

Obedient Faith
Mark 10:17-19
Charlie Brackett

An admirable young man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. The young man had wealth and power in this life, yet his concern was for the life to come. The priority he placed on eternal well-being is a priority worth adopting.

Jesus' answer was simple and to the point. He said, "You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

Before discussing what Jesus said, I want us to note what He did *not* say. He did not say, "There is nothing you must do." Jesus answered in a way many religious leaders today would not answer. Jesus knew that salvation was a free gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). He knew salvation came by the grace of God, yet He did not correct the young man when he said, "What shall I *do* that I may inherit eternal life?" Many today want us to believe there is nothing we must do to inherit eternal life because salvation is a gift of God. My friend, that is *not* what the Bible teaches.

There is no question that salvation is by the grace of God. The Bible definitely affirms that it is a free gift. Man can in no way earn his salvation. If it is a free gift, "Why, then," you may ask, "Must man do anything?" To explain, let's consider who, according to the Bible, will be saved?

Many scriptures teach that God wants everyone to be saved. 2 Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is.... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Yet not everyone *will* be saved. The Bible has a great deal to say about those who will be lost. If God wants everyone saved, but some will be lost, the only reasonable conclusion is that man's own will has something to do with whether or not he will be saved. God wants man's salvation, but man has to want it too. God's saving grace is conditional on man's obedience to God's commands. That is, it is conditional on man's faith. Listen to Romans 5:1-2 "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in the glory of God."

Please notice that faith in this context is not simple belief that does not produce the works of faith. Saving faith is faith that motivates obedience to the Lord's commands.

When the rich, young man asked Jesus what he must do, Jesus told him, "You *must do* these commands." If he did all the commands required by the Lord, he would not have earned his salvation. But, by his obedience he would have demonstrated his faith in God. He would have shown his trust and dependence in the Savior whose grace would save him.

Clearly, there are things we must do if we are to enjoy the grace of God. But, what things? We will consider them next time.