

"Keep The Commandments"

Matthew 19:16-22

A television broadcast sermon delivered

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By

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I have a very important message for us today from Matthew, chapter 19. If you would like to follow along with me, I will be in Matthew, chapter 19. And for verse 16, the heading at the top of my page says, "How to attain eternal life." That's the subject matter here. That's what these verses our speaking of, that's what's being discussed here, how to attain eternal life. And if you look with me at verse 16, Matthew 19:16, it says, "And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' And he said unto him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,' he sayeth unto him, 'which Jesus said, "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."' The young man sayeth unto him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?' Jesus said unto him, 'If thou will be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." This rich young ruler, as he is commonly referred to, came to the Lord and addressed him as good master. And that is the proper way to address the Lord Jesus Christ. Because the Lord Jesus

Christ is God, he is God. And to emphasize the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, the Lord asked this rich young ruler, "Why are you calling me that? Why are you calling me good?" He said, "In order for you to call me good, you would have to call me God." Verse 17, "He said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God,'" and that's the truth. There is none good but God almighty himself, that is the truth. God's people are only good in Christ, in God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Outside of him the scripture says, "There is none good. No, not one." Outside of being robed in Christ's righteousness, the scripture says, "There is none righteous." He is our righteousness. He is our goodness. All goodness belongs to him. And that's about to be proven to us right here in this message, and in these next few verses. Verse 16 says, "And behold one came and said unto him, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?'" And I want to tell you that right there is the error that all of mankind is naturally born into, the error of thinking that I have to do a good thing in order to be saved. I wanna really point out the error. And if you really think about what I'm saying, you will agree, that's what everybody thinks. I have to do a good thing to inherit eternal life. That is what everyone wrongly thinks, until the truth comes. And I am gonna go ahead right now and tell us what the truth is, okay? What the new changed mind of repentance will teach a man or a woman. I'm gonna tell us the truth in the form of changing that question. Error says, "What good thing must I do that I may have eternal life?" That's error, what's wrong. "What good thing must I do that I may have eternal life?" Truth says, "What good thing did Christ do that I may have eternal life?" Do you see the difference there? And I wanna to tell you, I don't normally handle a message like this. I'm gonna spend the majority of this message focused on the problem. I really, today I really want emphasize and declare man's problem, and then I'm gonna end this message with the good news remedy of the gospel. We're gonna just close out the message with the good news remedy of the gospel. But I want us to, I believe this will be very eye-opening, very helpful. I want us to really understand man's problem. Verse 16, it says, "Behold one came and said unto him, 'Good master, what good things shall I do that I may have eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'Why

callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.'" He said, "If you want to attain eternal life, if you want to earn eternal life, here's what you do. Keep the commandments." Now, here is the fact of the matter. If a person will keep the commandments of God, that person will walk straight through the gates of heaven into glory itself. When the law was given, God said, "If you will do this, you will live." That's what he said. And if a man or woman truly kept the commandments, that man or woman would inherit eternal life, all right? But here's the problem. Over in 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "But the Lord said unto Samuel, 'Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'" The Lord looks on the heart. The problem for all of us, me included, the problem for all of us is, God is not just looking at the things that can be seen concerning us. God is looking at the things that cannot be seen. God looks on the heart, God looks on the heart. The scriptures, yeah our Lord walked this earth, and the scriptures is constantly saying, "The Lord Jesus, knowing their hearts," knowing what was in their hearts. He could read their minds and read their hearts. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." That Proverbs 4:23. "Out of the heart are the issues of life." We're talking about how to attain eternal life. That's our subject matter, how do you attain eternal life? Well, "Out of the heart are the issues of life." That's the first thing we need to understand. The heart includes the mind, the inner being. God looks on the root of the matter. That's what we must understand. All that man can see, all that I can see in you, and all that you can see in me, is the result. That's all you can see when you look at me. Just the result, just the evidence, just the manifestation of what originated in my heart. Whatever I say, it originated in my heart. Whatever I do, it originated in my heart. It starts in the heart, it starts in the mind, it starts in the inner being, and that's what God is looking on. Is that not fearful? God sees all of it, God sees all of it. Not just the things that we do openly, and the things that we don't do openly, but the things that we don't do at all, but that go on on the inside. There are things that go on inside each one of us that never make it out. There are things

