

Mark 10:17-22

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Date: 12 May 2015

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[0 : 00] Is this better? That's good. In New Year's Eve last year, I was on my way home from London. I was on my way to the airport, and I got a phone call from a friend of mine asking me over some time. I walked straight into the house, and at the back of the house, there's a girl who I hadn't seen from school for about 10 years. So I woke up to her. Carly, I haven't seen you for about 10 years. How are you? I'm doing well. I said, Carly, what have you done since the last time I saw you? She says, well, you'll not believe it, but although I messed about in school, I went to university. I said, well done, Carly. Then what did you do? She says, well, I worked really, really hard, and I got my degree, and then I graduated.

That's great, Carly. Then what did you do? Well, then I looked for a job. So I looked through all the different places to work in Belfast, and eventually I got myself a job. I said, that's great, Carly. Then what? Well, then I thought I'd go for a better job. So I moved to London, and now I'm working in London. I said, that's great. What are you doing now?

She says, well, now I'm back for Christmas. I said, all right. So now you've got your job. Now what do you want to do? She says, well, then what I want to do is I want to try and climb the ladder. I want to try and get promotion and try and climb up and become more powerful.

I said, that's great, Carly. Once you get that, then what do you want to do? Well, she says, well, then I think what I'll do is I'll step out, and I'll maybe try and get married, and I'll maybe have family. That's great. Then what are you going to do? Well, once I have my family, then I'll step back into work, and then I'll try and get a better job. Then maybe I'll move to Paris or Singapore or Hong Kong. That's great, Carly. Once you get the better job, then what are you going to do? Well, then I want to try and own my own company, own my own firm, and maybe become an entrepreneur. That's great, Carly. Let's say you get that. Then what do you want to do? Well, maybe my children will have grown up, and maybe I'll have grandchildren, and I can enjoy them. Then what are you going to do? Well, then I'll maybe retire, and I'll move back to Northern Ireland, and then I'll chill out. This is great, Carly. Then when you're chilling out, then what are you going to do? Well, I'll probably get old, and I'll probably get sick, and maybe I'll go into a home. So then you're sitting in a home. Then what are you going to do? Well, I'll probably just die. Then, Carly, then what are you going to do?

There's a story in the Bible that you read earlier on, and it's a story of a man who's got everything most people would want, because the Bible tells us he's rich. In fact, he's so rich that he's in the top 5% of the richest people in his land. He dies in the finest of places, owns the nicest of property, travels in the finest of transport. This man's one of the richest in his land, but he's not just rich, because the Bible tells us he's a ruler.

[3 : 43] He's powerful. In fact, he works as a kind of a magistrate. When you have difficulty in knowing how the Bible applies, you go to this man. He can work out exactly how it should apply. He's not just rich. He's not just powerful. This man is young. In fact, he's between about 25 and 40. He's young. He's rich. He's powerful. He's in the prime of his life. But although he's got everything most people would want, the question that this man begins to ask is the Carly question. Then what? Now I've got everything. Then what? Well, as Jesus is traveling around, he comes into this man's area. And as this man hears Jesus travel and Jesus speak, the one thing this man does not have is the one thing Jesus has. The one thing this man doesn't have is the capacity to live forever. He doesn't have eternal life. And as Jesus travels throughout his land, he preaches about the kingdom of God. And in God's kingdom, people live forever.

And the Bible tells us that as Jesus travels, this man comes up to him. And if you look at verse 17, it says this, and as he was setting out on his journey, a man, this man, knelt down before him and asked, good teacher, what must I do to inherently turn away? Jesus, I've got all the things that most

people would want. I'm rich, I'm young, I'm powerful. But the one thing I don't have is the one thing you have. Eternal life. What must I do to live forever?

What must I do to have eternal life? How would you answer that question? Someone ran up to you and asked you, what must I do to have eternal life? What would you say? What's Jesus say?

Verse 18. Jesus said to him, what do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 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. And he said to him, teacher, all these things I've kept from my youth.

This guy asks Jesus, what must I do to have eternal life? And Jesus says to him exactly what this man wants to hear. He says to him, obey the law. And it's easy. Because this man's a Jew. And from the age of five, he would have had to learn off the commandments one by one. If there's anyone who knows the commandments, it's this man. And in order to become a ruler, not only do you have to know the commandments, but you have to memorize them and live them out, you have to put them into practice. If there's anyone who knows the commandments, it's this man. And to become a ruler, not only do you have to know what they are and know how they apply, but you have to be able to apply them to other people, like a judge.

[6 : 58] If there's anyone who knows the commandments, it's this man. And so you can imagine what he thought. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus says, obey the commandments. And this man thinks, I've done it. It's easy. I must be. So he turns to Jesus and says, I've done it all. Jesus, is that enough? Maybe like the man, you maybe think the same thing. In order to be a Christian, what must I do? I do all the things I'm expected to do. I say the right things, use the right words, wear the right clothes, go to all the church services, do the good things, don't do the bad things.

