

Simple Faith

Key Verse: *“Then 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.”*
—Mark 10:21

Selected Scripture:
Mark 10:17-31

THE FOCUS OF TODAY’S

lesson is a young man from a wealthy Jewish family who inquired of Jesus, “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17) Jesus did not immediately answer the question, but first prepared the young man for proper understanding. He asked him why he called him “good,” because God is the only one who is truly good. (vs. 18) This answer points out that there is only one standard of goodness—that which is represented by God the Father. Although it was not wrong to call Jesus “good,” the man must recognize first the divine standard. Then he could properly appreciate Jesus as an approved teacher of God.

Jesus next directed the young man’s attention to the Law, asking him if he had kept its various commandments. (vs. 19) Some may ask why Jesus did not answer as we might today—“confess your inability to keep the Law perfectly, believe on Christ Jesus as the one who redeemed you, and make a full consecration of your life to the Lord.” We answer that such a statement was not yet due to be fully proclaimed, as the Law Covenant was still in force. Jesus had not yet fulfilled it, “nailing it to his cross.” (Col. 2:14) Thus, he properly directed the

young man's attention to the Law, showing that the way to eternal life was by keeping its commands.

Later, the New Testament teaches what the Jews, as a people, failed to discern. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. 3:20) The purpose of the Law was, first of all, to test Jesus and demonstrate his perfection by the fact that he was able to keep it. Secondly, it was to prove to the Jews, and to all men, the impossibility of anyone except a perfect man fulfilling the terms of that covenant.

When the young man answered, "all these have I observed from my youth," Jesus looked lovingly upon him. (Mark 10:20) He saw that this man was far above many as to his nobility of character. Yet, the Lord realized he had been blinded by the customs of the time, and failed to show love and care for the many poor all about him. So he gently reminded him of this fact by responding as stated in the words of our Key Verse.

Here was the answer the young man needed, and which could assist him in developing the simple faith necessary to inherit eternal life. Every Jew ready and willing to thus sacrifice his earthly "treasures" and become a follower of Jesus would be accounted worthy of transfer from the house of "servants" under Moses to the house of "sons" under Christ. (Heb. 3:5,6) The young man, however, so full of confidence a few moments before, found that the Master had probed his heart in its most vulnerable spot. He did not have sufficient love for God and for his fellows. "He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."—Mark 10:22

Jesus then turned to his disciples, telling them how hard it is "for them that trust in riches" to enter into the kingdom of God. (vss. 23-27) Let us remember these words of simple faith, and lay up for ourselves "treasures in heaven. . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matt. 6:20,21 ■