that go on inside your mind, that thank God, they never make it out. My mind too, and they never come out. We all commit sins and transgressions and wicked things that other men and women don't ever get to see, and it's because they never make it out. But God sees it, we must know this. The night is day to him, that nothing is hidden from him. God sees it, and that's a problem for us. That is a problem for you and me, because it's those inner things that cause us to be transgressors of the law, it's the inner things. Forget about the outward things. The outward things are terrible and they're bad enough, but oh buddy, the inward things. That's what causes us to be transgressors against the law. Whether they ever make it out or not is irrelevant. The law has been broken in the heart, the law has been broken in the mind, and that's what God is looking on. So if we're gonna keep the commandments, does this bring a whole new light to the subject of keeping the commandments? If we're gonna keep the commandments, we have to keep them outwardly, yes, but inwardly. Oh, now that's where the problem is, inwardly. That's the first component of our problem, okay? The second component is, if we're gonna keep the commandments, we can't just keep one of them. We have to keep all of them, all of them. Over in Galatians chapter three, and I just wanna remind us that in our text, that's what the rich young ruler asked the Lord. He said, "Which ones, which ones do I need to keep?" And that's what people think, you know? "Well, I got some of them right. You know, hopefully I'll be okay, I did this one, or." Well, Galatians 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. For it is written, cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them," all things. Whoever is trying to keep the law for their salvation, that is a cursed person, because that person is trying to accomplish something that cannot be accomplished in sinful flesh. The law is so strict, the law is so exact, the law reaches all the way in to the deep fiber of our beings, and it spans the eternity of our lifetime. That means we cannot break one law from the moment we enter this world, till the moment we leave it, we cannot break one law. Galatians 4:21 says, "Tell me, you that desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? Do you not hear the law? You who are counting on your

ability to keep the law, do you not see the impossibility of that task?" James chapter two says in verse eight, "If you fulfill the royal law, according to the scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, you do well. But if you have respect to persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors." What that's saying is, is if you keep a commandment of the scripture, great, but if you don't keep all of them and you break one of them, you're considered by the law as being a breaker of the law. "Love your neighbor as yourself." That doesn't just mean the guy right next to you. If you love one neighbor as yourself, but you don't love all your neighbors as yourself, you're a breaker of the law. The law will not consider you to be mostly good or half good or a little bit good. The law will just consider you to be a sinner, that's it. Verse 10, right here in James chapter two says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." If the speed limit is 70 miles an hour, and we go 71, we would not be a one-70th breaker of the law. We would be a breaker of the law, period. And if our ticket was \$71, you have to pay a dollar for every mile, the judge wouldn't say, "Well, you were within the law for 70 of those miles, so you just have to pay us a dollar," no. If that law is broken in one point, it's broken in full, and it has to be paid in full. If justice is served, it has to be paid in full. This is what people do not naturally understand. Keeping the law of commandments openly, outwardly, is not good enough, not by a long shot. Keeping most of the commandments is not good enough. Starting to keep them right now, even though you have a whole life of broken commandments behind you, it's not good enough, not with God. We're gonna find that out when we go meet God. It's not good enough. If he finds one speck of disobedience to his commandments in us, his holy justice has no choice but to condemn us as sinners against his law. So look back at our text, if you're turning with me, to Matthew 19, Matthew 19:16. It says, "And behold, one came and said unto him, 'Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' And he said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God. But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,' he sayeth unto him, which Jesus said, 'Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit

adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' The young man sayeth unto him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth. What lack I yet? I've done it all.'" I believe you and I both know that that's not true. He may have done okay on the outside, but not on the inside. I believe you and I both know that. Scripture says, "All have sinned and come short." But even if he had, all right? See if you can really enter into this. Even if he had, here's the problem for me. Even if he did, inside and out, everything just right, here's the problem for me. I haven't, and you haven't, and you and I both know that, and it makes no difference what he did. We're not looking to him. Our salvation is not dependent on him. My problem is with me, and your problem is with you. Our Lord said, "Don't commit murder, and don't commit adultery." And Matthew five tells us that if we get angry with another human being without a just cause, we've murdered that person in the heart, murder. It says if a man looks on a woman and lusts after her, or if a woman looks on a man and lusts after him, adultery has been committed in the heart. Our Lord said, "Don't steal." I'll make a little confession to you here, okay? When I was about four years old, four or five years old, I was playing in my neighborhood with the other boys, and about my age, I was the youngest one. We ended up behind a neighbor's house. It was an older couple, I didn't know them. But we were just, I don't know, doing what boys do, and went behind their house and opened their sliding door. And it was unlocked, it was open. And being that I was the youngest, all the kids said that I had to go in there and steal something. And so you know, I did. I went in there, I opened up a drawer, and I stole a red ski mask. And I went, you know, finished playing with the guys, and went back home that afternoon and walked into my house with a big red ski mask on. And my dad looked at me and said, "Well, where'd you get that?" "Oh, I found it." That's what I said, "I found it." You know, so now not only have I stolen, I've lied. But he got the truth out of me, and he marched me back down to that house and made me, first, he tore my tail up, this was the good old days. And I was chastened. And then he marched me down there and made me knock on that door and apologize to that couple and give them their ski

