

**CLOSE TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST  
THE MORAL SELF-RIGHTEOUS MAN  
MATTHEW 7:21-23; LUKE 18:18-23**

**INTRODUCTION**

A few weeks ago we began looking at being **CLOSE TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST**. It's sad that there will be so many people who will miss out on heaven. But what really is much sadder is that there will be many of those folks who were so **CLOSE TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST**.

I'm talking about folks who may have been close to the things of God and on the threshold of salvation, but failed for different reasons to make it to heaven. **In our first message we looked at Judas Iscariot and saw how HE WALKED WITH JESUS, BUT MISSED HEAVEN. We compared him to the lost Church member.**

*JUDAS HAD A NAME THAT HE BELONGED TO CHRIST!  
JUDAS WAS IN THE PRESENCE OF JESUS!  
JUDAS OUTWARDLY APPEARED OK!*

**Today we want to look at a man we know as “The Rich Young Ruler.” He is prime example of the MORAL SELF-RIGHTEOUS PERSON!**

**I. THIS MAN WAS A YOUNG MAN! (Matthew 19:22)**

*Matthew 19:22–“But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.”*

**In his mind he may have thought that he had a long life ahead of him.**

*James 4:14–“Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”*

*Job 14:1-2--1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

*Psalms 39:5–“Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.”*

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*THIS MAN WAS A YOUNG MAN!*

**II. THIS MAN WAS A RULER! (Luke 18:18)**

*Luke 18:18–“And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

**This was a man who had a position of power and influence.**

We're not told, but perhaps this man thought that his position would gain him some recognition in the eyes of Jesus!

That is what we see a lot in the world in which we live. **Many times people who are in positions of power and influence try to use their position to gain favor.**

**III. THIS MAN WAS A RICH MAN! (Luke 18:23)**

*Luke 18:23–“And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.”*

**He was very rich. But, what we are not told is how he gained his riches. We don't know, but understand that Jesus knew!**

**There is nothing particularly wrong with having riches!**

**It is not a sin to have riches!** But, there are some people that in order to get ahead and gain riches, are willing to cast their principles aside. I'm not saying that this was necessarily the case for this man, but many times that is how it is.

**IV. THIS MAN WAS SEEKING!**

**A. He Was Seeking At The Right Place–Jesus!**

*John 14:6–“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”*

Mark's account says he came running and kneeled before Jesus.

**B. He Was Seeking In The Right Way–Respectfully!**

He called Jesus “*Good Master.*” (Vs 18)

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**C. BUT, He Was Seeking For The Wrong Thing—Self-Justification! (Vs 18)**

*“What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”*

*Romans 3:19-20—“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

*Galatians 2:16—“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

**D. Jesus Came Seeking Him First! (Luke 19:10)**

*Luke 19:10—“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

*Mark 10:21—“Then Jesus beholding him, loved him. . .”*

*THIS MAN WAS SEEKING!*

**V. THIS MAN WAS MORAL IN HIS OWN EYES!**

**(i.e. He Was Self-Deceived!)**

**If we take this man at his own testimony, we see that:**

- A. He Had Never Killed Anyone.**
- B. He Had Never Committed Adultery.**
- C. He Had Never Stolen.**
- D. He Had Never Bore False Witness.**
- E. He Had Honored His Parents.**

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**F. He Had Loved His Neighbor As Himself.**

**We all like to think of ourselves in a good light! Don't we?**

That is the tipping point for a lot of folks when it comes to accepting or rejecting the salvation offered by Jesus!

**In order to be saved, you have to admit that you're a lost sinner!**

**In order to receive Christ's righteousness, you have to see and admit to your own unrighteousness!**

**In order to receive Christ's forgiveness, there has to be an admission of guilt!**

**VI. BUT, THIS MAN WAS LACKING AND HE KNEW IT!  
(Matthew 19:16-22)**

*James 2:10—“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*

The truth is that this man **was not** keeping the whole law and knew it. In fact, he was guilty of breaking the very first commandment—*Exodus 20:3—“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”*

His riches were his God! He called Jesus Good Master, but his true master was mammon!

*Matthew 6:24—“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*

**VII. THIS MAN WENT AWAY SORROWFUL AND LOST!  
He had THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE standing right before his eyes, yet he walked away lost!**

*Proverbs 13:7—“There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”*

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*Jeremiah 9:23-24—“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, **let not the rich man glory in his riches:** {24} But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”*

*1 Timothy 6:9-10—“But they that will be rich **fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.** {10} For the love of money is the root of all evil: which **while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**”*

**CONCLUSION**

- 1. One may have done no wrong in the eyes of this world**—They can be of impeccable character in the community.

*1 Samuel 16:7— “. . . the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”*

- 2. One may have done no wrong in their own eyes.**

*Romans 3:10-12—“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”*

- 3. One may even have more morals than most so-called Christians.**

*Isaiah 64:6—“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*

*Titus 3:5—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”*

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*Ephesians 2:8-9—“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

- 4. The real question of righteousness every person is have you submitted yourself to the righteousness of God? (Romans 10:1ff)**

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for **you** to enter the kingdom of God.

(On our own human merit, it is impossible! Only with God’s grace and mercy in our lives, it is possible!)

- 5. I wonder, do YOU lack anything today?**

No matter what you have today, if you don’t have Jesus in your life, then you are lacking the one and only key ingredient!

*John 3:3—“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*