



World Christian Fellowship

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Jesus and Eternal life!

Matthew 19:16-22

Matthew 19:16-22, *Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"* ¹⁷ *So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."* ¹⁸ *He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'* ¹⁹ *'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* " ²⁰ *The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"* ²¹ *Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."* ²² *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

Sharing Jesus Christ to someone and that person prays a sinner's prayer with you

Or someone is led to Christ by you,

When you see no change in their life, nothing really happens differently, and they never ever connect with the church. It doesn't make any sense at all.

If you have been struggling with why that happens, then I think you are going to find the answer in this passage.

Luke 14:33, *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

Salvation is not for people who pray a prayer necessarily, or people who think they need Jesus Christ. Salvation is for people who forsake all. There is an abandonment of everything in genuine salvation.

There was a test.

On the one hand, he had his possessions.

On the other hand, there was Jesus Christ.

He had to make a choice.

Because he was unwilling to forsake all.

He never could be a disciple of Christ.

Salvation is for those who forsake everything.

V 16, the young man poses a question related to eternal life.

How to obtain eternal life?

The term “eternal life” is used about **50 times** in Scripture. In all that we endeavor to do, we try to get people to want eternal life, to seek eternal life, to receive eternal life.

John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

We pray, study, plan, strategize, and develop methods to try to get people to receive eternal life.

But here comes a young man who walks right up and asks Jesus the very question.

Most of our work in evangelism is to get somebody to this point. We got to say “Believe, sign the card, raise your hand, walk the aisle, do whatever.”

When the young man walked up and asked the question, he jumped over the whole process of normal pre-evangelism effort.

Whereas here he walked up and asked Jesus the question about eternal life.

This is not an unfamiliar question to the Lord. It appears on several occasions in the New Testament, not only asked by this young man, but also asked by a lawyer.

In **John 6**, asked by a group of people, essentially the same question: *“How do you get eternal life?”*

All our evangelistic efforts are basically to bring someone to that point.

When they seek eternal life, it can be given to them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is ready. But the amazing thing is he goes away without ever receiving eternal life.

Reason?

He goes away because he is not willing to forsake everything.

Jesus set up an insurmountable barrier for the man. Instead of taking him where he was and just getting him to make the “decision,” Jesus stops him dead in his tracks and makes it impossible for him to get saved on those terms, which he had already come to.

What kind of evangelism is this?

Jesus would have failed the evangelism class.

He doesn’t know how to get closure.

He doesn’t know how to draw the net.

He doesn’t know how to sign the guy up.

We have so many contemporary, unbiblical modes of evangelism. Our mass evangelism with its decisions, statistics,

and its aisle-walking, and its “hurry up and come to Jesus,” and “just believe and there’s nothing else” kind of approach is leading all kinds of people into the delusion that they are saved. In fact, they are not.

How do you obtain eternal life?

V 16, Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

He knew what he wanted.

You cannot come seeking something if you don’t know you want it.

One ought to know what they seek before they can seek it.

He wanted eternal life.

He knew he didn’t have it.

He had a lot of things, but he didn’t have eternal life.

1. He knew what he wanted.

V 20, He was young.

V 22, He was rich. Had great possessions.

Luke 18:18 that he was a ruler. Most likely he was a ruler of the synagogue.

He was a Jewish religious leader devout, honest, in terms of his relationship to Judaism.

Young, wealthy, prominent, influential. Very rare that a young man would be a ruler of a synagogue.

As far as the culture of his day, the religious environment of his day, he had everything.

V 16, *Now behold,*

We would say in our vernacular, “Could you believe this young ruler came to Jesus wanting eternal life who is a devout Jew who was a religious man, who is a ruler of a synagogue, who is influential, prominent.

It was amazing that he would come and admit that he didn’t have eternal life.

- He had not found the reality to put his soul at rest.
- He had not found a confident permanent peace, joy, and settled hope.
- He was coming on the grounds of a felt need.
- There was restlessness in his heart.
- There was an anxiety in his heart.
- There was a sense of being unfulfilled.

