

# Matthew 19:16-30

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[ 0 : 00 ] Can you be seated and open your Bibles to Matthew 19, which is on page 824.

! Let's move from Canada to here.

Got engaged to Xander. Yes, is that right? That is right. If only people listen to my sermons with that much attention, normally. But we're delighted at you both and we'll pray for your marriage.

Congratulations to us all. Matthew 19, verses 16 and 13. This morning I want to introduce, or perhaps reintroduce, the most radical, the most awesome, the most breathtaking, and the most dangerous person that's ever set foot on this earth.

And that, of course, is the Lord Jesus. I promise you that you will never be the same after meeting him. I challenge you that you should never be the same after meeting him.

[ 1 : 22 ] And we meet Jesus in this passage. We're going to pick it up in verse 16. Behold, stop what you're doing. Look, listen. Behold, a man came up to him, the same teacher. What good deed must I do to have eternal life?

And whatever you say about this guy, whatever we're going to say about him, he is asking the right kind of question to me. I don't think I've ever been asked this question as a minister. But he's interested in the big questions of life.

And the big questions of the Bible. He's not interested in who did Cain marry, where did Cain and Abel get their wives. He wants the big question. His big question is, how do I make sure that I live forever?

He's a rich man. And we know that he's a man of great wealth. But he knows that he's only got so long to live. And as you know, removal mans do not follow her sisterly.

You cannot take what you have with you. He knows that. And if you only had one chance to ask Jesus one question, this is the one to ask, or something like it.

[ 2 : 28 ] What good thing, what good deed must I do in order to inherit eternal life? And straight away, Jesus knows where this man has come from.

And the way he uses the word good is the clincher. He clearly, this guy, does not understand the nature of goodness. So what Jesus does is he shoves the question back in his face.

Look at verse 17. He said to him, why are you asking about what is good? There is only one who is good. Do you see what Jesus is doing?

He's drawing a circle. And he's saying whoever you want to put in that circle of goodness. I'm going to take everyone out of that circle of goodness.

Except one. Everyone else is outside the circle. Only one in the circle of goodness. Let me ram off a bunch of names.

[ 3 : 27 ] And you can tell me in or out. Who's in the circle of goodness? And who's out? Mother Teresa. In. Or out.

Character, audience, participation, in or out? The Jewish priests. In or out. Jesus' own mother Mary. In or out. My own mother Mary. In or out. How dare you.

Or leave you. That's what he says. In or out. Okay. Okay. Here's a difficult one. Janet Seba. Look at that.

There was a moment of hesitation. There's no hesitation. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Janet. Jesus says there is only one who is good. And it's not you. It's not me.

[ 4 : 29 ] And Janet would be the first person to say it's not her. First of all. It's such a radical thing to say. So that's my first point. It's a radical thing to say. There is only one who is good.

In a world. In a culture where everyone is tripping over themselves. To tell one another how wonderful we are. We parade it online. How good we are. And it's only our actions.

Sometimes let us down. We're good. But sometimes our actions let us down. And Jesus says. No one is good except God alone. So let me be honest with you.

If you knew how sinful I was. You wouldn't let me preach to you. And if I knew how sinful you were. I wouldn't bother preaching you either. We only know so much about each other. But Jesus comes along.

[ 5 : 31 ] And he says. Let me just make the verdict. We won't go into details from this passage. But here it is. And you see no one is good except God alone. What do they say? They say. If you could look into my heart.

You'd spit in my face. Vice versa. But at this point. Jesus could have gone to. 50 different verses of the Bible. And he could have made it plain to this guy.

That he wasn't good. But Jesus is not in a hurry. He clearly loves him. He really wants this heart. To work out for himself. That he is not.

Good. So he says. Okay. You want to go down. That route. What must I do. In order to get into heaven. Let's go the whole way.

Jesus says to him. Verse 17. If you would enter life. Keep the commandments. If you want eternal life.

[ 6 : 28 ] If you want to live forever. Do the commandments. And the guy is probably thinking. Okay. Well I can do it now. I love his answer in verse 18. Don't you? He said.

Which ones? The man inquires. Jesus says. Obey the commandments. commandments. And he says. Which ones? As if they were optional extras.