What must I do to be a Christian? I just need to obey. Is that enough? What does Jesus say? Verse 21. Jesus looked at him and loved him and said to him, you lack one thing. You've done the right things, said the right things, you've obeyed all the commands, but you still lack one thing. Because what you've done is not enough. Last week, there was a birth of a famous child. You probably heard the child. Charlotte. Charlotte Diana. Is that right? Charlotte Diana, the new addition to the royal family. And everybody was very excited. If you're foreign, you're probably even more excited, probably not excited. But in Northern Ireland, people really aren't that excited. But in England, they're very excited. But what you may not know is that Charlotte Diana almost was never born. In fact, her parents, William and Kate, were almost never married. Because although they started dating in 2003, four years later, William dumped Kate. And nobody could understand why. Why on earth would you dump Kate Middleton? She's got the looks, she's got the charm, she acts the right way. Why would you dump her? Well, two weeks before William and Kate get married, a guy, Adam Bolden from Sky News, interviewed Prince William. And he asked him the million dollar question, William, why did you break up with Kate? And this is what he said. He said, Kate is from, has a normal life. She wears her normal clothes. She has normal interests. Kate has normal hobbies. She goes to normal places. And she does normal things. Kate has a normal lifestyle. But I don't. Because I have a royal lifestyle. And Kate can plan what she wants. She can plan the job she wants. She can plan what holidays she wants to go on.

She can plan where she wants to travel, what she wants to become. But I can't. Because I'm part of the royal family. And Kate has her own identity. She's from her own family. She has her own kinds of friends. She speaks with her own accent. But I can't have it. Because I'm part of the royal family. And he said this. He said, the reason I dumped Kate is because Kate had to decide, was she prepared to give it all up in order to become part of the royal family.

Would she give up her lifestyle? Would she give up her plans? Would she even give up her identity to become part of the royal family? Jesus turns to this man and he tells him, you want to turn your life? Give it all up. Take your lifestyle. All the money that you have. All the property that you have. All the things that you own. And give it all up. But not just your lifestyle. Because this man was young. He could do whatever he wanted. He could go where he wanted and become what he wanted. And when Jesus tells him to give up all he has. He tells him to give up all his plans and all his ambitions.

[11 : 28] Give them up. And he goes even further than that. Because this man, not only in giving up his property, he's giving up his land. And this man read his Bible. And he knew that the land he lived on was land that was passed to him from generation to generation. And if this man gives it up,

he gives up his very identity.

That which goes to the heart of what it is. And when Jesus turns to him and tells him to give it up, he tells him, give up your lifestyle. Give up your plans. Give up your identity. And then he says two of the greatest words in the Bible. Follow me. See, Jesus didn't just say, give it up. He says, follow me. And the Bible tells us that after this conversation, Jesus was on a journey. And eventually that journey would lead him to a courtroom. And when Jesus says, follow me, he tells this man to follow him into the courtroom. And even though this man thinks he's obeyed all the commandments, Jesus says, follow me.

As you hear that there are commandments of God's law that you've brogled. Even though you think you've followed them, follow me to the courtroom, follow me to the courtroom, follow me. And when Jesus says, follow me, he says, follow me into a grave, into a tomb. For although you should have gone, I'll go on your behalf.

And when Jesus says, follow me into a grave. And then you'll see eternal life. So Jesus turns to this man and says, you want eternal life? Give it up. Follow me. To the courtroom. To the cross. To the grave. Out of the grave. And into eternal life.

[13 : 36] And let me define your life. And let me define your life. And let me make your plans for the future. And let me give you a Jesus Christ identity.

Not based on yourself. Not based on yourself. But based on him. Perhaps you're here today. And you wonder, what is it that makes a person a Christian? What is it that gives him eternal life? Jesus says, what makes you a Christian? Give it all. Turn to him. Follow him. And let's see eternal life.

Back in 1948. Back in 1948. There was a famous guy called Jim Elliot. Jim Elliot was a missionary in South America. He was American.

And Jim Elliot went and preached the same message that I'm sharing with you in South America. And as he preached it, he was killed. He was killed for telling you what I'm telling you. For telling others what I'm telling you.

[14 : 41] But in 1948, people found his diaries and they saw what he had written about his time in South America. And he wrote down this little quote. It sums up everything he said he wanted to do in his life.

It says this. It says, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. He is no fool who gives up the things he cannot keep, his lifestyle, his plans, his identity, to gain what he cannot lose.

Eternally. This man looks to Jesus and he hears Jesus tell him, give it up and follow me. And the question that he now has to answer is, will he give up what he cannot gain, what he cannot keep, in order to keep what he cannot lose?

What's he going to do? Verse 22. Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great position.

This man looks at all the things he has, knows that one day they'll fade away. And instead of giving up the things he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose, he looks at Jesus and walks away.

[16 : 09] And he rejects it. He walks away. I have a friend who's from North Ireland who's a film director. And he tells me if you want a successful film, you've got to make sure the story ends on a high.

You've got to make sure it's got a happy ending in a film. And if this was a story that was presented to be made into a film, it would flop. Because instead of having a happy ending, it's a depressing story with a sad ending.

But thankfully this man's story is not the only story in life. Because just like this man has a story, you and I also have a story.

And as we hear what we must do to receive eternal life, so too we have an ending to our story. And the question, just like this man, that we must face, is are we prepared to give up the things we cannot keep, to gain what we cannot lose, or are we like him, going to walk away?

Today Jesus tells us, give it all up. Follow me. To the cross, to the grave. Out of the grave, to eternal life.

[17 : 32] The question for us is, what's the ending to our story? Let's pray.