He knew what was missing: eternal life.

How did he know?

The Jews understood eternal life.

They understood that term or that concept.

Definition:

Life means the ability to respond to your environment.

Look at a dead person and see how well they respond.

Eternal life means the ability to permanently respond to your environment.

Eternal life carries with it the divine environment.

In physical life, we can respond to a physical environment.

In eternal life, we have the ability to respond to the divine environment.

We respond to the life of God.

When we are saved, we enter into the heavenlies.

Our citizenship takes on a divine character.

We come alive to God, and that's unending.

But it is a quality of existence, not a quantity of existence.

- I am sensitive to God, that I can respond to God.
- Before I was saved, I was dead in sin, utterly unresponsive to the divine environment.
- When I became a Christian, I became capable of responding to the divine environment.

- I shall always be capable of responding to the divine environment.

The Jews thought of it as the life of the age to come. This young man knew that he did not have the ability to fully respond to the divine environment.

He knew that he did not have the ability to fully respond to God. He wasn't sensing God's love, God's rest, God's peace, God's hope, God's joy, the security of belonging to God. He knew that he did not possess the divine life.

He knew that he didn't have in his soul the life of God.

Apostle John uses the word **zōē 34 times**, and every time he uses it in his writing, it always means the life principle itself which makes us spiritually alive.

So eternal life is not just long-time living, eternal life is a quality of existence which allows us to be alive to the world that God dwells in. It allows us to possess the very life of God.

It is that life which is the result of the new birth.

Nicodemus was born into a new life, a new dimension of living in which he was alive to God. That life is unaffected by death which only transfers us fully into the heavenly world.

Now the rich young ruler knew that he didn't have the life of God in his soul.

He knew that he really didn't sense God fully.

He knew that he didn't walk with God.

He knew he didn't commune with God.

So, he was very perceptive.

He had gone beyond the Pharisees in his own system who were content with their own musings and praying to themselves. He was not. He knew it was a quality of life which he missed.

There are people who know they don't have eternal life, but they also don't feel any need for it.

They know they are not alive to God, but they really don't care to be alive to God.

They know they don't sense the divine dimension.

They don't have the full confidence of security in the life to come, the great settled hope that comes to believers.

They aren't that interested in it.

They are not desperate enough to really want what they don't have.

He not only knew what he wanted, but he felt deeply the want of it.

2. Urgency in seeking.

V 16, *Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”*

He doesn't have any prefaces, he doesn't warm up, he just blurts it out.

V 20, *The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”*

He has gone through all the things and done religiously. What do I still lack?

A certain amount of frustration, unfulfillment, and anxiety.

The cry of a heart that feels a need. “I want this thing.”

- He has lived an exemplary life outwardly.
- He has avoided outward sins.
- He tells all those laws that he supposedly thinks he had kept.
- He is moral.
- He is religious.
- He is strong in heart to conform to the standards of his religion.
- He is a leader in terms of the eyes of the people.

Yet he was unsatisfied.

He knows that it's eternal life that he lacks, and he wants to know how to get it, and there is a real felt need deep in his heart. There is a vacuum there.

What a tremendous prospect he is!

3. To seek diligently.

You have a person who knows what they don't have, wants it, He is willing to seek Jesus.

Jesus waited for the man to come to Him.

Jeremiah 29:13-14, *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the Lord,*

Here is a diligent seeker.

Mark 10:17, *Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"*

This is a religious guy with some integrity.
He really does want to know God.
He wants peace, joy, and all of that.

There were missing elements inside of him.

But would you note somewhere in your mind that this is a very self-centered young man at this point?

He is coming for something that will satisfy his heart and the need of his heart. That is not wrong but its incomplete.

There was an urgency.

He rushed down the aisle before there was an aisle.

He ran to Jesus before “just as I am” had ever been written.

He is in a hurry.

He is enthusiastically in pursuit of eternal life, salvation.

