

**MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, 3500 Edwards Mill Road, Raleigh, NC 27612**  
**NEWS & EVENTS – August 2022**

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*18 A ruler questioned Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 20 "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" 21 And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth." 22 When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." 23 But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. 24 And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God." (Luke 18:18-30)*

*Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* A really good question for a really good God.

To put it another way it might sound like, *What can I do to inherit your estate?* Consider some child or grandchild asking this question. Or some nephew or niece making this bold presumption of an uncle or aunt. Although these relatives are more distantly related than a child to a father, the question is no more presumptive in either case. What is really seems to be implied is *what can I do to earn your favor so I can be included in your will?* Sounds like another self-focused scenario. The question being asked is prefaced with a complimentary comment. *Good Teacher* reveals that the ruler operates with an agenda. And flattering Jesus might be what it takes to justify himself as deserving of eternal life. If only he can find out what he should do to earn it. This is the mind of a natural man seeking spiritual things. A man's prayers can sound a lot like that.

In some respects, it can be possible to understand the mind of God. But not with an earthly mind. We cannot open the door to eternal life with our earthly effort. Nothing we can do or think will help us gain eternal life. We cannot attain it by the power of our will. Any earthly estate is not acquired in the same way as an eternal inheritance is bestowed. But we *can* surely inherit eternal life. It's a gift from God to a child of God. A child of God is included in the will of God to inherit eternal life. Here lies the conflict of the wills. The ruler is rich with many worldly goods. But no goodness in his life will merit him worthy of eternal life. To receive eternal life, you must know who has the power to grant it. The ruler's best opportunity to receive eternal life was to know who he was talking to! He was asking a really good question to a really good God! Jesus is implying that you shouldn't call Him *good* unless you can call Him *God*. Then you will know that the Lord Jesus holds the gift of eternal life in trust for those who trust Him to believe. The ruler is distressed and depressed when he is given God's solution to his good question. He can only gain eternal life as a gift when he releases all that holds him in its power. Only when he is willing to sell the possessions that possess him and will he be free to follow Jesus.

Here is the teaching from a really good God. While it is really hard for the wealthy to enter the kingdom of God, it's not impossible. If the rich man is able to release the wealth that holds him in its grip, then the possible only becomes possible with God. Following Jesus leads us to God's kingdom but not when we are loaded down with worldly wealth. Treasure in heaven is stored up by sacrificial obedience to Christ. The goal of the really good question is not the self-effort of attaining eternal life, but receiving what God has provided. The disciples were not rich men. They had left what they valued as precious to follow Jesus. That kind of sacrifice is precious to God. When we want to follow Jesus more than we want to remain with anything else, God honors that. To follow Jesus into the Kingdom of God we must be Spirit-Born and not earthbound. To gain eternal life, we must be born again...or we will never see the Kingdom of God. If we want to spend eternity with a really good God, we can follow Jesus. And we can begin to possess eternal life with Him, even in this realm. Eternal life begins with Jesus, the Good Teacher. Learn to live out the lessons He teaches. Learn to follow Jesus into the Kingdom. We can't get there on our own. You can only get there from here when we begin the journey with Jesus. It's never too late to start the journey.

Blessings to you,  
Pastor Sam