



Growth Group Questions

March 9, 2025

“What’s the One Thing?”

CONTEXT

Jesus is now intentionally making his way to Jerusalem and his ultimate passion and crucifixion. The young man who approaches is often called the rich young ruler. Matthew 19 describes him as young, and Luke 18 says that he was a ruler. All three gospels agree that he was wealthy. It should be noted that the phrase “eternal life” only appears in the gospel of Mark in verse 17 and then again in 10:30.

Jesus wants to get the man to think about the first table of the 10 Commandments, even though Jesus’ questioning is around the second table which concerns our relationships with humanity. The problem is the man is focused solely on his horizontal relationships and has not made God his primary relationship. In particular, he is not obeying the commandment to not have any other gods before God. Money and wealth have become his god.

The “one thing” the man lacked was not his understanding of the law, but what he lacked was a radical trust in God, who alone is good. If he possessed that kind of trust, he would have been able to abandon his material wealth and follow Jesus

Jesus loves this man, and he wants him to be one of his followers, but Jesus also knows that wealth and possessions can get in the way of being his disciple. It should be noted that Jesus’ call in this instance is not to poverty, but to discipleship. There is sacrifice and obedience that is needed to follow in the way of Jesus. Obedience to the law ultimately needs to lead to discipleship. The law is not the primary thing.

After the man walks away, Jesus turns to his disciples and continues the conversation about the difficulties of following him. Wealth and possessions are an issue for all of us. In verse 27 Jesus reminds his followers that on their own they cannot achieve or acquire eternal life. They, and we, must depend on God. It is our admitted deficiency that allows God to work. God does the work in us and then we can go and do God’s work.

SCRIPTURE

Mark 10:17-31

¹⁷ 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?”

¹⁸ “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ 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.’^[a]”

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

²¹ 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.”

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

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

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is^[b] to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ 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.”

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

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

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!”²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Colossians 3:1-2

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Philippians 4:12-13

¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

2 Corinthians 8:9

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

QUESTIONS

1. The story we read this week in Mark 10:17-22 is also found in Matthew 19:16-23 and Luke 18:18-23. What can we learn about the man in the story from reading these three different accounts?

2. When Jesus told the young man “One thing you lack. Go and sell everything you have and give it to the poor. . .”, what was Jesus really saying to him?
3. In Mark 10:27, Jesus answered the disciples’ question about who can be saved by saying: “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” What was he telling them?
4. In Colossians 3:12, the Apostle Paul says we should set our hearts on “things above.” What are the “things above” that he is referring to? How do we do this?
5. Pastor Paul said that it is our admitted deficiency that allows God to work in our lives. What do you think he meant by that?
6. In Philippians 4:13, the Apostle Paul says: “I can do all things through him who gives me strength.” What does that mean to you?
7. What does it mean to yield your life to God? What does that look like to you?
8. What Bible verses help you to understand the importance of putting God first in your life?
9. How can we keep secondary things from becoming primary in our lives?
10. This week’s sermon focused on Mark 10:17-3. As you read through the entire chapter during the week, was there anything else in Chapter 10 that particularly spoke to you?

SERMON QUESTIONS

1. What is your “one thing”?
2. What secondary things have you allowed to become primary in your life and what can you do about it?