

**How Do I Get to Heaven?**

1. **Not by Trusting Self**
2. **Not by Trusting Wealth**

*Introduction*

- How do I get to heaven? Imp qstn all have to ask, bec someday all die, all meet maker; all need know: how heaven? That's qstn man in lesson asked; said to Jesus, **vs. 17b** (What must...). IOW, how heaven? Problem is: so many misundstngs, false notions re how get heaven, who gets heaven, who doesn't, why don't, why some do. That's what makes today's lesson so imp: Jesus helps this man (and us) understand wrong answers, and right answer, to that all-imp quest: how heaven?

*Not by Trusting Self*

- Man in today's Gospel was on mission to find out; **vs. 17a**; on knees, begs Jesus to tell: **vs. 17b**; how heaven? Jesus starts by quoting from 10 Coms (murder, adultery, steal). This was man's response: **vs. 20**. Which makes you say: really, seriously? Kept all coms? Sure re that? Never disobd parents, hated, lusted, lied – never? Really? Serious? See man's problem? Not being honest with himself; thinking too highly of himself; focusing on self – trusting in self. Every time he speaks, it's just: **"I"** (**vs. 17; 20**). I, I, I – "Jesus, I'm good person; I've done right things; I deserve eternal life; and now I want know what I need do to get it." He was trusting in self.
- But can't get to heaven by trusting in yourself, bec your very self is corrupted by sin. And God says can't get to heaven unless have no sin. So when you look at coms (like this guy), and trust in self, and think, "No problem; I've kept these coms" – really you're just deceiving self. Remem what Jesus in **Mk 7**: **"It is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed,"** whole host other sins. Come from here: from sinful, unhealthy heart – which we all have, bec we've inherited it from our parents, going all way back to A&E. Called original sin; you're born with it. From moment born, you act on it; disobey God in countless ways. And if you ignore that, or minimize, or compare self to others you think worse, or even if just convince yourself that you're pretty good, pretty morally decent person, well, then, John: **"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"** (**1 Jn 1:8**). Truth is that, no matter how good you may think you are, you cannot save self, bec your sin stands as barrier between you and God. That's why can't get to heaven by trusting self.

*Not by Trusting Wealth*

- Nor can you get heaven by trusting wealth. This man very wealthy. So when Jesus said **vs. 21cd**, it says, **vs. 22**. And not wrong to have great wealth: God gave great wealth to Abraham, Job, Nicodemus. And not like Jesus commands all people, all time to sell all their possessions, live in poverty: discs owned boats/nets, Peter house – weren't told sell. But danger of having great wealth: can easily become the god in which we trust. Money/possessions/wealth have way of knocking God off top spot in our hearts, becoming the idol we worship. That's what happened this man: money became his god; couldn't let go of it; trusted wealth instead of God. That's why Jesus says to him: if want follow me, first got to go, sell everything you own. Jesus trying destroy money-god in heart.
- And that's what Jesus wants do to you, too: wants to destroy money-god in your heart. Would you consider yourself wealthy person? Maybe not, if envisioning Warren Buffet billionaire type. But when consider luxuries you enjoy in this country & at this time history, luxs which far surpass what most other humans have enjoyed for most of history of world, and which still far surpass what many people in world enjoy today – yeah, I'd say we're wealthy! So Jesus' warning re wealth needs to resonate with us, too. Money is dangerous; it will destroy your faith when it becomes your god. Jesus once said: **"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you**

will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money” (Mt 6:24). Paul echoed that warning in 1 Tim 6: “Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim 6:9-10). And here in this Gospel, Jesus: vs. 23b, 25 (real camel, literal needle-eye). Impossible! When you let money become your idol and you trust in your wealth, it is impossible to get to heaven.

#### *But by Trusting Jesus*

- So, back to question at hand: how heaven? **What must do inherit eter life?** Or as discs: vs. 26b – Can anyone? Truly impossible? Well, if you trust in self/wealth, then yes, Jesus: vs. 27a; vs. 27b. How heaven? Not by trusting self/wealth; but by trusting Jesus as my Savior.
- Don’t miss this small detail in reading: vs. 21a. Jesus loved this man, wanted him be saved. Jesus loves you, too; wants you be in heaven. And so Jesus became your Savior. Actually did obey all the coms he listed earlier; kept them perfectly, so he actually could say vs. 20b. Jesus was perfectly sinless; earned heaven (something we could never do). But instead of keeping for self, gives heaven to you/me, as free gift of his grace, bec loves us! And that love drove Jesus to cross to pay for all our sins: including our sins of greed, coveting, money loving. For all times we made money our idol and trusted wealth instead of God, Jesus covered those sins with blood shed on cross. That’s what makes Jesus our Savior: loves us, died on cross to forgive our sins, and now gives us heaven as gift of his grace. That’s how we get to heaven: not by trusting self/wealth, but by trusting Jesus as our Savior.
- And that’s what Jesus was trying teach this man. Notice: this man never called Jesus “Savior;” called him “**good teacher.**” And Jesus didn’t like being called “good teacher” (vs. 18) bec that’s all the man thought of him as: only as a good teacher, not as his Savior from sin. But you will never make it to heaven unless you trust in Jesus as your Savior from sin.
- After this rich man went away sad, never hear from him again; never told if he came to faith. I’d like to believe he thought long/hard re this incident, stopped trusting in self/wealth, and came to see Jesus as more than just teacher but actually as his Savior. But we just don’t know. What we do know, however: trusting in self/wealth will never get you into heaven. Only by trusting in Jesus and in his sacrifice on cross can we inherit eternal life. That’s how we get to heaven!

#### **Mark 10:17-27**

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>18</sup> “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.’”

<sup>20</sup> “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

<sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

<sup>22</sup> At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

<sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>26</sup> The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”