As if you can say. This week. I'm going to go for. Commandment. Six. Three. And nine. And you can. You can take the rest. Now what is interesting.

Is that how he approaches Jesus. Can you just see that? I've not seen this before. Verse 16. It's very interesting. He says. What good deed.

Singular. What good thing. Must I do. To have eternal life. He wasn't interested in things.

[ 7 : 25 ] He wasn't interested in deeds. He just. He just. He says. Jesus. Just nail it for me. Give me one issue. Where I can be a hero.

Hand over a million pounds. To pay off the church debt to you. You know. Be the saviour of the universe. That will guarantee me. A place in heaven. What? As many cathedrals. That have been built on the back of that lie.

Just give me one thing. Jesus. And. Jesus spells out the details. Of the commandments. That he wants him to keep. And he gives him the back end. Of the ten commandments. Can you see it? Verse 18. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor. Your father.

And mother. And. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. They are. If we can call this. They are the pointy end.

[ 8 : 24 ] Of the ten commandments. Right? They are the sharp end. Of the ten commandments. And they are very hard. Just sidestep. And they are straightforward. I think it's interesting.

Isn't it? Even Jesus gets confused. With the order of the ten commandments. He gives them commandments. Six. Seven. Eight. And nine. And then he goes back to the fifth. Commandment. Love your neighbour as yourself.

And then love your neighbour as yourself. She says. Don't take the life of another human being. Don't sleep with another man's wife. Or another woman's husband. Don't take what doesn't belong to you.

And don't lie. Especially in a courtroom. And respect your mum and dad. And then he summarises it. Love your neighbour as yourself. Love your neighbour. Love your neighbour. And it's interesting. The way he ends it.

He kind of reminds us. That being good. It's not just about. Not doing wrong things. It's actually about. Doing positive things.

[ 9 : 22 ] We all know. Don't we. Sins of commission. And we all do. Things that it's easy to recognise. Things that we. Do. That we. We shouldn't do. But there are sins of omission.

Aren't there? There are sins that you should do. But don't do. So just in case you wonder. What is going on about. Loving your neighbour as yourself.

That's what he says. As quick as a flash. And on a moment's hesitation. He says. Verse 20. All these I've kept. What do I still lack?

All these I've kept. What planet does this guy live on? Live on. I mean if you hear the Ten Commandments. Each week in this church. And you think. Yeah. Tick. Tick. Tick. Done. Done. Done. Next. If that's your response. To the Ten Commandments. You do not get them. You don't understand them. You're exactly where this guy is.

[10:25] You've not understood. That the most. Core truth. That no one is good. No one is in that circle. Except God alone. I told you.

You had this before. But there was someone. Who I went to see. She was old. And she'd been a Christian. A long time. And she said to me. The thing is Paul. I don't really struggle. With any sin. Anymore. Do I? I said to her. Well. Pride may be a bit of an issue. For you. She said. I don't think that's right. I don't think that's right at all. I got very annoyed. I said. In one way. You can read the 10 commandments. Can you? But you can. Look at the 10 commandments. And. Say. Look you in the eye. You can say. Well I've never killed another human being. Tick. Never been unfaithful to my wife. Tick. But you know.

[11:21] You know what Jesus says about this stuff. We said it in the introduction. The confessor is saved. You go back to Matthew chapter 5. And the Sermon on the Mount. He says. You know. The heart. The heart.

The heart that is angry. Is subject to the same. Kind of judgment. Just like the heart that murders. Jesus says.

The heart that lusts. Is subject to the same. Kind of judgment. As for the heart that commits adultery. And ends up in bed with another man's wife.

And all of a sudden. When you realise that. Them over there. Aren't over there anymore. Because you see.

There is no us and them. There is just us. And this is a very. Very good example. I think. Of how you can have a very.

[12:18] Clear conscience. And not be right with God. Because this bloke. Has a clear conscience. Doesn't he? As far as he is concerned.

Is concerned. But he is not right with God. And it may be today. That as you sit there. You think. You try your best. You don't sleep around.

You are generally. A nice person. Other people in your office. Or your school. Would say. He is a good bloke. She is a good woman. And you may even.

Call yourself. Good. And if that is true. Do you realise. That your view of yourself. And Jesus view of you. Are very different.

