem—this man was concerned about his relationship with God because he felt in his heart that something was not right. He was not good, because, as Jesus pointed out, no one is good except for God. Not even a respected religious teacher like Jesus would be good enough for God, if he were merely a man.

Questions

1. What does the feeling of guilt tell you about your relationship with God?
2. What did Jesus want us to learn about our ability to be good enough for God?
3. What role does Jesus' blood and righteousness play in your relationship with God?

Because we are Lutherans...

From Martin Luther's explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed

He (Jesus Christ) has redeemed me, *a lost and condemned creature*, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

Bible Story

The Thief on the Cross

Luke 23:39-43

1. The thief knew that he would soon die, and that he would have no chance of making his life any better before he would meet God. Notice how helpless this thief was to do anything to save himself.
2. None of us really have any chance of living a life that is good enough for God, because God demands perfect love for him and perfect love for our brothers, sisters, dad, mom, and all people.
3. See what Jesus does for this man who cries out to him for mercy. Learn from the thief, and do the same.

In Liturgy and Song

The Confession:

Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done
and the good I have failed to do,
You should cast me away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins.
Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

Jesus' forgiving love assures us that we will not be destroyed by God's anger against sin.

Lightning and thunder stands for the feeling of God's anger

Hymn 349:2

In thine arms I rest me; Foes who would molest me Cannot reach me here.
Though the earth be shaking, Ev'ry heart be quaking,
Jesus calms my fear.
Lightnings flash And thunders crash;
Yet, tho' sin and hell assail me,
Jesus will not fail me.

Prayer

Turn to me and have mercy on me, as you always do to those who love your name.
Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.
Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey your precepts.
Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. Amen.
Psalm 119:32-36

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The Text

Mark 10:19-21

You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

²⁰ “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

²¹ **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.”

Keys to Understanding

Steal to secretly or forcibly take what is not yours.

False testimony to stand in court and tell lies. In culture as well as ours, the main reason why someone would give false testimony against another in court would be to win a lawsuit against that person. It would be a “legal” kind of theft.

Defraud to get someone else’s money or possessions by trickery

Treasures in heaven God’s richest blessings in eternal life.

Keys to Applying

We should not interpret this as if Jesus were asking all of us to sell *everything* we have and give to the poor. Jesus said this to call the man’s attention to the thing that he lacked—love for God, and love for his neighbor. Without love, all of his striving to keep the commandments was useless in God’s sight. At first, the man didn’t understand that. And how could he? It is natural for us to do our best and think pretty highly of ourselves for it, even if the feeling of guilt remains. Jesus looked at him and loved him, that is, he saw into the man’s heart and wanted to help him. Jesus loved this man, and saw how far he was from salvation—so far that he didn’t even know that he was a sinner, though he felt the guilt of his sin. Jesus loved him and wanted to save him, so he gave the man a very pointed command that would show him his sin. This rich man was to sell everything and give to the poor simply because Jesus asked him to. It should have been easy because of the treasure Jesus promised him in heaven. It should have been easy to do out of love for Jesus, who offers the treasure of heaven. It should have been easy to do out of love for the poor, who are also beloved children of our beloved God.

Because we are Lutherans...

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Questions

1. When parents, pastors, or other Christians point out our sin, our natural reaction is to get mad at them for being so critical. Why does Jesus want them to point out our sin?
2. How should we react when someone points out our sin to us?
3. What makes this difficult?
4. How does Jesus' forgiveness help to calm our defensive hearts?

Isn't it easier to humbly confess our sins and let go of all our selfish wants and pleasures when God comes to us with his forgiveness and a promise of better treasures in heaven?

Bible Story

Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-15

1. Explain that Abel's offering was good but Cain's offering was bad because of what God saw in their hearts. God wants to be loved above all, and he wants us to serve him out of love for him.
2. Compare Cain and Abel giving up some of what they had as an offering to God to the offerings we can give to God by giving our money and time to show our love for him and our love for each other. Explain how time and money spent helping God's people is like doing it for God.
3. Explain how doing the right thing is a sin when we do it because we have to, and not because we love God and love his people.

In Liturgy and Song

Hymn 482

1 Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,
For dull content with warmth and sheltered care,
For songs of praise for worldly wealthiness,
While of your richer gifts we're unaware.

2 Teach us to thank you, Lord, for love and grace,
For life and vision, for a purpose clear,
For Christ, your Son, and for each human face
That shows your message ever new and near.

3 Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise,
For words that speak at variance with deeds.
Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways,
Unmindful of a broken brother's needs.

4 Open our eyes to see your love's intent,
To know with minds and hearts its depth and
height.
Let thankful days in loving labor spent
Reflect the truly Christlike life and light.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, how hard it is for us to love you above all, because we have a sin-ruined heart and we naturally love ourselves above all. In love for us, expose our sin and break our sinful hearts as we daily remember your will. Then heal us with your forgiveness, Father, for you have forgiven us in Christ, and you promise your forgiveness to us for as many times as we need to hear it. We pray this in Jesus, name, Amen.

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The Text

Mark 10:22-27

(Go, sell everything you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.)

²² At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Keys to Understanding

How hard Jesus never says that it is impossible for the rich man to go to heaven. He says that it is very difficult—so difficult that it would be impossible without the power of God.

The rich In the Greek the expression is “those having possessions.” The wealth and possessions of a rich man stand in the way of his faith. Wealth makes it seem like life is good and God is pleased with you. The love of money and possessions makes us selfish, and pulls our love and attention away from God and our neighbor.

Easier for a camel... This is something that is humanly impossible, but not for God. In the same way, it is absolutely impossible for a rich man to love God and his neighbor more than all his stuff, and thus impossible for him to go to heaven—Impossible, unless God brings him by his grace and forgiveness.

Who, then, can be saved? The disciples’ question comes from the popular thought that a rich man must be leading a fairly God-pleasing life, since all riches are blessings from God. If the rich man can’t be saved by what he does, then, the disciples thought, it must be even harder for the poor man. Though they seem to have missed the point that the man’s riches were a hindrance to his salvation, Jesus does confirm their statement that it is very difficult for anyone to be saved—in fact impossible, without God.

All things are possible with God When we understand how impossible our plight is, the stage is set for us to understand also how incredible our salvation is. How can a camel go through the eye of a needle? How can a rich man, or any sinner for that matter, be saved? Only by the miracle of forgiveness—our sins having been laid upon Jesus, and his righteousness being given to us.

Keys to Applying

Jesus led this rich man to the crushing conclusion that he could not live a life that would be pleasing to God. In his commentary on the rich man here, he also leads the disciples to the same conclusion. “Who, then, can be saved?” Jesus’ words, “With man this is impossible” lead us to consider the question for ourselves. Who, then, can be saved by the life that he lives? The answer Jesus gives is that no one can. “With man, this is impossible.” The only way to heaven is in Jesus, through faith in his Word and in his gifts in the Sacraments.

Questions

1. What warning is there for those who think that they will be in heaven because of the good life they have tried to live?
2. What warning is there for those who have lived a pretty good life, but have cut themselves off from the preaching of God’s Word and the Lord’s Supper, and think that they will be ok on the strength of their own faith and a minimal amount of Bible reading?
3. What warning is there for those who love their stuff?
4. What is God’s promise to you?

Because we are Lutherans...

Martin Luther's Explanation to the First Article

I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true.

God wants us to see that all our possessions are from him, and that we should use them in love and service to him and our neighbor rather than in love and service to ourselves. After all, he has given us all that we have, though we have not deserved it. Far beyond that even, he has given us the powerful gift of his forgiveness, so that we are being brought to heaven like camels through the eye of a needle!

More Questions:

1. One of God's purposes is that we support the work of the church. How important is that work to you? Does the percentage of money that you give to the church reflect how important it is to you?
2. Why is it so hard to give an appropriate percentage of our income to church?
3. One of God's purposes is that we use our money to help others. Why is it so hard to do that?
4. What did Jesus do to make it possible to love God and our neighbor more than we love our money? (Hint: In what way are we already "rich" through faith in Christ?)

Bible Story

Elisha Traps the Blinded Arameans

2 Kings 6:15-23

1. Was there any chance for Elisha and his servant to save themselves?
2. Explain that the miraculous power of God saved Elisha and his servant. The same miraculous power of God saves us from every evil—even saving us from our sins and the punishment in hell that would surely be given to us otherwise.

In Liturgy and Song

434 Lord, You I Love with All My Heart

1

Lord, you I love with all my heart; I pray you ne'er from me depart;
With tender mercies cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share; Heaven itself were void and bare
If you, Lord, were not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break,
My trust in you no one could shake.
You are the treasure I have sought;
Your precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my
God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

"Your precious blood my soul has bought." A miracle, like a camel through the eye of a needle.

2

Lord God, 'twas your rich bounty gave My body, soul, and all I have
In this poor life of labor.
Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place May glorify your lavish grace
And serve and help my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile; Let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me To bear my crosses willingly.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

What God wants us to do with our riches.

3 Lord, let at last your angels come; To Abram's bosom bear me home
That I may die unfearing.
And in its narrow chamber keep My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me That my own eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, your glorious face, My Savior and my Fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise you without end.

The conclusion of the miracle of our salvation.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, all our money and possessions are gifts from you. Help us to remember this and be truly thankful. Lead us to show our thanks in the way that we use our money and possessions, giving generously to your work and to the needs of others. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.