

Greatest need, biggest problem, best news — Mark 10:17-31
Basil Howlett - Carey Baptist Church – 4 May 2008

These three things are highlighted in the story of the rich young ruler who met Jesus.

1. Our greatest need. A bigger house? Newer car? A good partner? Better health? These things may be important, but the Bible says our greatest need is to be 'saved', i.e. to be rescued from the guilt and punishment of all the wrong we have done and to get right with God (verse 29). Jesus said to this young man that he should be prepared to sell all he had in order to get salvation. We may not have to do that, but we should be prepared to do so. It's so urgent. Why? Because we are in a bad way spiritually.

- We are sinners in the sight of God. Like this young man we may pride ourselves that we have lived good lives but the fact is that we have all broken God's laws.
- We are separated from the presence of God. One of the most dreadful things about sin is that it creates a great barrier between us and God. That's why men and women find life so empty and meaningless.
- We are sentenced to be punished by God. God hates sin and has declared that it must be punished

2. Our biggest problem. We are totally incapable of saving ourselves (verses 23-27). The young ruler thought he could 'do something' to gain eternal life but Jesus said it was impossible - as impossible as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. If we want to try to do the impossible we must:

- Make amends for every sin of the past. We can't even remember all our sins leave alone make amends for them. NB Some people wrongly think that Jesus was telling this man to make amends for his sin by giving all his money to the poor. That's a denial of the gospel. All that Jesus is saying in verse 21 is that it was this man's wealth which was blinding him to his real need and keeping him from humbling himself before the Saviour.
- We must also change our sinful, twisted hearts which make us do wrong things (Mark 7:21-22)
- We must, from now on, live a perfect life. We must never again lie or cheat or lose your temper. We must never again be proud or jealous or unkind or selfish: never again have an impure thought. We must put God first every day.

Even this rich young man with all his money, power, influence and vitality couldn't save himself. Is all hopeless then?

3. The best news we could ever hear. 'God is able to do the impossible (Verse 27). He is able to save men and women from guilt and hell. He is able to forgive our sins, change our hearts and set us on the road to heaven. How can He do that?

- Because His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, came into this world and died upon the cross to bear the punishment of sin. (verses 32-33).
- Because He has all power.

Conclusion.

How can we know this salvation from God's hand? There's only one way! We must turn our backs on our sin and come as poor helpless beggars to Christ and hold out our empty hands to Him, so to speak, and plead with Him to give us this salvation. We must say *'Please God have mercy upon me. I recognise my greatest need: I need to be saved. I realise my biggest problem: I can't save myself. Lord, I have heard the good news: you can save poor helpless sinners like me. I plead with you to do so.'*

Be urgent! Don't let anything keep you away from Christ.

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