Very different. Because Jesus says. No one is good. Except one. And you. Ain't that one. That's why he says.

[13:16] Why Jesus says. Unless you are like. A little child. You will not enter. The kingdom of God. Well I'll tell you this. I've yet to meet a child.

Who's got a problem. With what Jesus says here. I think children. Laugh this up. I think they take it on board. No one is good. Except God alone.

For the little children. They say. Yeah. I agree with that. And they take it on board. Little children know.

That they're not good. This man I think. This fine name man. He's wealthy as me. He's robust. He's sincere. He's passionate.

He probably sees life. As a list of challenges. To overcome. And getting into heaven. Eternal life. Is just one of the challenges. So Jesus happens in the time. The challenges.

[14:11] That are called the ten commandments. And quick as a flash. He says I've done all. And I'm ready for anything. Now. Give it to me. What's next? So Jesus gives it to him.

Verse 21. Jesus says. If you would be perfect. Go sell what you possess. And give to the poor. And you will have treasure.

In heaven. And come follow me. It's very interesting. That's the exact opposite. Of what Jesus. Jesus says.

To the tele-evangelist. You know the tele-evangelist. That are on TV. And the tele-evangelist says. Sell everything. Give it to me. And follow Jesus. But Jesus says.

No you sell everything. Give it to the poor. And come follow me. That's the first difference. But Jesus is so radical. Isn't he? Secondly. The radical command. Radical statement. Radical

command.

[15:06] He says this man. It is a specific command. To a specific guy. You've got to understand that. And he's saying. To this man. I want you to sell everything. I want you to.

Unload it all. Give it away. And follow me. Jesus does not say to him. We might have expected. Jesus to say. Well. Well done. Good on you. Keep up the work mate. I know you're trying. You're only human. And that is the British Jesus.

And the British Jesus is. Keep going. Keep trying. You're only human. Do your best. But the British Jesus. Isn't going to save anyone. You know what Jesus is saying.

What he's doing. He's saying. Look. If you want to be perfect. This is what it will take for you. To get into heaven. If you want to get in. Then you've got to sell everything.

[16:05] You've got to unload it. And give it to the poor. And then come and follow me. Stop being rich here on earth. And start being rich towards God. And that pretty much was the straw.

That broke the camel's back for this man. See what Jesus is doing. Is unveiling this man's self deceit.

Self delusion. He's showing this man. That he's having himself on. He's having himself on. About how good he is. And Jesus has one final law on his back.

And it breaks him. And the sad response is in verse 22. Where the young man shared this. He went away sorrowful. He went away sad. Because he had great possessions.

Why sad? Why sad? Well maybe because for the first time. This man realised that he didn't love God. With all his heart and mind. And soul and strength.

[17:02] And maybe for the first time. This man. Realised that God wasn't his first loyalty. And Jesus in his kindness.

And loaded the law of God. On his back. And he just collapsed under it. Or rather he ran away from it. Sad. Here was something. Finally. That this guy couldn't afford.

The price tag for eternal life. Was out of his price range. And you know the reason why. Don't you? Because he wanted to pay himself.

Didn't he? That's the problem. He wanted to pay his own way. He wanted to pay his own way. Into heaven. And he didn't realise.

That nothing less than perfection is required. And sad he was. That day. But not as sad as he will be. On that day.

[17:58] When the son of man. Sits on his throne. And this same Jesus. Who he walked away from. He will discover. That he missed out on the very thing.

He asked for eternal life. What does Jesus say? Jesus says. What good is it for a man. To gain the whole world. And yet lose his own soul. We hear that statement.

Don't we? And we think. 2000 years after this event. You can look back with such clarity. Can't you? And say. Well you idiot. You fool. Notice what Jesus doesn't say.

And what this man doesn't do. Notice. Jesus doesn't run after him. And say to him. And what I meant to say. Is he's going to be prepared.

To leave everything. Jesus doesn't suffer. And you notice. What the rich man doesn't do. He doesn't fall on his knees. And say. Have mercy on me. Oh Lord.

[19:01] Either. I'm a sinful man. I can't do this. We've got a very different story. If you've done that. No.

