

You're Going the Wrong Way!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read in Mark, the Gospel according to Mark, in chapter 10, and if we read again at verse 17, Mark chapter 10 at verse 17.

And as Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Good teacher. One question which often puzzles people is, how do you get to heaven?

How do you get to heaven? Because, well, there are many views about how to get to heaven. There are so many different religions, and there are so many faith groups, and they all believe different things, and it leads to confusion as to which way is the right way to get to heaven.

And even some people say that all religions, they all lead to heaven. They all get you to heaven in the end. Of course, the atheist would say that there's no such thing as heaven.

[1 : 3 3] When you die, you just cease to exist. You go into the ground, and that's the end of the story. But the agnostic, someone who believes in God but not knowing which God to believe in, they'll admit that there must be a heaven if there is a God.

But the agnostic isn't quite sure which God is in heaven. They don't know which way is the right way to get to heaven. But, you know, for most people, whether they're religious or not, most people would like to believe that at the end of their days, when their days are done, they would like to believe that they're going to heaven.

And they're going to go to heaven, they say, because they're a good person. In their understanding of who goes to heaven and who doesn't go to heaven, it's only good people who go to heaven.

Bad people, like the pedophiles and the rapists and the murderers, they all go to hell. But not good people. Not the upstanding members in a community.

Not the good neighbours. Not the friendly, nice, warm people. Not those who keep themselves to themselves and they pay their taxes and don't do anyone harm. They don't go to hell.

[2 : 4 7] They all go to heaven. And, you know, there are all these opinions about who will and who won't go to heaven. But the one question no one ever seems to be asking is, what does God say about how to get to heaven?

What does God say about who goes to heaven and who goes to hell? Because, well, if you were to ask God, if we were to ask God tonight, well, who, how do you get to heaven?

Who goes to heaven? What do you think he would say? Well, we have the answer here in the Bible of what he says, because that's the very thing this rich young man did. He came to Jesus, Jesus, the God-man.

And this man, he asked Jesus, what must I do to inherit eternal life? In other words, how do I get to heaven? But, you know, this question which the rich young man asked, it sparked a discussion.

A discussion not only between Jesus and this wealthy young man, but also a discussion between Jesus and his disciples. Because when the disciples heard Jesus talking to the rich young man and explaining to him how to get to heaven, the disciples soon realized that their understanding of how to get to heaven was also a wrong understanding.

[4 : 07] And that's because they had a wrong view of salvation. And so what we see in this passage, a very interesting passage, what we see is that Jesus says to the rich young man and to the disciples, he explains to them about how to get to heaven.

And he tells them that their understanding of how to get to heaven or their thought of the way to heaven is the wrong way. And Jesus says to them, to this rich young man and to the disciples, he says to them, you're going the wrong way.

You're going the wrong way. In fact, in this passage, Jesus addresses three wrong views of salvation. Because you could say that the rich young man, he had a superficial view of salvation.

The disciples then had a surprising view of salvation. And Peter, Peter had a self-righteous view of salvation. Three wrong views of salvation.

A superficial view of salvation. A surprising view of salvation. And a self-righteous view of salvation. And Jesus says to them, you're going the wrong way.

[5 : 20] They're all going the wrong way to heaven. So first of all, we look at a superficial view of salvation. A superficial view of salvation.

Look at verse 17 again. And as Jesus was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Now, if we were to have graded this rich young man on his outward appearance of religion, and his honorable question, and what seemed to be a desire for eternal things, if we were to have graded him, he would have scored full marks.

Because as Jesus was walking through Judea, this rich young man, he makes a beeline for Jesus. In fact, Mark tells us that he ran up to Jesus, which would be an indicator of the urgency that he had to ask this question.

He ran up to him. But then he kneels down before Jesus, which would also indicate his reverence and his respect for Jesus. But more than that, this rich young man, he addresses Jesus with such a serious and weighty question, that it would also indicate that he's thinking deeply about eternal things.

[6 : 37] He says to him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? But you know, sadly, the outward appearance of this rich young man and his honorable question, it was all a facade.

Because the question of this young man's lips was not the question of this young man's heart. The question of his lips was not the question of his heart. Yes, if we were to go on outward appearances and his respect towards religion, this rich young man, he looked the part.