The Lord was walking down the road in Perea. No doubt there was a crowd around Him, as always gathered around our Lord. In addition to the disciples this young ruler runs right into the crowd.

He is not embarrassed by the fact that he is known by the people in that area. Everyone perhaps knew who he was indeed he was a ruler of the synagogue.

He is not embarrassed by the fact that he confesses publicly and openly that he does not possess eternal life, which would have been very difficult for his stature.

He not only came running to Jesus, but he got on his kneeling.

He is in a position of humility before the Lord.
He has prostrated before the Lord.
He acknowledges the humble situation.
That takes some kind of integrity to do that!

He doesn't mind losing face with all the people who think he was a spiritual giant already.

What an opportunity?

He is ready.

If this person gets saved, then he will be terrific.
He is rich. We need rich Christians.

Not only is he rich, but he is also influential.

What could he do as an influential person?

He is a prime prospect for a testimony on Christian TV or write a book.

4. He came to the right source.

There are lots of people looking for eternal life and looking hard, but they are looking in the wrong place.

Why do you think Satan counterfeits religions all over the face of the earth?

So that people go chasing the wrong thing.

They won't find eternal life there.

But some people may be rather diligently looking for it there.
But he came to the right source.

1 John 5:11, *And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*

1 John 5:20, *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.*

Jesus not only was the source of eternal life, but He was also that eternal life.

This rich young ruler came to the right source.

No doubt he had heard of the power and teaching of Jesus because he comes to Him and says, "*Good Teacher.*"
He acknowledges that He was a teacher of divine truth.

He said, "good, "Greek word "**Agathos.**'

Kalos means good on the outside.

Agathos means good on the inside, good morally, good in nature, good in essence.

He says, "I know that You are a good person. I know that You are moral. I know that You are upright. I also know You teach divine truth. You perhaps know the secret of getting eternal life."

- I don't think he thought he was God.
- I don't even think he particularly thought of Him as the Messiah.
- I just think he was so struck with the power of Jesus' teaching, and the power of His life.

However, he had been exposed to it so he says that this teacher has got the secret to eternal life. Maybe He can tell me how to get it.

More than affirming the deity of Christ or the messiahship of Christ he just calls Him an internally, morally good teacher, whose life demonstrates that He probably walked with God, and knew the secrets of eternal life.

He came to the right source.

Even though he didn't know who He was in the fullest sense, he certainly did come to the right place.

Acts 4:12, *Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

5. He asks the right question.

He really did ask the right question.

V 16, *Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”*

Certainly, he was work oriented.

He was raised in a Pharisaic system of tradition.

He was trained to think that you did things religiously to gain divine goals and divine ends.

A fair question.

I don't think we ought to knock him for the question.

You do have to do something to get eternal life.

You must believe.

Your will has to be involved. There must be a response.

The question is basically a fair question.

He didn't ask,

How can I be more religious?

How can I be more moral?

How can I get more self-respect?

I want eternal life. What do I do to get it?

John 6:28, *Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"*

Jesus replied to them.

John 6:29, *Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

What do I need to do to have eternal life?

He thought it was something he had to do.

In a sense in which he was right, because we must act as an act of faith, activate our will as an act of faith toward Christ.

This is too good to believe.

If you lose this person then you really failed in ministry.

He even knew that he had to do something good, something genuinely good.

Jesus' answer is amazing.

if Jesus was a contemporary evangelist, He might say, "just believe. Jesus died for you and rose again. If you just believe that, just pray and ask Jesus into your heart, and confess Him as your Savior, you will be saved."

Jesus didn't do that at all. Jesus put up a wall in front of this person.

V 17, *So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."*

Do you think God's given Me something that no one else knows about?

There is none good but one, that's God.
You know what they are, you don't need to ask Me.

There's no new information.
There's no secret.

Why are you asking Me what is good?

You know what good things are written in the law of God.
Now go do them.

If you will enter into life, keep the commandments. God alone is the one that's good. God in His goodness has revealed all His will.