This man. Walks away from Jesus. Jesus doesn't walk away from him. Jesus never walks away from anyone. If you find.

This morning there's space. Between you and Jesus. Well get him moved. It isn't the saviour. And he's walked away from this Jesus. Who clearly loved him. But I want to ask the question.

Who is he walking to? Where is he walking to? So what's a good question to ask. If you're going to walk away from Jesus. Where are you going to walk to?

Is he going to walk back to that religion. That he was once a part of. That allowed himself. To have himself on. That he was good. Is he going to walk back to that religion.

[20:02] Where he can do a few good works. Pack himself on that back. And say. Well maybe I'll get in. Maybe my good will outweigh my bad. I'd be the good bloke. When you go back to that BMW.

Lather upholstered. Gold pleated. Piece of machinery. Give it a big kiss. Make it feel good. When you slip into some Armani suit.

You get a big hand from it. When you walk away from Jesus. What exactly do you walk to? Jesus is so radical.

And at this point. Jesus turns the screw on all of us. Listen by the way. It's good to know that. That Jesus is not just having a conversation. With this rich guy. He's having a conversation with you. Look at this 23.

The man is gone. And Jesus said to his disciples. Truly I say to you. Only with difficulty. Will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. That's a radical statement.

[ 21 : 08 ] And then he says this. Which is even more shocking. Again I tell you. It's easier for a camel. To go through the eye of a needle. Than for a rich person. To enter the kingdom of God. Now if you look at Edward Young.

He was wandering around at the back. I don't know if he still is. Edward Young is a children's story Bible. Quite a lot of us have this children's story Bible. And in that children's story Bible. It says that the needle was.

The eye of a needle was a gate in Jerusalem. If you hear that. It was a gate in Jerusalem. And a camel had to go to it. And a camel would have to strip off. And crouch down.

And that was the only way to get through the eye of a needle. That's absolute rubbish. And the point there is. It was difficult to get in through the eye of a needle. There is the eye of a needle gate in Jerusalem.

Now when Jesus says camel here. He means camel. And when Jesus says needle. He means eye of a needle. I've got one here.

[ 22 : 10 ] It's a needle. See it? Probably can't sit down. It's a little needle. It's got a little eye in there. You can't see it because you're far away. It's a tiny little thing.

Can you see it children? Just there? And you get a cotton. I haven't got a cotton because it's my hand. I can never get it in. But you get a cotton. You thread the cotton through that eye of a needle. You have a very still hand don't you?

And it goes through. And then you. I don't know whether you tie it. Or you do something. You loop it around. And then you can use it. Alright? Cotton threads in the eye of a needle. My friend preached on this in St. Helens Bishop's Gate.

He's somehow got a pantomime camel. To come in. But I haven't got a pantomime camel. I haven't even got a camel. I've got a zebra. It's a wooden zebra.

Alright? And so when Jesus meant needle. He meant needle. Okay? When Jesus meant camel. He meant a real camel. Okay? That's not a real camel. It's a wooden zebra.

[ 23 : 11 ] But let's try and get it in. Can you see it? We're going to try and get it in. Through the eye of a needle. Alright? Can you see it? We'll do it slowly. Alright? Try and hook it up.

Won't go through, will it? Let's try and back it in. Shall we? Alright? And there's the needle. There's the zebra. Can we do it? Maybe you can have a try after.

We can't. It's ridiculous. It's absolutely ridiculous. What is Jesus saying? Why can't it be the gate in Jerusalem?

Well because verse 26. Here's the point. Look at the point. It says. With man this is impossible.

That's the whole point. It's impossible. So again notice what Jesus is saying.

He's saying. He's not saying it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's impossible. It's impossible. And you notice.

[ 24 : 13 ] Can you see the disciples reaction to this? They are absolutely astonished by this. I'm surprised that they're surprised.

But the very reason that they're surprised is because the Jewish people were very clear. If God had blessed you. That one of the ways that God blessed you would be by blessing you materially.

Now there's good reason for that. In the Old Testament. There was this kind of prosperity line of thing. It's still being pumped out today. If God is for you. You will experience great financial blessing.

You'll be rich. And if God is a great issue. You'll be poorer. And there were some very rich people in the Old Testament. That kind of got God's thumbs up. So you think of Job. Job was a very, very wealthy man.