His outward actions, they seemed to portray signs of an interest in the gospel and this desire to follow Jesus. But it was all superficial. It was all outward appearance.

It was all above the surface. And you know, I say all this because throughout his ministry, Jesus had many people kneeling before him.

There was a leper who came to Jesus crawling on his knees, pleading with Jesus. The leper pleaded, Lord, if you can make me clean. Lord, if you're willing, you can make me clean.

[7 : 50] Then there was Legion. You remember Legion, the demon-possessed man. And he fell down on his face in the dust before Jesus and worshipped Jesus. Then there was Jairus.

Jairus threw himself at the feet of Jesus, begging Jesus just to come and heal his dying daughter. There were many people who fell at the feet of Jesus. But you know, the difference between all of them and this rich young man is that they knew their need of Jesus.

They knew their need of Jesus. This rich young man, he didn't see his need of Jesus. That's why he calls Jesus good teacher.

He was trying to flatter Jesus by calling him good. He was trying to get on the right side of Jesus. He was trying to, you could say, trying to butter him up, trying to be a nice guy towards the teacher.

But you know, the rabbis, they never considered anyone or anything good except for God. That's why Jesus responds to this young man's question by saying, there is none good.

[9 : 01] Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. No one is good except God alone. Now Jesus, he never said these words to highlight that he was God.

He said them in order to reaffirm to the young man that you can flatter and you can butter up and you can be a nice guy to the teacher of God's word all you like.

But that will never get you into heaven. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? And as we said, the question of his lips was not the question of his heart.

And you know, my friend, we ought to be careful how we view Jesus. Because this young man had a superficial view of the Savior.

So much so that he had a superficial view of his sin and a superficial view of salvation. His view was shallow. It was no deeper than the surface.

[10 : 01] That's why Jesus says to him in verse 19, you know the commandments, don't you? Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.

And as a Jew, this rich young man would have been taught the Ten Commandments from the moment he could talk. And there's no doubt that he knew the commandments. He knew them in his head.

But he didn't know the commandments in his heart. And of course there's a huge difference between knowing it in your head and knowing it in your heart. And the rich young man, he knows it.

He knows it all, which is why he doesn't call Jesus good in verse 20. Because he knows that Jesus is now getting serious with him. He takes a step back.

Jesus is getting serious with him. But the truth is, the rich young man, he didn't actually want to do anything in order to inherit eternal life.

[11 : 02] He didn't want to do anything because he thought he had already done it. He thought that his wealth and his good works and his commandment keeping and being a good person and living an upright life, he thought that that was enough to get him into heaven.

The only reason he actually came to Jesus was for his own ego. He wanted confirmation that he was a good person. He wanted Jesus just to give him a wee tap on the back and say, well done for all your good works.

My friend, this rich young man had such a high view of himself that he even told Jesus that he's worthy of going to heaven. And you know, we actually see that here because the rich young man, he claimed, he claims to Jesus that he's never committed adultery, he's never murdered, he's never stolen, he's never lied, he's never defrauded anyone and his whole life he's honoured his father and his mother.

But that was his own self-assessment. And like many people, this young man, rich young man, he had a superficial view of sin, salvation, and even the saviour.

He only saw the good he had done and based everything upon outward appearances. But Jesus says to the young man, that's not how God assesses you.

[12 : 29] And that's not God's assessment of you. That may be your self-assessment. But that's not God's assessment of you. Because God doesn't have a superficial view of salvation.

God knows how much it cost to save people from their sin. He knows the depth and breadth and length and height of hell which Jesus had to endure for sinners.

God knows the extent that Jesus had to go in order for sinners like you and me to be saved. But he also knows the love that put him there. And the love of Jesus for this lost young man is actually what Mark is drawing our attention to.

He tells us that Jesus looked at him and loved him. Jesus looked at him and loved him.

You know what a look to have from Jesus. For Jesus to look at you and to love you and to know that you're lost. And you know that's what Jesus does with every lost sinner who is trying to find their own way to heaven.

[13 : 40] He looks at them and he loves them. And Jesus looks at them and loves them says J.C. Ryle because the heart of Jesus is a wide heart.

You know J.C. Ryle he says that Jesus has an abundance of pity, compassion and tender concern for those who are following sin and the world. But you know if you're lost tonight my friend if you're lost tonight it's not because Jesus doesn't love you and Jesus isn't ready to save you.