You know the Word of God
You know the law of God.

It is all there.
Jesus haven't added anything to it.
Keep it all.

Why does Jesus say that to this person?

Because there is a missing factor here.

This person is coming to Jesus, and his seeking of salvation is based on his felt need.

He is seeking salvation because he has anxiety, and he has frustration, and he wants joy and love and peace and hope. That is not a good enough reason to come to Christ. That is incomplete. It isn't wrong and incomplete.

If we go around the world offering people happiness, joy, peace, and so forth, it's very easy to get them to respond to that.

All you must do is find all the people who are psychologically incomplete. If you can offer them all the solutions to their anxieties through Jesus, they will take Jesus to get those things. But that is not a complete understanding of salvation.

So, Jesus slams a wall in front of the person and says that the one thing you haven't done is that what God who has revealed His good Word. So, you just go out and do it all. You keep the commandments.

Can anyone do that?

Why did Jesus tell him to do that?

So that he would realize he couldn't do it.

The problem with this man is that by the time we get to the end of verse 16, there is something that hasn't been mentioned.

What is it?

His sin.

There has been no mention of that.

The young man has no sense that he is offended a holy God. His desire for eternal life is purely wrapped up in his own anxieties and his own personal needs. He has no thought for the affront that his life is to an infinitely holy God.

That is a necessary element in understanding the truth of salvation.

Jesus simply says keep the commandments and you don't need Me to add anything.

God is good.

God has revealed His good will in His law.

Now he must be confronted with the fact that he has violated God.

We cannot bring people to Jesus Christ simply and only based on psychological needs, or anxieties, or lack of peace, or lack of hope, or lack of joy, or lack of happiness.

They must understand that salvation is for people who want to turn away from the things of this life and turn to God, who see

that they have lived in violation and rebellion against a holy God. They want to turn around, confess that, and affirm their commitment to live for His glory.

God must be involved.

Salvation is not a psychological thing,

A man must know that unless he is willing to forsake all the things in this life and come to God, he can't be His disciple.

- All he felt was a personal need.
- All he felt was personal anxiety.
- All he felt was the lack of stuff in his life.
- That is not substantial enough.

Our Lord takes the focus off his felt need and puts it on God and tries to show this young man that the real problem in his life is not what he doesn't have in his heart but offend a holy God.

Jesus is showing him the divine standard so that he will see that he comes short.

What we need to do when we evangelize someone is to make sure they understand the full nature of their sinfulness as it violates the holy law of holy God. So that salvation is a Godward thing, not just a manward thing.

All evangelism must take the imperfect sinner and place him up against the perfect law of God. So, he can see his deficiency.

Evangelism, which deals only with men's needs, feelings, problems, lacks true balance.

That is why the churches are filled with full of people who aren't really saved, because they sought and gained some kind of psychological affirmation and not transactional redemption.

Why do you think Paul in Romans spends first 3 chapters affirming the sinfulness of man before he ever gets to salvation?

The rich young ruler had no sense of his offending God, he had no remorse.

- There must be remorse.
- The Beatitude attitude.
- One must be begging God for forgiveness.
- There needs to be meekness.
- There needs to be mourning, overwhelmed by sin.

He didn't have that.

He wanted psychological needs met.

- We don't see the remorse over sin at all in this passage.
- We don't see him saddened that he is offended God.
- We don't see him aware of his sin.

We must approach the sin problem.

Psalms 7:11, *God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day.*

A good God, a holy God, a pure God can't tolerate evil at all. So, Jesus affirms what must always be affirmed, that there is a divine law which must be kept.

If you violate that law, you are under the judgment of God.

This young man is incredible, but he is sincere.

V 18-19, *He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'¹⁹ 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' "*

Our Lord responds by giving him the last half of the Ten Commandments in reverse.

The Ten Commandments are divided into two parts.

- The first half deal with God.
- The second half deal with man.
 - First half man's relation to God.
 - Second half man's relation to man.

He gives him the second half, which is easier.