He was a very righteous man. And you think of Abraham. Abraham was a man who was known for his faith and his trust in God. But God blessed Abraham materially. And so if Jesus starts shutting the door on the rich.

[ 25 : 18 ] He's shutting the door on Abraham. On David. On Job. On Joseph. And a couple of others who were very godly. Now we know, don't we?

We know that the more you have in life. The more you have to let go of. To trust Jesus. If Jesus is going to be first.

And the more you have. The more there is going to be let go of. It just comes. With the nature of the more you have. And yet we also know.

Don't misunderstand this. It's not as if Jesus is saying. Well somehow being poor. That's going to be really easy to get into heaven. That will get you in heaven. It's a ridiculous lie. And so here at the end of the day.

When you read the gospel in its entirety. Jesus is not on the side of the rich. And I know this is very controversial to say. But Jesus is not on the side of the poor. Jesus is on the side of anyone.

[ 26 : 22 ] Who sides with his son. That's who's side he's on. The Lord Jesus. And so Jesus has at this point. Slammed the door.

And I'm telling you. And you need to know. That Jesus slammed the door on you. Because don't think that when Jesus gives these warnings about the rich. He's talking about Sartre Brunei. Or he's talking about Bill Gates. Or Elon Musk. Or one of the kind of other uber rich people out there. He's talking about. These guys.

I'm talking as one rich man. To a room full of rich people. And everyone in this room. On the international scale. It's clearly the top 10%. Some of us here will be in the top 5%.

And now. That has got to make us on the scale of rich people. If God was going to line up. 6 billion people on the face of the earth right now.

[ 27 : 25 ] We would be on the rich end of the scale. If you're on unemployment benefit. If you're living in council housing. You are in the top 10% of the world.

And so we need to stop thinking. That this is talking about someone else. It's talking about you. Me. And Jesus says.

You getting to heaven. Is like a camel. Going through the eye of a needle. So understand this morning. That 1.3 billion people don't have saved drinking water.

Let alone tap water in their own house. Let alone an indoor toilet. Where are the rich ones? Well that's depressing isn't it? Why is it depressing? Because I want to go to heaven. I want to go to heaven.

I want eternal life. But Jesus says. It's impossible for you and I. To have eternal life. Because you like I are rich. And then Jesus fortunately finishes.

[ 28 : 22 ] That sentence in verse 26. Can you see it? With man this is impossible. But with God. All things are altogether now. Possible.

Hallelujah. So good to hear. But the rich man. Verse 22. Didn't stick around to hear that sentence. That's the tragedy. He stopped listening to me.

The moment Jesus said. Go send out with him. Bang. He's gone at the door. He didn't hear. Come follow me. And what does it mean to follow Jesus? In a nutshell. It means that everything.

It means that everything. And everyone. Has to come a poor second. To the one in the circle of goodness. The one who alone is God. The one who alone is good.

It has to be. He has to be God. Because who else can demand. This kind of loyalty. And he's so clearly good. As the Bible keeps saying. Jesus will say.

[ 29 : 22 ] Unless you love me more than your mother. Or your father. Or your husband. Or your wife. Or your brother. Or your sister. You are not worthy of me. Follow me. And it's worth it.

And I'll take care of you. Let me read you verse 27. And Peter said and replied. Sir we've left everything.

That's following you. What then will we have? And so you have a radical statement. You have a radical command.

But you also have a radical promise. Jesus said to verse 28. Truly I say to you. In the new world. Where the Son of Man will sit. On his glorious throne. You who have followed me.

Will sit on 12 thrones. He's referring there to the apostles. Judging the 12 tribes of Israel. And here we are. Verse 29. And everyone. That's me and you. Who has left houses.

[ 30 : 19 ] Or brothers. Or sisters. Or father. Or mother. Or children. Or lands. For my sake. My name is sick. Will receive a hundredfold. And will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last.

And the last will be first. What's Jesus saying here? What is the radical promise? The radical promise is this. There will be no regrets.

For those who put Jesus first. It's a win-win scenario. Jesus says. I will take care of you now. And I will take care of you forever.

I'll take care of you. And so if as a result of following Jesus. Ealing turns against you. Jesus says. I will be there. And I will bless you with a host of others.

