

20:20 Vision Ministries—Devotions by Roger Browning Week 29 (July 14-20, 2019)

The most frequent question that is asked by earnest seekers as well as by skeptics and doubters is, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” As students of the truth, we will explore the subject over the next few weeks.

Sunday, July 14 (read Mark 10:17-18)

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.” (Mark 10:18)

Our search for the answer to the question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” could end with the printed verse above. The Bible declares that there aren’t any good people because, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Nevertheless, in the eyes of us humans, some people are more honorable than others. The trouble is that we will always err in our judgment because, “Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b). Having established the frailty of our own goodness (see Isaiah 64:6), we will look at the testimony of the Rich Young Ruler in tomorrow’s study.

Monday, July 15 (read Mark 10:19-20)

“Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” (Mark 10:20)

Only when we realize that Jesus is God in the flesh will He allow us to call Him good. The Rich Young Ruler does not understand this fact when he asks, “Good teacher,” what must I do to inherit eternal life (v. 17b)? He wants a works salvation so that he can make sure **he** covers all the bases. Jesus quotes a few of the Ten Commandments to open up the young man’s eyes to his own sins (v. 19). Amazingly, the ruler refuses to acknowledge even a single sin (v. 20). The man is anxious to have eternal life, but he does not understand that **Jesus is God** or that he **is a sinner**. Anyone who denies these facts is looking at life through a worldly perspective and not through the lens of the Word of God. We will follow the story in tomorrow’s devotion.

Tuesday, July 16 (read Mark 10:21-22)

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.” (Mark 10:21)

Jesus assists the anxious seeker by pointing out, indirectly, that he is addicted to his possessions. Just as He still does with each of us, the Lord puts His finger on the **one thing** the Rich Young Ruler lacks. He tells him to sell all of his possessions, make an offering to the poor, and to follow Him (v. 21). Many people quote this verse as if Jesus tells him to give **everything** to the poor, but that is incorrect. The Lord only wants our possessions to be liquid enough so that we can answer His call. The Bible states that, “He went away sad, because he had great wealth” (v. 22b), but the tragic truth is that his great wealth had him. He is standing in front of God, but he refuses to come to Jesus on His terms. I wonder how many others are there who want salvation, but only on his/her own merit. Don’t miss that the young ruler’s addiction does not affect the Lord’s love for him!

Wednesday, July 17 (read Mark 10:23-27)

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." (Mark 10:27)

Today's reading is designed to remind you that salvation is a **gift**; it cannot be bought with money or good deeds! Rich people have trouble seeing their need for total dependency upon God (v. 23), because they have always been able to purchase the things that they perceive will bring happiness. Although His specific warning is to the rich man, Jesus expands that thought to say that it is tough for **anyone** to enter the kingdom unless he/she understands the fact that salvation cannot be earned (v. 24). We will look at His illustration in tomorrow's devotion, but today's message is stated in the printed text above. Do you live like you believe this truth? Can you trust Him to deliver on His promises?

Thursday, July 18 (reread Mark 10:23-27)

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:25)

A whole generation of Christians has heard that the "eye of a needle" was a hole in the wall around Jerusalem where a camel could enter only after his cargo was removed and he got on his knees to crawl through the entryway. Evangelists of that era used this word-picture to say that we must come to God on our knees and empty of worldly possessions. They seemed to be unaware that they were teaching that it is **possible** for a man to humble himself enough to be welcomed inside the gate. The truth is that Jesus is saying that you could pass a literal camel through a literal eye of a needle easier than for anyone to enter the kingdom without the mercy and grace of the Lord. He says that is **impossible** (v. 27), not just difficult! Be assured once and for all! Salvation is His gift to anyone who believes in the cross and empty tomb and who repents and receives His forgiveness!

Friday, July 19 (read Mark 10:28-31)

Peter said to Him, "We have left everything to follow you!" (Mark 10:28)

Most of the promises of God are limited to those who trust Him and His Word completely. The average church member seems to be content with believing in Him for salvation while continuing to live his/her life without commitment. Peter wants to know what is promised to those who are totally sold out to Christ (v. 28). Jesus promises to provide more of everything that is important to us (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields), but He adds a strange companion to these wonderful gifts (persecutions). Here you have your first real answer to the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Memorize 2 Timothy 3:12-13 to help in times of trials. We'll conclude this thought in tomorrow's devotion.

Saturday, July 20 (read Mark 10:32-34)

They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. (Mark 10:32a)

Jesus is our example of a life totally sold out to the will of God! **He** leads the way as we enter any new and scary territory (v. 32). Those, like His disciples, who follow Him closely will understand the necessity of the cross in the plan of salvation (v. 33-34), but those who follow at a distance will always be afraid to trust Him completely (v. 32b). Are you a **fan** of what Jesus has done or a **follower** of the truth of His Word? Do you follow closely because you love Him or do you stay far behind because you are afraid of His demands on your life? The wonderful promises of God are available to anyone who walks with Him daily (1 John 1:7). Move close enough to hear His promises and you will be blessed by God and persecuted by the world!