



BEYOND A HOLY LIFE

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We're going to look at a man who was very enthusiastic for the things of God. A man who truly wanted to live right. What is your goal as a believer? Is it to live holy, to live right? If so, you will see yourself in this man.

And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (Mark 10:17 ff KJV) A young man comes running to Jesus. He has the opportunity to talk with Jesus, and he doesn't want to miss it. He is some kind of ruler, (see Luke 18:18) but he kneels before Jesus, acknowledging Him as Master.

Here's a man who wants to connect with God. He wants God to speak to him. And he comes enthusiastic, expectant, open and willing. "Jesus, you are my Lord and Master, I want you to speak to me..." Is that your attitude also, today?

He wants to know what to do to inherit eternal life. In other words, how to be saved and how to live holy.

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. ¹⁹Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. ²⁰And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. This good, principled young ruler who has been obeying God since his youth continues to seek to live a holy life.

²¹Then Jesus beholding him loved him... Jesus loves this man. Jesus beholds him, gazing at him, drinking in his upright character and holy desire. And Jesus loves him, because he sees the man's genuine desire to honor the Father.

²¹Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. There is something more this man must do. He is already living a holy life. But now he must follow Jesus. He must leave everything behind, take up the cross, and follow this man, Jesus Christ.

Until now he has honored God with his lifestyle. Now Jesus calls him to go further. To be with Jesus wherever He goes. And to pay whatever price is necessary to make this possible.

Jesus is a person. He is not a set of principles to try to live by. He is not a book to learn inside out. He is a person. And here He calls this young ruler to follow Him, the person, Jesus Christ.

What was the man's question to Jesus? *Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ¹⁸And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.* Jesus said this because being a child of God is about more than just being good. This man's focus is on being holy, being righteous. That shows his noble character. But God wants more! The man needs to go beyond just doing everything right. He needs to go beyond a holy life. He needs to identify with Jesus by leaving all, and following Him wherever He goes.

We have been saved. God has made us holy new creations and we give outward expression to that holiness as our minds are renewed and we obey God daily. That is sanctification. We're saved and sanctified. **Just like the young man, Jesus beholds us and loves us.**

But He wants us to go beyond just being saved and sanctified. He wants us to go beyond simply seeking to live an upright life. He wants us to follow Him wherever He goes. Jesus is not a lifestyle. He is a person. He wants us to know Him and follow Him. Wherever He goes, He wants us to be with Him.



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²²And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. This holy, enthusiastic young man, who ran to Jesus just a few minutes ago and threw himself at His feet, now turns away and leaves, sad. Holiness is not enough; Jesus is calling him to follow Him. And there is a cost in this which the young man is not willing to pay.

We have talked about salvation and sanctification. Praise God for those things. But they are not enough. We have to go on to follow Jesus. **God did not adopt us as His children just to save and sanctify us. He adopted us so that we could be with Jesus wherever He is.** It was good that the rich young ruler obeyed the commandments and honored God with his lifestyle. But that was not God's ultimate purpose for him. Jesus wanted him to follow Him, to be united with Him, and this meant he had to let go of whatever was necessary to be able to follow. It was going to cost him. And for him, the cost was too much.

Jesus calls you to move beyond your salvation and sanctification, and to follow Him wherever He goes. To be with Him, day by day, hour by hour, wherever He goes. There is always a cost involved in this.

What is your cost? The young ruler had to sell all he had and give to the poor. Your cost may be different. But it always means letting go of whatever is necessary, in order to follow. At times the cost may be in outward things. Most of the time it has to do with areas of your heart where God calls you to let go and follow. Will you walk away sad like the young man? Or will you open your heart and follow?

²³And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁴And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. ²⁶And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? Why were the disciples astonished? Because we all have riches. The poorest person on the face of the planet has riches. Areas in the heart where we take refuge and want to see and do things our way. Hideouts and strongholds and palaces in our hearts where we seek to hide away from God and His will for our lives. Those are our riches. And the disciples knew just how difficult it is to let go of them.

²⁷And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. Are we new creations? Does the Spirit of God live inside us? Then it is possible for us to let go of whatever is necessary and follow Jesus.

The disciples paid the price, and discovered that there is a reward.

²⁸Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. ²⁹And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, ³⁰But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. ³¹But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

When we follow Jesus, there is a cost, and there is a reward. Be encouraged by that.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last first. Following Jesus means letting Him deal with our hearts, so we can be in union with Him. Many people seem to be giving up lots of things, doing a lot for God and "following Jesus" in outward ways, but they are not allowing God to deal with their hearts. They are seemingly first but will be last.

Then there are those who outwardly do not seem to be achieving much, maybe they are struggling in different ways, do not have it all together, seem weak, and fumble around trying to find the will of God; but in their hearts they are following Jesus and wanting to be united with Him in all things. They are the “last” who will be first.

³²And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him. ³³Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: ³⁴And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

The young man turns away sad, but the disciples continue to follow. Jesus is pressing on ahead, and they are following. Where is Jesus leading them? To Jerusalem. They’re afraid. Sometimes we’re also afraid when we follow Jesus. So He takes them aside to explain to them what’s going to happen. (Sometimes we so wish Jesus would tell us what is going to happen as we follow Him!) Unfortunately, His words to the disciples don’t seem very encouraging. He says, “We go to Jerusalem” (in other words, you are coming with Me) “where I will be tortured and killed.”

As we follow Jesus, He leads us at times to Jerusalem. There are areas in our lives that have to die. And there are things He calls for, that cost us. But notice what He says next, “*the third day I will rise again.*” He leads us to a place of death so that life can come forth. It’s hard to be encouraged by that when you are still this side of Jerusalem. But as we follow Jesus, there is always a third day; there is always a resurrection. When you follow Jesus and are afraid as He takes you down roads you do not wish to go, remember, ***there will be a glorious third day.***

The young man came running to Jesus, eager to hear him and learn how better to order his life of holiness. Jesus told him that he needed to let go of all and follow Him. God wanted more from him than simply a holy life. The young man went away sad.

The disciples went on with Jesus- to Jerusalem. To a place of death, followed by glorious, glorious life.

The young man seemed to be one of the “first.” He lived and ordered and upright life. But at the end of the day, he didn’t want to follow Jesus. On the other hand, the disciples had a bunch of problems and needy areas in their lives. For example, if we keep reading, we see that immediately after this event, James and John began to try to vie for positions of authority in the kingdom of God (Mark 11:35-37.) They had many problems and a lot to learn. But the important thing is that they followed Jesus. And they went down in history as men who came to know their God and do great exploits in Him (compare Daniel 11:32.)

Meanwhile the young ruler didn’t go down in history. **He was left behind with his upright life, but nothing more.** He was left with his riches, but nothing of eternal value. The disciples gathered much eternal treasure. The difference was that they continued following Jesus, while the young ruler went his own way.

The young ruler, despite his ordered and upright life, is one of the “first” who will be last. The disciples, despite all their struggles and problems, are some of the “last” who will be first.

Who will you go with? With the young ruler? Or with the disciples? Like the young ruler, are you content to seek to live an upright life and leave it at that? Will you remain in the comfort of your salvation and the security of your sanctified conduct? Or like the needy disciples, do you desire to know your God and follow Jesus into the glorious third day? Will you leave your riches behind and press forth to follow Jesus, to be with Him wherever He is?

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“IF ANYONE THIRST, LET THEM COME TO ME AND DRINK”- JESUS
(JOHN 7:37)