

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost

Mark 10: 17-22

October 11, 2015

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

If You Wanted To Go To Tacoma Would You Head North, West, East Or South? Well, You Can Do Whatever You Want.... But If You Want To Get To Tacoma You'd Better Head South. Ok. Let's Say You Wanted To Go To Leavenworth For A Visit. Would You Take A Ferry To The West, Go North Or South On I-5 Or Would You Go East On Highway 2? Well, You Can Do Whatever You Want But If You Want To Get To Leavenworth You'd Better Head East On Highway 2. And So It Is With God And Eternal Life. If Someone Wants To Go To Eternal Life...Well, He Can Do What He Wants...But There Is Only One Way, One Road To Eternal Life: Jesus Christ. But People Think There Are Many Ways To Eternal Life Including The Road Marked: **"I Am A Good Person"**. That's What Our Text Is All About This Morning As Jesus Tells Us About **"The Road To Eternal Life"**

I. There Is Indeed A Very Popular Highway To Eternal Life That Is Built By Human Effort.

A. This Was The Road That The Rich Man Was On. He Placed His Hope Of Having Eternal Life On Being A Good Person. And His Opinion Was Reinforced By The Fact That He Was Wealthy. He Had Lots Of Money And **"Stuff"** Which Was For Him The Proof That God Was Pleased With Him And The Way He Lived. This Man's Highway To Eternal Life Was Built By Being A Good Person As He Says To Jesus, **"Good Teacher, What Must I Do To Inherit Eternal Life?"** And We See This Especially When Jesus Told Him To Keep The Commandments This Rich Man Said: **"Teacher, All These I Have Kept From My Youth."** Many People Think That They Can Get To Eternal Life By Being A Good Person. This Is The Way Of The World Is It Not? You Have To Work For What You Have. You Have To Do Something. That's What Life Is All About. Do You Want To Be Successful? Well, Then You Have To Study Hard In School...And If You Don't Continue To Work Hard You Might Get Fired Or Someone Else Will Pass You By.

B. But Here's The ProblemIt Doesn't Work This Way With God. God Is Not Happy With Our Best Effort Because It Is Never Good Enough. As A Matter Of Fact ...Not Even The World Accepts Trying Our Best. How Many People Get Fired From Jobs Even Though They Tried To Do Their Best? How Many Athletes Get Cut From The Team Because Their Best Was Not Good Enough? How Many Students Fail An Exam...Even Though They Tried Their Best? And So It Is With God. It Is Impossible To Construct Our Own Way To God By Trying To Be Good. For It All Comes Down To What Is Meant By **"Good"**. The Rich Man Called Jesus **"Good Teacher"** And What Was Jesus' Response? **"Why Do You Call Me Good? No One Is Good Except God Alone."** Did You Get That? **"No One Is Good....Except**

God Alone.” Jesus Was Telling This Man That He Had Not Kept The Ten Commandments The Way God Wanted Them To Be Kept: Perfectly. Now Let’s Get Personal. Since Only God Is Good This Means That I Am Not Good And Neither Are You. True...True... We Might Be Good By Human Standards...I Like To Think Of Myself As A Good Person And I'm Sure You Do Too...But According To God's Standard...We Are Not Good... Now....This Is Important...Because If We Think That We Are Good...Then We Will Be Tempted To Depend On Our Own Goodness To Have Eternal Life.... Instead Of Relying On Jesus...And We Will End Up In Hell. A Few Verses After Our Text The Disciples, Who Were Starting To Understand What Jesus Was Saying To This Rich Man And They Asked Him, **“Who Then Can Be Saved? (V. 26, Esv).** And Here Comes The Answer. Sound The Trumpets And Let’s Hear The Drums Roll. Jesus Says: **“With Man It Is Impossible..., But Not With God” (V. 27, Esv).** Did You Get It? It Is Impossible For Us To Save Ourselves... And That’s What Jesus Was Trying To Teach The Rich Man: **“Oh, You Think You Are A Good Person Do You?....And That You Have Kept All The Commandments Of God? Well, Let’s Test That. 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” (V. 21, Esv).** And What Was The Response Of The Rich Man Who Saw Himself As A **“Good Person”**? Mark Tells Us, **“Disheartened By The Saying, He Went Away Sorrowful, For He Had Great Possessions.”** Well...This Man Wasn't As Good As He Thought He Was.....And Neither Are We. And We Need To Know This Before The Judgment Day So We Can Stay Off The Road Marked **“I Am A Good Person.”**

ii. And Besides...It's Not Necessary For Us To Make Our Own Road To Eternal Life..... We Have Another Road That Has Been Made For Us By Jesus Christ. In The Movie **“The Wizard Of Oz”** Dorothy Didn’t Know How To Get To The Emerald City. But The **Munchkins** Told Her That All She Had To Do Was **“Follow The Yellow Brick Road”.** And So It Is With Us. To Get To Eternal Life Jesus Told The Rich Man And Us **“Come Follow Me” (V. 21, Esv).**