You're lost says Jesus because men love darkness rather than light. you prefer to walk in sin than to seek the Saviour.

And you know that was the case for this rich young man and it's the case for many of you in here tonight. You've come face to face with the love of Jesus time and time again in the Gospel and yet the amazing thing is you're still trying to find your own way to heaven.

And the reason is like this young man you have a superficial view of salvation. It's all about the outward appearance. You're blinded by your good works and you're so blind that you can't see that Jesus he's the only remedy.

[15 : 08] He's the only remedy to your ruin. And Jesus is saying to you tonight you're going the wrong way. You're going the wrong way. If you're trying to walk your way into heaven you're going the wrong way.

But you know when the disciples listened to what Jesus said to the rich young man about his superficial view of salvation they realized that they had a surprising view of salvation.

And that's what we see secondly. A surprising view of salvation. So a superficial view of salvation and a surprising view of salvation. A surprising view of salvation.

Look at verse 23. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples how difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God. And the disciples were amazed at his words.

But Jesus said to them again children how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.

[16 : 17] And they were exceedingly astonished and said to him then who can be saved? And so having listened to this dialogue between Jesus and the rich young man the disciples they are completely taken by surprise.

They are astonished to hear that this rich young man is being denied access into heaven. And just so the disciples don't think that Jesus has made a mistake Jesus actually repeats himself.

And the disciples they are surprised at the words of Jesus all because their view of salvation was that rich people deserved to go to heaven. Because in their minds having wealth was a blessing from God.

Riches were viewed as a reward for being a good person. And so when the disciples encountered this rich young man speaking to Jesus their initial perception of him was that if anyone can get to heaven it's him.

I mean look at him they are saying look at him he is rich God has blessed him with wealth he is young God has blessed him with health and he is running up to Jesus because he knows that his life is short and his salvation is an urgent matter.

[17 : 35] But more than that they know that well he must have a good upbringing God he knows that he knows the ten commandments he knows how to keep them and he has promised that he has kept them he even kneels down before Jesus because he has been taught to show reverence to the teachers of God's word.

The amazing thing is this rich young man they look at him and they think well he is asking all the right questions he must be on the way to heaven and so for the disciples all they can see is this rich young man is that he is a perfect candidate for heaven but as we know Jesus sees through it all because he can see the heart of this rich young man and all Jesus sees in the heart of this rich young man is covetousness and idolatry because like many people who lead an exemplary life and who even endear themselves to their religion they can still be an idolater but you know what we must be clear on is that this rich young man's problem wasn't his money it was his love of money that was his problem his love of his possessions that he was unwilling to part with any of it for the sake of eternal life that was his problem his money was his security his money and his wealth is what gave him that comfort and that status that he wanted and he wasn't willing to part with any of it in order to get to heaven now

Jesus wasn't actually demanding that the rich young man has to sell all that he has in order to become a Christian and go to heaven Jesus was testing the rich young man to see what was of more value to him his possessions or eternal life and you know it's a challenging question from Jesus what's more important what's of more value to you your possessions or eternal life what's more important to you what is it that you're thinking about all the time what is it that you focus your life on is it your job is it your house is it your car is it your sheep your family your your stuff or do you focus upon eternal life and my friend the thing is your response to that question shows where your treasure is but as Jesus said where where your treasure is there will your heart be also and you know my friend it's a simple question but at the same time it's a hard question because Jesus is asking you tonight what's more important to you your stuff or your soul what's more important to you your stuff or your soul but you know what we have to see is that Jesus' question is actually about discipleship

Jesus wants to know if you're willing to become his disciple Jesus wants to know if you're willing to give up the treasures in your heart in order to gain treasure in heaven Jesus wants to know are you willing to put away your idols in order to gain him as your savior are you willing to deny self and take up your cross and follow Jesus are you willing to obey Jesus and follow him in order to have access into the glory of heaven are you willing to make Jesus your lord and master and cast your lot in with him and my friend only you can answer that question I can't see your heart sometimes I wish I could just to know where you're at but only you can answer that question I just hope that you don't leave church the same way that this rich young man left Jesus because it says in verse 22 that he was disheartened by what Jesus said and he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions but you know even Jesus admitted that many people they struggle with this