Both are impossible to keep, but the second half is less impossible.

Frist half of the commandments are impossible.

One might think that they did the second half.

Jesus gives him the benefit of the doubt by gives him the easier half of the impossible.

Then adds a little one at the end just to make it difficult, *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*

So, Jesus nails him against the Ten Commandments, against the law of God.

The law of God is the issue, sin is the issue, not just psychological felt need, not just religious desire.

Jesus gives him all these laws, and He reverses them, He ends up with the father and mother one. Maybe Jesus knew that the young person was not honoring his father and mother. We don't know why He chose that order. But He preaches law.

We can't preach grace until you preach law because nobody understands what grace means unless he understands what law requires.

No one understands mercy unless they understand guilt.
We cannot preach a gospel of grace unless we have preached a message of law.
Jesus binds the guy to the commandments of God.

Why did Jesus give that?

At least the young ruler will say I have fallen short of that.
What you need is not simply to have your psychological needs met. What you also need is to get right with a holy God whom you have offended.

V 20, *The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"*

This shows us how he perceived those laws.

- Maybe he never murdered anybody.
- Maybe he never committed adultery.
- Maybe he never stole anything.
- Maybe he never lied to anybody.
- Maybe he honoured his father and mother.

Maybe on the surface he did do those things in the way that they had been defined to him as external.

We know he is not telling the truth. So, he violated one of the former ones already.

But the Jews had thought they had so externalized the law, that they saw everything on the outside and they never dealt with the heart.

Jesus taught in the **sermon on the mount in Matthew 5**, He said murder is not the physical external act, but when you hate someone, you murder in your heart.

You think you haven't committed adultery, but when you look on a woman to lust after her, you have committed adultery in your heart.

You divorce your wives without biblical grounds, you commit adultery as well.

You say you don't lie, but you tell you that you lie through your false oaths.

Jesus says to them all through **Matthew 5**, *"On the outside you look good, but on the inside, you have got all this vile evil."*

The Ten Commandments were simply external pictures, symbols, behavior patterns that were to be indicative of hearts that were right.

- It wasn't enough not to kill someone, but you shouldn't hate someone.

- It wasn't enough not to commit adultery, but you shouldn't even want to do that.
- It wasn't enough not to lie but you shouldn't even desire to do that, or to try to fool somebody.

The point is that the man didn't understand the internal character of God's law, he understood only the externals.

The young ruler thought he thought he was as Jewish as you could be, as religious as you could be.

He said that in the presence of all those people. He must have felt that they would affirm that, that it was believable to them, that the guy was really a good man.

Externally he kept the law but that was his whole problem. All he wanted was some fulfillment in the empty place in his heart. He had no sense of having violated God at all.

Jesus couldn't take him on those terms.
He had to slice him open before He can sew them up.

This young ruler couldn't be saved because he didn't understand the real meaning of salvation.

A sinner coming to God and asking forgiveness. If you don't think you have sinned, then you can't be saved.

This rich young ruler who sought eternal life, sought it diligently, asked the right question. When Jesus stopped him at that point, confronted him with his sin, he wouldn't confess his sin.

- Confession of sin,
- Repentance,
- Turning from sin

is an utter essential in salvation.

Our Lord is proving that point to us explicitly!

The young man had totally missed the point of God's law. He had externalized the whole thing, failed to understand that the external law was only an indication of how God wanted the heart to be.

V 20, *The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"*

This is the way self-righteous religion works.

It is very self-convincing.

Young man believed this.

- He believed he was righteous.
- He believed he had kept the law.
- He couldn't figure out what else he ought to do.

Mark 10:21, *Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have*

and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”

Young ruler was sincere.

There was something genuine in him.

He really was a religious person.

- ✓ Jesus loved him.
- ✓ Jesus is not willing that any should perish.
- ✓ Lord Jesus Himself was about to die for the sins of this man, and He longed for the soul of that man.

But Jesus would still not take him on his own terms.

Jesus had to have him understand his utter sinfulness.

