



# SESSION 3

## EVERYONE NEEDS JESUS

**BIBLE STORY:** The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)

**SOME PEOPLE SAY:** Being a good person gets you into heaven.

**GOD SAYS:** Everyone sins and needs a Savior.

**TODAY'S POINT:** Everyone needs Jesus.

**THEME VERSE:** Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. *Romans 12:2*

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. *Romans 12:2 (KJV)*

**BONUS VERSE:** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. *Romans 3:23-24*

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. *Romans 3:23-24 (KJV)*

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

We all want to relate to each other. We may connect around things we experienced growing up or where we went to school. We try to relate around the behavior of our children or grandchildren. We find common hobbies to bond over. Once we can find something in common with someone, we feel like we've made a connection.

While we all come from different backgrounds, there's one thing that absolutely every person has in common. We are all sinners and in need of a Savior. The word *sin* means to disobey God. God has a perfect standard, and we have all fallen short of that standard. We have stepped outside of the boundaries we discussed in Session 1. No matter how hard we may try, we are unable to meet the requirements needed to live without sin. Jesus, however, is aware of this and makes Himself available to us even in our sin.

Today's study allows us to peer into a conversation between Jesus and a rich young ruler who thought he had fully followed God's commands. He seemed to believe that he was good enough for heaven. We will see their exchange and the calling that Jesus offered the young man. Our goal is to better understand this encounter so that we do not make the same mistake that the rich young ruler did.

## **THE ENCOUNTER (MARK 10:17)**

Our story begins with an encounter between Jesus and a young man with an amazing question. We can learn from the actions of both people in this story. The first thing that we see is that Jesus is open to us approaching Him as we are, imperfections and all. As we have already stated, we are all sinners and in need of the Savior. Jesus is aware of this fact and allows us to approach Him from that place. The rich young ruler was soon to hear the fact that he too was a sinner. Yet, Jesus allowed the young man to approach Him to ask Him a question.

All too often we wrongly conclude that we need to get cleaned up before we can approach Jesus. This simply is not the case, and this passage reflects this truth. Jesus was aware of the young man's sin, and He is aware of our sin too. If we had to clean up our lifestyle first, then Jesus would not have allowed this encounter to happen.

We also learn that Jesus is open to our questions. The young man had a profound question and he believed that Jesus was the One to ask. Jesus did not brush him or his question aside. Instead, Jesus engaged the young man.

What questions do you have for Jesus today? Do you have the same question as the rich young ruler? Is something else on your mind? Based on this story, you can know for sure that Jesus is approachable and open to your questions.

One other thing we see in this verse is the posture of the young man when he approached Jesus. The Bible says that he ran up and knelt before Jesus. To kneel before someone is to actively show submission to that individual. The actions of this young man were correct. He did need to submit to Jesus. We would be wise to parrot this action when we come to Jesus with our questions.

## **THE EXCHANGE (MARK 10:18-20)**

Jesus began to answer the young man's question by pointing back to part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The Ten Commandments can be broken down into two groups, both of which center on relationships. The first group of commands teaches how we can relate to God and the second group teaches how we can relate to each other. Jesus pointed the young man toward the second group.

It is important to point out that Jesus said that the young man knew the commands. This tells us that he had a religious background. Someone must have taught him these things. But evidently, simply knowing what was found in Scripture did not bring him the hope of eternal life. If this is true for the rich young ruler, then it is true for us as well. We need to do more than know about Jesus and the things taught in the Bible to have eternal life.

The young man said that he had kept all these commands since his youth. He was telling Jesus that he had, in fact, done everything right. But just to be sure, and possibly to get a bit of public affirmation, he approached Jesus with his question about eternal life. But he also seemed to know that something was missing. Otherwise, he would never have approached Christ with his question about eternal life.

## **THE CALLING (MARK 10:21-22)**

The Bible says, "Looking at him, Jesus loved him." "Looking at him" uses a version of the verb that indicates intensity, showing that Jesus examined the rich young ruler very closely, and still loved him. This clearly shows the heart of the Savior. Even when we are stuck in our sin and shame, Jesus loves us.

Jesus knew that this young man had not lived out the commands to perfection as he had claimed. Yet, Jesus still loved him. The same can be said about us too. Even if we think that we are good enough to get into heaven, Jesus knows this is not true and loves us anyway.

The love that Jesus had for this man led Jesus to call him to something much greater than any possession the young man had. Jesus called the man to follow Him. The word *follow* indicates to become a follower or disciple of a teacher. He called the man to a life of following Him.

But Jesus asked one more thing: for the young man to leave his wealth behind. It is important to understand that a person does not have to sell all his things to get to heaven. Jesus knew that the rich young ruler cared more about his things than he did about following Jesus. Jesus knew the heart of the young man and He called the man to set aside his sin and follow Him.

The man had a strong reaction to Jesus' words. Commentators say *dismayed* means "shocked" or "appalled." This request was more than he was willing to give. So he left, "grieving," and chose his wealth over a relationship with Jesus.

Our desire to have great wealth may not be what stands between us and Jesus. But the Bible says that everyone has standing between himself and God. The only question is whether we choose to keep that thing or to embrace Jesus' calling.

Jesus called this man to a relationship with Himself, and He still calls people to relationship with Himself today. But we cannot come to Jesus thinking we can be "good enough" to get to heaven. Nor can we set the terms of the relationship, keeping whatever we want from our old lives. Instead, we must come to Him on His terms, acknowledging our sin and need for Him. We need to ask Him to search our hearts, show us what stands between us and Him, and then pray for the faith to give God first place in our lives and truly follow Him.

### **OUR HOPE (MARK 10:23-27)**

As this incident came to an end, Jesus clarified a few things for the disciples. He used the camel, the largest animal in Palestine, to illustrate the impossibility of entering God's kingdom for someone reliant on earthly riches. The disciples were astonished at the words of Jesus and asked who can be saved. Jesus, still willing to answer questions, said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27).

Commentators point out that the disciples may have believed that riches were a sign of God's favor, based on the teachings of Deuteronomy 28:1-14. If this was their belief, then the rich man must have seemed closer to the kingdom of heaven than anyone. If it was impossible for him to enter, how could anyone? But Jesus provided them with a hope on which to rest. "All things are possible with God." And God sent Jesus to make it possible for all people to be saved.

If our hope for eternity is placed on ourselves and our religious behaviors, like the rich young ruler, then we will be tremendously disappointed in the end. If, however, we place our hope in the finished work of Jesus, then we are placing our hope in God. And all things are possible with Him.

### **QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION:**

- The actions of Jesus reveal that He is open to our questions. How should that affect how we answer the questions of others about God, Jesus, and the Bible?
- We see in this story that even though the rich young ruler believed himself to be good enough to go to heaven, Jesus revealed his heart. Is there anything in your own heart standing between you and a relationship with Jesus?