Jesus admits that it's not easy it's not easy to give up things it's not easy to give up our stuff it's not easy to give up your life and follow Jesus it's not easy to give up your status or your position or your comforts that you've known to and clung to all your life it's not easy to admit that discipleship comes at a great cost it's not easy in fact Jesus says it's impossible it's impossible he says he says in verse 25 that it's far easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God in other words it's impossible and you know as the disciples as they're listening to Jesus speak they're just amazed at what he's saying they're totally surprised that this rich young man couldn't be saved and go to heaven because he wouldn't let go of all his earthly riches he wouldn't let go of all these things and commit his life to Jesus they can't believe it so much so that they begin asking Jesus well who then can be saved who can get into heaven if he can't get into heaven who can if this rich young man who's an exemplary person he's a good person he's an upstanding member of the community if he can't get into heaven because he's a good person then who can and we're told that Jesus looked at them verse 27

[23 : 32] Jesus looked at them Jesus has been looking at everyone he looked at the rich young man and loved him but now he looks at his own disciples and he says with men it is impossible but not with God for all with God all things are possible and what Jesus was saying is that it's impossible to get to heaven without God it's impossible to get to heaven without God that might seem like an obvious thing to say but that's what all the other religions seem to forget because they all think that the only way to get to heaven is to climb the ladder of good works and as long as we're a good person and all our good works outweigh all our sins then God will let us into heaven but you know my unconverted friend if that's your view of salvation if that's if you think that that's the way to get into heaven that it's all about good works and being a good person and being an upstanding member in the community and hoping that our good works will outweigh our bad works if that's the way you think that you'll get to heaven then Jesus is saying to you tonight stop you're going the wrong way you're going the wrong way because Jesus as he says to us in the gospel

I am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the father no one can get into heaven except through me and so my friend it's impossible to get to heaven on good works can I make that clear it's impossible to get to heaven on outward forms of religion it's impossible to get to heaven by being a good person it's impossible to make you to pay your way into heaven it's impossible to get to heaven by sitting in church it's impossible to get to heaven by just reading your bible morning and evening it's impossible to get to heaven without God because Jesus faith in Jesus Christ is the only way and you must come to this

Jesus for salvation dependent upon what he has done on the cross not what you've done dependent upon what he has done you must come to this Jesus and just throw your arms wide open and cry to him for mercy saying like the publican God be merciful to me a sinner that's how you must come to him because he's the only way to heaven he's the only way to heaven if you're going any other way Jesus is saying to you tonight you're going the wrong way you're going the wrong way but there's one more view of salvation that's going the wrong way and it's a self-righteous view of salvation we've seen that the rich young man had a superficial view of salvation salvation the disciples had a surprising view of salvation but lastly and briefly Peter had a self-righteous view of salvation a self-righteous view of salvation

Peter says in verse 28 Peter began to say to him see we have left everything and followed you we have left everything and followed you like all the other disciples Peter had been listening intently to this conversation between Jesus and the rich young man but whilst he was listening to Jesus Peter seemed to be getting more and more restless because if Peter had understood Jesus correctly Peter thought that Jesus said that there's nothing you can do for God in order to get to heaven there's nothing we can do he says to inherit eternal life and so Peter he concludes that if it's impossible to get to heaven by good works and by being a good person Peter concludes and he says well what's the point in sacrificing everything for God which is why Peter he has this outburst and he says well we've left everything to follow you and the disciples had they'd left their nets they'd left their tax booths they'd left their homes they'd left their families and they'd left even their income to follow

Jesus but as Peter listens to Jesus and he can't believe what he's been hearing he asks he's asking does anything of what we've done for you count towards going to heaven do any of our good works count and Jesus says salvation salvation is all of grace and you know with this we have to see that Peter he actually had the mind of a Pharisee because he thought that he could get to heaven by faith plus good works he thought that he would get to heaven by his faithfulness to Jesus and the fact that he had given up everything to follow Jesus and what's remarkable is that even as a disciple of Jesus even as a Christian he has a self righteous view of salvation and Jesus is saying to Peter you're going the wrong way you're going the wrong way Peter was acting he was acting you could say like the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son we all know the parable of the prodigal son a wonderful parable where the prodigal son he's the younger brother who takes his father's inheritance and he squanders it in the far off land and he squanders it on reckless living but when the prodigal returns home the father he graciously welcomes his son with open arms that's what salvation is it's all of grace he welcomes him but the older brother the older self righteous brother he's furious he's furious and he comes to his father and he says to his father all these years