mask back and, but here's what I wanna tell you. I'm out, do you understand? One point. "Yeah, but you were four years old, or five years old." Doesn't matter, listen to me. I'm out, I'm out, one point. I stole, I physically stole. Whether though we physically steal things or not, in the heart we steal things all the time. We steal the credit from other men and women. We steal the credit from God for things that he's done. We try to act as though we did it. Verse 19, he said, "Honor your father and your mother." How much regret do we all have for the grief that we caused our parents, the talking back, the rebellion? He said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." You and I both know we've never loved our neighbor as ourselves. Do you have a heart to go buy your neighbor everything you've ever desired to own, and empty your bank account and put it in your neighbor's bank account and say, "Here's the keys to my house, and here's the keys to my car. I want you to have it." No. Once we really get ahold of this, all we can say is the same things the disciples said. At the end of verse 25, they said, "Who then can be saved?" Who then can be saved, all right? That's where the remedy comes in. "With man, this is impossible." That's what the end of verse 26 says. "With man, this is impossible. But with God, all things are possible." Let me finish out our message here, showing you the gospel remedy to this hopeless situation, all right? In the other accounts, in Mark and in Luke, it says that, "The Lord Jesus Christ loved this rich young ruler," loved him. And rather than reprimanding him right here, the Lord pointed him to the good news, the good news gospel of Christ. Verse 21, Jesus said unto him, "'If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions." Our Lord said, "If you want to be saved, this is what it's gonna take. You're gonna have to deny yourself. You're gonna have to rid yourself of everything that you believe has any value before God. You're gonna have to give it to another. Follow me, look to me, trust me. Cast your all on me and you'll be saved." What is it going to take for us to inherit eternal life? All right, here's the heart of the issue. Here's the heart of the matter. It is going to take the complete fulfillment of a perfect law, this is what our

Lord said, the complete fulfillment of a perfect law. And it is going to take the complete payment for a broken law, and that is gonna have to come through the sacrifice of one for another. You're gonna have to sell everything you have. You're gonna have to get rid of all your riches, and give them to another. It's gonna come through a sacrifice. And I can tell you that both of those things took place in the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Lord Jesus Christ, for his people. Eternal life comes one way, it is by the substitution of Jesus Christ for his people, with his people. His people cannot do it, only he could, so that's what he did. And our ending result is to believe what he did, look to what he did, trust what he did. That's what God will cause his people to do. He said, "I did not come into this world to destroy the law, I came to fulfill it." Everything he said, "You have to do this, you have to do this," Jesus Christ did it. He did it, he fulfilled it. He said, "I came to obey the commandments," he did. He said, "I came to pay the penalty," and that's exactly what he did in every step that he took on this earth, all the way to the shedding of his own blood on the Cross of Calvary. He fulfilled every commandment of God, "You have to do, do, do," and our Lord said, "You have to give." You have to do, and you have to give. He did, he fulfilled every commandment of God, all the way to the point of the cross. When at that point the scripture says, "Though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor." He took all of his possession, all of his riches, everything that had value before God, and he gave it away. He gave it to his people. "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes, he became poor." He took all of his riches and gave it to his poor people, and it says, "He did that so that through his poverty, you might be rich." He made himself to be poor. This is the work and sacrifice of Christ on the Cross of Calvary. He emptied himself before God to pay the sin debt of his people. This is what you are gonna pay the sin debt to God with. "Everything that I have, everything that I am." What must we do to inherit eternal life? Believe on Christ, believe on his work, believe on his blood, that will happen, if he made that sacrifice to you. To him be the glory, Amen.