Where was the mourning?

Where was the sorrow over sin?

Where was the sense of having violated a holy God?

It wasn't there.

6. Obtaining eternal life is confession & repentance.

Confession of sin.

Repentance – turning from sin.

This is where this young ruler went out. Missed out a necessary element.

V 21, *Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

The word perfect is often used in the Bible to refer salvation, particularly in the book of Hebrews.

You say you love your neighbour as yourself.
Go give everything you have got to your neighbour.

7. Surrender to obey the Lord.

Jesus is saying, are you going to do what I want you to do?

Who runs your life?
Is it you? Or Me?

Jesus gives him a test.
He gives him a command.
Go sell everything and give it to the poor and then follow Me.

True salvation includes confession of sin, repentance.
True salvation includes a submission to obey the Lord.

I don't think a person coming to Christ understands fully all that that confession may mean.
I don't think they understand necessarily all that that submission to the lordship of Christ may mean.

But all the Lord is asking for here is willingness.
He will unfold the fullness of what it means.

The sin of this young ruler was a sin of covetousness.

- Sin of indulgence,
- Sin of materialism,
- Sin of wealth.

He was indifferent to people who were poor and people who were in need, and Jesus nailed him on that thing.

Will you do what I say?

Will you obey My lordship?

Do you have to give away everything you have to be a Christian?

No, you don't.

The Lord didn't say that to other people.

But do you have to be willing to do whatever the Lord asks you to do?

Yes.

It may be different in different cases.

Luke 14:33, *So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

Jesus knew right where He was talking, because He knew this was most important to the young ruler.

- For some people it might be a car.
- For some people it might be a girl.
- For some people it might be a job, or a career, or a certain sin they want to indulge in, or whatever.

For this rich young ruler, it was his money and his possessions. The Lord put His finger on it, and said, “Are you willing to give every bit of money?”

Salvation demands these two things.

Will you acknowledge your offense to God, and turn from your sin?

He just wouldn't acknowledge his sin.

Will you leave your present perishing priorities and follow My commands though they cost you what is dearest to you?

Salvation is a commitment then to leave sin and follow Jesus Christ at all costs.

If you are not willing to do it on those terms, Jesus doesn't take you.

In Matthew 13 you have two parables.

V 44- 46, The parable of the hidden treasure and the parable of the pearl of great price. Those refer to the salvation that's offered in the kingdom.

- In both cases the man sold everything he had, bought the field to get the treasure.
- The person sold everything he had to get the money to buy the pearl.

All it costs you is everything you have.

To come to Jesus Christ, you have to say yes to Christ, which means Jesus become the supreme Lord of my life.

You take number HIM one priority.

Whatever You tell me to do I am willing to do.

Romans 10:9-10, *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

What was his reaction?

V 22, *But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*

He went away.

Why?

What was more important to him than Christ?

Possessions.

He couldn't come on those terms.

He went away sorrowful!
Because there was some honesty in his heart.

He really did want eternal life; he wasn't willing to pay the price.

Conclusion:

Look at the contrast of another ruler who was rich.

Luke 19:8-10, *Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."*

⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Zacheus knew he had been doing wrong all the time.

I have got to get my life right.

I have got to give everything back.

I have got to give all this stuff to the poor.

I have got to return to everybody four hundred percent.

This is the opposite!

Here is a true Jew.

This is real salvation.

Why?

Because Zacheus can only think of what a sinner he is and wants to unload all the stuff that he has taken unjustly from people and give them back not only what they deserve, but everything else he has got.

See the contrast of **Matthew 19 and Luke 19**:

The Lord showed him a sinner.

Measured him up against the law of God but he wouldn't see it.

The Lord gave him a command, asked him to follow and he

wouldn't do it. Because he was not willing to turn from his sin.

He was not willing to affirm the lordship of Jesus Christ in his

life. He could not receive salvation.

"He went away very sad for he had great possessions."

He came for eternal life, and he left without it.

What a sad thing.