[30 : 02] I've been serving you and yet I have not transgressed your commandment and yet you never gave me a young goat and the father says to him son you are always with me and all that I have is yours and that's what Jesus is trying to remind Peter Peter already has his inheritance you don't need to work for it you already have your inheritance Jesus is reminding Peter you already have an inheritance that is incorruptible undefiled that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you and he tells Peter that what he's done for the name of Jesus and for the sake of the gospel it's not worthless but Jesus says you have your reward in heaven for your faithfulness but that's not what gets you to heaven that's not what gets you there you only get there by grace alone you only get there by faith in Jesus Christ it's not by self righteous acts it's not by what we give it's not by how much we serve or how much we do for

Jesus that's not what gets us into heaven no all these things they should be an expression of our love for Jesus and our love for the gospel what we do for Jesus what we do for the church what we do in the name of Jesus for the gospel it shouldn't be done out of guilt or of favors or of the approval of others or even the approval of God all our service to Jesus Christ should be done out of love with a heart of service and a heart of submission to Jesus because as Jesus says the sacrifices which we make in this life as a disciple as a Christian they are nothing they are nothing in comparison to the eternal value of heaven but then Jesus gives this little riddle right at the end of verse 31 many who are first will be last and the last first and what

Jesus means here is that in order to be his disciple and in order to experience through salvation we must humble ourselves and receive salvation as a gift conceding that faith in Jesus Christ alone is the only way to heaven you know what Jesus is saying is that the only way to be saved is to hold out your hands and ask Jesus to be saved it's as simple as that and that when you've asked Jesus you confess him as your Lord and your saviour and you live in light of that confession that if he's your Lord if you've asked him to save you then you walk every day confessing Jesus is my Lord my friend there is nothing that you can do to save yourself you can only ask Jesus to save you and if you think that by works or by doing good or being a good person will get you into heaven

Jesus is saying to you again tonight you're going you're going the wrong way and if you're going the wrong way you need to turn back and you need to turn to Jesus because Jesus is the way the truth and the life and no one can get to heaven except through him no one can get to heaven except through him and my question I want to leave you with is not is how to get to heaven but will I see you in heaven will I see you there and the only way to ensure that I see you there is that you come to this Jesus and you commit your life to him and you follow him every day of your life by walking with him and looking to him and loving him you make sure that this

Jesus is your Lord and Saviour for time and for eternity may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray O Lord our gracious God may give thanks to thee that thy word gives us direction and that even when we're going the wrong way and that when we're on the broad road that this Jesus comes to us so graciously and so lovingly and that he tells us that we're going the wrong way and that he points us to himself and he says I am the way the truth and the life no man comes to the father except through me and Lord that we would come to him because he invites us to come that we would come to him on bended knee because he asks us to to come to him knowing that he's king confessing him as saviour acknowledging him as lord and knowing that without him we will not experience or receive eternal life

[35 : 27] Lord bless thy word to us we pray lead us and guide us we ask direct us in thy paths we plead for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of psalm 25 psalm 25 in the Scottish Psalter page 231 psalm 25 we're singing from verse 4 down to the verse 7 another psalm that emphasizes the way the ways that the Lord is able to direct us and even to teach us and that's the prayer of verse 4 of psalm 25 where the psalmist David he says show me thy ways O Lord thy paths so teach thou me and do thou lead me in thy truth therein my teacher be for thou art

God that does to me salvation send and I upon thee all the day expecting do attend thy tender mercies Lord I pray thee to remember and loving kindnesses for they have been of old forever my sins and faults of youth do thou O Lord forget after thy mercy think on me and for thy goodness great so we'll sing these verses in conclusion of Psalm 25 to God's praise show me thy ways O Lord thy path so teach thou me unto thou lead me and thy truth ■■■■■■■■■■ might thee come far to me

God can Light us Joy him And the Lord help heek Pere çoc■ sa Upon thee all the day, expecting to attend.

Thy tender mercies, Lord, I pray thee to remember.

And loving kindnesses for thee have been of hope forever.

[38 : 49] My sins and faults of youth do thou, O Lord, forget.

After thy mercy, take on me and for thy goodness.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen.