

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

June 21, 2020

Happy Father's Day

"Rich Young Ruler"

Sunday school at 8:30, in-person Services at 9:15 & 10:45 with King's Kids (Video live-taped sermon online by Monday afternoon).

NEWS

Be respectful of others by allowing them to deal with COVID 19 in their own way.
Church camp at Little Bitterroot Lake, August 14-16.

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MATTHEW 19:16-22

"What good thing shall I do?"

- 1) The implication about legalism and assurance...
- 2) The implication about the word good...
- 3) The implication about divinity in Jesus' response...
- 4) Where is good found tangibly today?

"Keep the Commandments,"

- 1) Why did Jesus list the Commandments He did?

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

2) Why skip those about God? (Ro. 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14, James 2:8)

3) Why relocate the one about parents? Why ignore 10? What about Leviticus 19:18?

“If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

1) “Complete,” or “Perfect,” is τέλειος (tē-lā-ōs). It means, to attain an end goal, or purpose (II Timothy 4:7). It is the same as the “Treasure.”

2) Why sell and give... If the whole key is following Jesus?

Possessions is ὑπάρχω (hüp-är-ḫō), it would be that which is excess.
Poor is πτωχός (ptō-ḫōs), it is to be helpless.

Love others enough, to take your extra coat, and give it to the person with no coat. Have that attitude, proven true by concrete acts of love, and you will be free to follow Jesus.

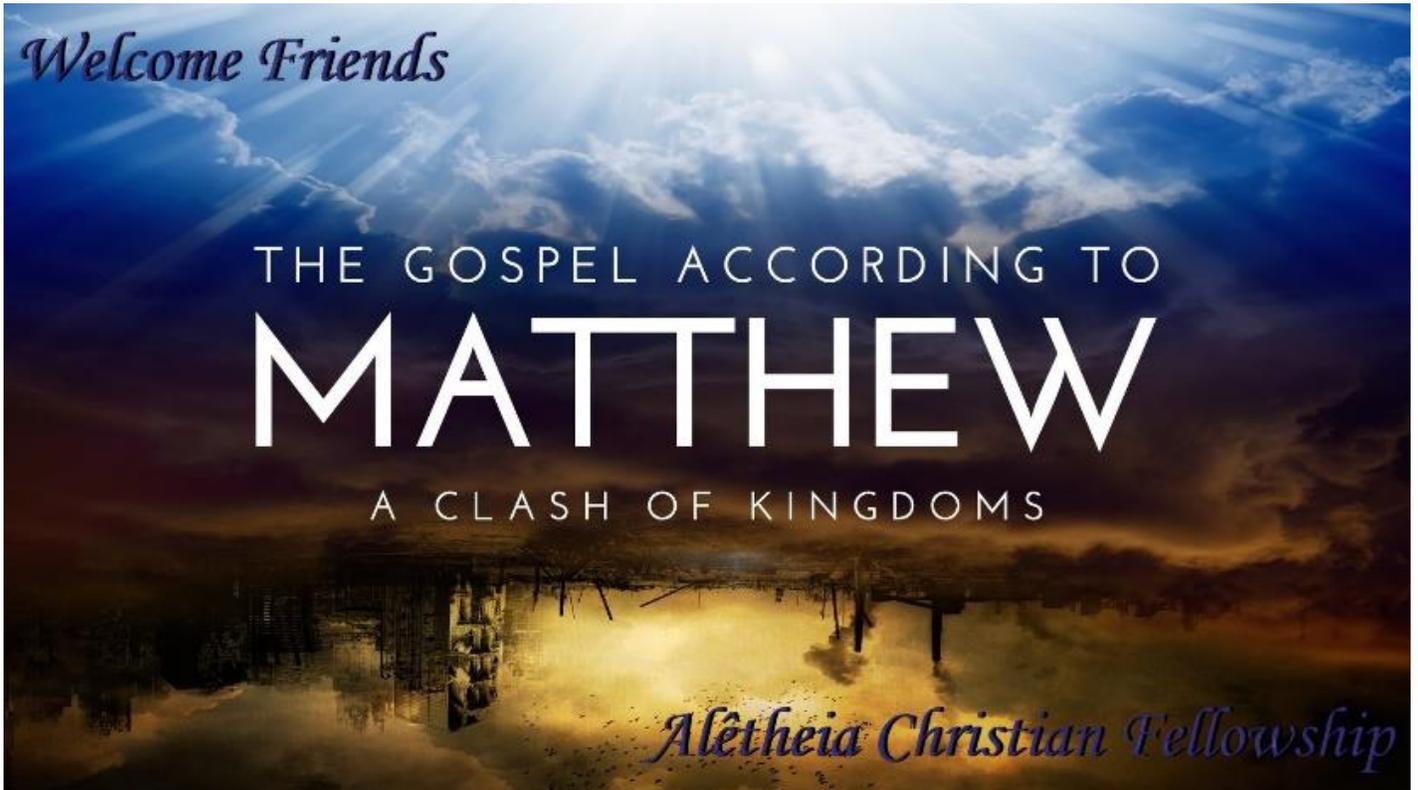
Those humble enough to acknowledge their need, and who, instead of trying to figure out a way to help themselves, simply place themselves in God’s hands, fully trusting Him, are those who can be saved.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon/Elder

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 19d ~ 062120
Happy Father's Day
"Rich Young Ruler"



Let's jump right in...

Matthew 19:16-22, ¹⁶And someone came to Him and said, “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” ¹⁷And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸Then he said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?”

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**Matthew 19:16-22, ²¹Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”
²²But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.**

21 Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Matthew 19:16a ~ And someone came to Him and said...

So, Matthew, being Matthew, gives us few details about the man, but we can infer much, especially given that both Mark and Luke also report the incident.

Matthew 19:16b ~ “Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?”

The guy came to Jesus specifically asking, “What good thing shall I do?” The implication is that He was not fully secure about His eternal destination... We see, when taking the whole exchange together, that he was confident that he had done a lot. That he was far better than most. That he had a good understanding of the Scripture and worked diligently to obey. Even so, his question reveals that he still had a hint of doubt. That fact is more evident in his second question, “What am I still lacking?”

My friends this is the dilemma for all legalists. Legalism, by definition, is about your performance... What good things you do and what evil things you avoid. It is always about you... You become the center

of your universe. The only time God enters the equation is as judge. The only time other people enter the equation is in regard to their influence, to either help, or to hinder, your performance.

When we make our standing with God about how well we perform, there will always be the concern that our performance isn't good enough... No matter how sure of ourselves, not matter how boastful of our accomplishments for the Lord, there is always the nagging question that awakens you in the middle of the night... Is it good enough... Am I... good enough? Am I good enough?

That was where this man was at... Am I good enough - what other good thing can I do so that I will have the assurance I want... The assurance I need to sleep soundly at night knowing that I am, in fact, good enough?

Matthew 19:17a ~ And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good...”

That’s precisely why Jesus first takes up the question of goodness. Jesus’ first words are “Why are you asking Me about what is good?” In both Mark and Luke, the way we get to this point is the man addresses Jesus as “Good teacher.” I’m sure that’s true, just as I’m sure that he then went on to ask about what good thing was required. Please remember that the Gospel writers are drastically abbreviating these incidents. It would literally fill an entire book to record every word, gesture, and nuance, of just this single event... History books and any reporting of the news is always a radically abridged snippet of what actually happened. That’s why history depends on who write it and the news is always fake news. It can never be the real news because it can never tell every aspect of

what happened. A news source reports what they think is the gist... It is biased by necessity. In the Bible, we're not getting the full story - we're getting what the Holy Spirit wants us to get... I'll trust that.

Jesus takes up the concept of "Good," first, because He wants to straighten out the common, but entirely erroneous notion of good.

Biblically, only God is good, period, end of story. Jesus confirmed that general Old Testament teaching here saying here, "There is only One who is good," and elsewhere, "No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19). It is one of those concepts that every Jewish person knew... This was well known by the man, in theory, but it wasn't well understood in practice.

That is just how it continues to be in Christianity today. Most Christians know the concept that only God is good, but will constantly think in terms of human good. Their own and that of some few others... Joe's a good guy. Fredricka is a good person... We go so far as to assume that most people, even non-Christians are at their core, basically good.

That's entirely wrong and that what Jesus wanted to get right from the jump. Only God is good. People can sometimes do things that we think of as good, but since we don't really know their heart and we don't know how what they did will affect the future... How can we say? If a person does do some good, it is either an accident, or it is divinely inspired - originating in God.

The concept is that only God is able to say what constitutes good and what constitutes evil - He's the only Judge and that's in large part the reason... Only God knows everything about everything.

Over the centuries, people have taken Jesus' initial response as an inadvertent admission by Jesus Himself, that He was not divine. That He was not God made flesh - God with us. It's even easier to come to that conclusion in the other two accounts where Jesus said in reply to the "Good teacher" address... "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone."

Jesus was not addressing His own status. From this incident told three times in the Bible it is completely impossible to determine what Jesus thought about His

own divinity. That's not what He was talking about... At all.

This is about correcting the man's basic assumption that since God is good, He expected good from humans in order to accept them into His eternal Kingdom. Jesus bluntly said, that's a stupid idea... Humans cannot be good, because God alone is good.

The good God wants to see in humans is His own good reflected... More on that in a moment.

Because what Jesus said was true, the good God wanted to bestow was a good that He Himself exhibited towards mankind, which was divulged to Moses and recorded in Holy Scripture.

Therefore, what God has already taught is what is necessary. God's not interested in showing us something new, if we are not obeying what He's already revealed.

Matthew 19:17b-20 ~ but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”¹⁸ Then he said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁰The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?”

“Keep the Commandments,” Jesus said. The dude asked, “Which ones.” He didn’t mean which commandments can be ignored, it’s a question about which commandments are more important to focus on? In other words, if after keeping them all, and I can do a little extra, where’s the best area to spend that extra... What would benefit me most? See the self-focus? Legalism is far more concerned with my reward and much less concerned about how I benefit God, or others. What can I do to enhance my situation? Generally, what can I think, say, or do - what can I avoid thinking, saying, or doing - that will improve my situation now, or in the future, or both?

To the Jews the 10 Commandments came in two tablets. The first tablet was about man's relationship with God and the second tablet was about man's relationship with man.

Jesus listed every Commandment from the second tablet and none from the first. Nothing about God... All of the Commandments He mentioned were about man's interaction with man.

In the Jewish Talmud, the prohibition against murder is #6, against adultery #7, against stealing #8, against bearing false witness #9. Then Jesus skips #10 and goes back to #5 - Honor your parents. Why skip 10, what is 10, why go back to 5, why ignore 1 through 4 on the first tablet dealing with God? Is it just random, or does God have a reason?

Taking them in reverse order, Jesus skipped 1 through 4, because they are preconditional requirements for following the rest. Paul did the same thing in Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 5:14, where He summed up the entirety of Christian life with what Jesus said here, and what James called the "Royal Law according to Scripture," which is, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (James 2:8).

It is not possible to truly love others without the power of the Holy Spirit and it is impossible to have the Holy Spirit without first being a Christian and it is impossible to be a Christian without first being right with God through Christ. So, Jesus can bypass Tablet One... It went without saying. Even pre-Christian Jews knew that.

Why was honoring your parents displaced? The displacement would have been jarring to the Jews and so it highlighted and drew attention. It's a positive command to do, rather than a negative proscription, "You shall not," like the rest of them, and it is relational, so it goes with what comes next. And what comes next is the kicker.

Commandment 10 is "You shall not covet." Sometimes it's phrased differently and sometimes numbered as 9 and 10. It says, "You must not covet your neighbor's wife. You must not covet your neighbor's house or land, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor." (Exodus 20:17, Deuteronomy 5:21).

Jesus didn't skip the Tenth Commandment, He just used Leviticus 19:18 to restate it and subsume all the other Commandments - the ones He mentioned as well as the preconditional ones He presumed. After a lengthy section detailing how a person must treat others well it concludes, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord." Literally, I AM Yahweh - Yahweh the verb to be... So we can rightly understand it as You must love, care for and be concerned about others as you are for yourself because I AM that which I AM, the Great I AM commands you (Leviticus 19:18).

The man replied essentially, Yeah, yeah, I know all that - I've been doing that since I was a child - I get that, what I'm looking for is the secret thing, the extra thing, the special knowledge, ritual, task, incantation, prayer, whatever, that will put me over the top for certain - make me even better than all the rest, than I already am.

Can you see a bit of yourself in the man? Yeah, yeah, I already know about believing in Jesus and going to church and owning a "Good Book," and not committing heinous acts and the theoretical loving God and loving others, but "What good thing can I do?"

Jesus went straight to the heart of the matter. This man believed that He was already obeying the 10 Commandments and the Leviticus summation of those Commandments. Jesus with one quick jab proved that the man was completely wrong in his self-assessment.

Matthew 19:21 ~ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Jesus said, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

It's so important to see the context, but also to weigh each word Jesus spoke. Oftentimes, people focus in on one or two aspects of what He said... We can't do that.

“If you wish to be complete, means, in context, not, as so many have taken it, if you wish to be super-saved, or be a superior Child of God, or be counted in the highest class of Disciple with the greatest reward to come in Heaven. Jesus was not establishing a two-tiered Christianity of those merely saved, and those who are Saints. Those who are laypersons, and those who are clergy.

Matthew 19:21 ~ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be **complete τέλειος (tě-lā-ōs), go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

“Complete,” or perhaps in your Bible, “Perfect,” is the Greek word τέλειος (tě-lā-ōs). It means, “The end.” It means to finish what you started, to attain an end goal, or purpose. II Timothy 4:7, I have fought the good fight, I have finished (τελέω) the course, I have kept the faith;

“Complete,” is a far better translation than the more common, “Perfect.” While can mean perfect, here it gives a completely erroneous idea that one can be fully saved, but then go the extra mile and be super-saved with a greater “Treasure in Heaven.” That is absolutely wrong!

The “Treasure in Heaven,” is a euphemism, or a common way of saying, a saved person who enters into Heaven forever... It simply means obtaining eternal life with God - that is the “Treasure.” As confirmed by the closing statement in verse 17, “If you wish to enter into life.” The Completeness in verse 21, means one who obtains it - their salvation is finished, it is complete, it is perfected... And by Whom? By Jesus and Jesus alone. You can never work your way into Heaven.

Please notice what Jesus said to the man. It wasn't, “Sell and give and you will obtain the treasure.” It was, “Sell and give, and follow Me.”

Why then the sell and give, if the whole key to being a person with complete salvation and therefore an obtainer of the Treasure in Heaven is in following Jesus?

Can you see that the thing that enables the following is, in this man's case, the selling and the giving?

Let's break it down a bit more and make it simpler. The prerequisite for loving your fellow man is loving God with everything we have... "With all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind." If that is true in us, it means that we fundamentally get that everything we are, and everything we have, all came to us from God. It continues to flow to us from Him and therefore, reasonably, belongs to Him. Trust me when I tell you God can spend it any way He wants. You may think you have something, but God can take it from you in a heartbeat.

Whatever I am, and whatever I have, is God's. He is merely allowing me to use it, and possess it, for a time. When we all give to the church, it is not a matter of how much of our money we will give to God... It is a matter of how much of God's money we will keep for ourselves.

Nothing is mine in Christianity. Everything is mine in capitalism. See why we struggle? God is not a

Republican, but neither is He a democrat. We're not talking communism and certainly not anarchy, what we're talking about is recognizing that God has given us resources of all kinds and we are to honor Him with those resources. We are to be good stewards of the resources He has lent us, but never think that any of it actually belongs to you.

Let me put it another way. You didn't earn a thing that you have... Apart from God's benevolence, but that does not in any way mean that what you have belongs to others - it doesn't, it is yours to shepherd... Yours to spend however you choose and how you choose to spend your resources will say everything about who you are and more importantly, Whose you are.

The person who truly loves God recognizes that and allows the Holy Spirit to lead them to spend their resources as He, the true owner, would spend them.

The second part is the loving of God's other kids. That obviously means that when we see a fellow human being and particularly a fellow Christian in trouble, we will eagerly do what we can to help.

Matthew 19:21 ~ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions ὑπάρχω (hüp-ä`-xō) and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

Jesus said sell your possessions and give to the poor. Possessions is ὑπάρχω (hüp-ä`-xō), literally meaning “from the beginning,” and so, in an absolute sense, it means to exist. In regard to the implied resources, it means the things that exist under the man’s control and so, “Possessions,” is a reasonable translation here.

It would be that which is excess - the man we find out owned “Much property.” His excess was His and the fundamental question posed was did he control his property, or did his property control him. Was he and his possessions, one and the same thing, in his mind and in his heart?

Matthew 19:21 ~ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the **poor πτωχός (ptō-χῶς), and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”**

Poor is a relative term. Bill Gates is poor compared to God. The Greeks, being philosophers had many words describing poverty. As an example, πέννης (pě-nās) is what we would call the working poor, they can survive, but have very few possessions. πενιχρός (pě-nē-χῥῶς) is like that, but with nothing extra at all - only enough for the necessities of life. ἐνδεής (ěn-dě-ās) is to be in want. This is a person lacking some basic necessities - they cannot survive without some assistance. None of those are the word used here. Our word is πτωχός (ptō-χῶς), it is to be so destitute, downtrodden, and helpless, that it is impossible to survive without someone else taking the initiative to actively help. It is what we would call abject poverty, utter helplessness, complete destitution. Literally, the root means to

crouch, or cower. It is said that these people are so weak they cannot even beg. They just cringe until someone takes pity upon them. It is precisely the word used to describe a Kingdom of Heaven person.

Those able to be saved are, as we've seen over the last few weeks, like helpless infants, or as we've seen before, they are like πτωχός, the helpless poor... Neither brings anything to the table, except their total reliance upon the one saving them.

What Jesus was saying is take your incredible excess, sell it, and give the money to people who will die without the kindness and generosity of a fellow human being.

Love others enough to take your extra coat and give it to the man with no coat. Have that attitude, proven true by concrete acts of love, and you will be free to follow Me, and you will then be complete - saved - a recipient of Heavenly treasure.

Matthew 19:22 ~ But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property.

Young - probably in his 20's... It was a "Bridge Too Far." What is your "Bridge Too Far"?



I hope you're getting the sense that this thing just keeps coming around and around. Those humble enough to acknowledge their need and who instead of trying to figure out a way to help themselves, simply place themselves in God's hands by trusting Him.



You shall love ἀγαπάω (ä-gä-pä-ō). Selfless, unconditional, self-sacrificing, merciful love - just the kind shown by God made flesh.