A. In John 14: 6 He Tells Us Why We Should Follow Him: **“I Am The Way, The Truth And The Life. No One Comes To The Father Except Through Me”** And This Is True Because Unlike The Rich Man Or Us Jesus Is **“Good”.** When Jesus Asked The Rich Man **“Why Do You Call Me Good? No One Is Good Except God Alone”.** Jesus Was Asking The Rich Man If He Really Knew What He Was Saying...That Like God, Jesus Is Good. He Had No Sin. He Never Did Anything Wrong. He Lived A Perfect Life Of Love.....And Even Though This Man Trusted In His Own Goodness, Jesus Did Not Yell At Him Or Scold Him....No. What Do We Read? **“And Jesus, Looking At Him, Loved Him...”** This Man Did Not Deserve Love...But Jesus Loved Him. And Even Though We Often Trust In Our Own Goodness. Jesus Loves Us Too..... Dying For Us On The Cross, As Paul Says In His Letter To The Romans: **“...God Shows His Love For Us In That While We Were Still Sinners, Christ Died For Us” (5: 8, Esv).** Jesus Did What The Rich Man And We

Have Not Done: He Gave Up Everything...Even His Life...For Us...So Paul Writes In His Second Letter To The Corinthians: **“For You Know The Grace Of Our Lord Jesus Christ, That Though He Was Rich, Yet For Your Sake He Became Poor, So That You By His Poverty Might Become Rich.” (8:9, Esv).** **“Though He Was Rich, Yet For Your Sake He Became Poor”.** Paul Is Not Referring To Money. Paul Is Saying That Even Though Jesus Was God In Human Form...Yet Gave Up Those Riches By Humbling Himself On The Cross To Die For Our Sins.. That’s How Jesus Became Poor For Us....And In The Process He Has Made Us Poor Sinners Who Were Doomed To Death And Hell....Rich...Not In Money...But In Restoring Our Relationship With God And Giving Us Eternal Life.

B. Since We Are Not Good In God's Sight We Must Be Sinners. We Have Done Things We Should Not Have Done.....And We Have Failed To Do Other Things Which We Should Have Done. This Is The Irony, The Paradox Of Christianity.....To Be Saved From Death And Damnation And To Have Eternal Life, We Must Admit That We Are Not Good People. Because Jesus Christ Did Not Come Into The World To Save Good People....But Sinners As He Says **“Those Who Are Well Have No Need Of A Physician, But Those Who Are Sick. I Came Not To Call The Righteous, But Sinners” (Mark 12, 17, Esv).** This Is Why Jesus Told The Parable Of The Pharisee And The Tax Collector: **“Two Men Went Up Into The Temple To Pray, One A Pharisee And The Other A Tax Collector. The Pharisee, Standing By Himself, Prayed Thus: ‘God, I Thank You That I Am Not Like Other Men, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, Or Even Like This Tax Collector. I Fast Twice A Week; I Give Tithes Of All That I Get.’ But The Tax Collector, Standing Far Off, Would Not Even Lift Up His Eyes To Heaven, But Beat His Breast, Saying, ‘God, Be Merciful To Me, A Sinner!’ I Tell You, This Man Went Down To His House Justified, Rather Than The Other. For Everyone Who Exalts Himself Will Be Humbled, But The One Who Humbles Himself Will Be Exalted.” (Luke 18: 10-14, Esv).** The Rich Man Was Like This Pharisee In The Parable Thinking He Could Have Eternal Life By Being Good....Exalting Himself. But The Tax Collector, Knowing That He Was Not Good, Humbled Himself And Trusted In God's Mercy And Forgiveness.

Conclusion: At The Beginning Of This Sermon I Said That You Need To Go The Right Direction On The Right Road... If You Want To Get To Tacoma Or Leavenworth. And That’s Pretty Obvious. Unfortunately, It’s Not As Obvious About The Direction And Road To Eternal Life. People Have All Kinds Of Ideas About How To Get To Eternal Life And Like The Rich Man Want To Make Their Own Road Based On Being Good. In **"The Wizard Of Oz" Dorothy** Made It To The Emerald City Only Because She Faithfully Followed The Yellow Brick Road.... Unlike The Rich Man In Our Text..... We Must Never Walk Away From Jesus Who Says To Us: **"Come, Follow Me" (V. 21)** And As We Do...One Day We Will Arrive At That Place Called..... Eternal Life.. Amen.