Do you believe that? One of the great lies to children. Isn't it? And young people. Children and young people. If you listen. If you don't come. It says. The devil will say to you.

[ 31 : 21 ] By following Jesus. You will miss out. You will miss out. You'll be lonely. You'll be popular. You want to friends.

And the devil says that to you. And so you. You think. I've got to tone down. Following the Lord Jesus. And I was alive. The devil. Because Jesus makes you. A promise to you. That if you stand for him. There will be no regrets.

And yes. It may well be lonely. And it may well be hard. In school to stand for him. But if you do that. He will sit by you. And he will reward you. Let's think of what we thought of last week.

Let's think for those who are single. Isn't it? And the temptations there are. And to stand for Jesus. And to follow Jesus. In your singleness. To not give in.

To the huge temptations. To not give in. With the world sinking. Do you believe this? That there will be no. Regrets. For standing for the Lord Jesus. That Jesus will take care of you.

[ 32 : 26 ] In this life. And in the next life. For those of us who are married. And we're fed up being married. And the temptation is to think.

It would just. It would just be easier to walk away. To stand for the Lord Jesus. And to follow the Lord Jesus. And honour our covenant commitments.

And Jesus says. There will be no regrets. If he lived for me. Talking to a Christian last week. About how God had given him. Many fathers.

In addition to his own. In the absence of a father. Who wasn't there for him. God had provided other fathers and brothers. Haven't you found that?

We need to work hard and harder. At being the family of God. I picked up spiritual mothers. In this congregation. Over the last 18 years.

[ 33 : 22 ] Not at the expense of my own mother. But in addition. And God has taken care of us. You will not miss out. By living full throttle.

For the Lord Jesus. We're so rich. A thousand times as much. And then we'll inherit eternal life. The end of that promise. Can you see eternal life?

That rings a bell doesn't it? Where does it ring a bell from? Ah yeah. That was the question. That the guy came from. Start wasn't it? What must I do. To inherit eternal life?

And the guy. He didn't stick around. Long enough to hear Jesus answer. That's the tragedy in a way. Because although verse 16. Is a good question. It's the wrong question.

He said to Jesus. What good thing. Must I do. To have eternal life? What's the right question? The right question is. Jesus. What good things should you do.

[ 34 : 20 ] For me to get eternal life? It's a different question. And Jesus would answer him. And say. What I must do is. I must die. I must suffer. And I must go to Jerusalem.

And die for you. I must rise for your forgiveness. And you will be forgiven. You understand. That you need a savior.

You understand. That there is no one good. Except one. And the one ain't to you. I have this conversation. Again and again. With different people. I'm sure you do too.

You meet someone. They find out I'm a minister. They say something like this. We're normally in a hospital. And they say. Well I know I'm going to have him. Because I've not done anything wrong.

And I'm a good person. To that we generally want to say.

So don't be right. I want to say. Jesus says. No one is good. Except God alone. Quick as a flash. How do they reply? They reply in this way. They say. I know God will forgive me.

[ 35 : 14 ] Don't they? And I've not said it. But I do need to say it. At some point. I need to say. Well which is it? If you're a good person.

You don't need to be forgiven. And if you're a forgiving person. Well then you're admitting. That you're not good. So which is it? Is that clear to you? If you're a good person.

You don't need to be forgiven. And if you're a forgiving person. You don't. You need to. By the very nature of that. You're admitting you're not good. And Jesus says.

There isn't any one of us here. The very act of asking for forgiveness. Is a testimony. To that fact. That you're not good. And so do you think.

Isn't it time this morning. To stop walking away from Jesus. And admit to Jesus. I'm not good. And I know that I'm wealthy.

[ 36 : 12 ] Because I'm a person. Living in a wealthy land. Surrounded by other wealthy people. And I enjoy the things God. That you have given to me. But I need to understand.

That I need to love you Lord. More than all of these things. And I have to put you first. Before my loved ones. And my things. Because if I put you first.

Then I can actually love my loved ones. And the things that you've abundantly given. To me properly. And I understand Lord. That I can't do it. And I need you to do it for me.

And when you do that. You allow the impossible. To become possible. Let's pray.