

I've been to their house a number of times. Every time I sit in their living room I'm reviewing how important a relationship with Jesus is. They nod and agree. They agree that hearing the Word of God and partaking of the sacrament are important. "Yes, we'll come. We'll be there." Sunday comes and they aren't there. It's disheartening, not because I want another person in the seats but because they're the ones missing out. They're the ones with mixed up priorities.

You're here so you must have your priorities in line. At least this morning you seem to. I know how easy it is to get mixed up but still try and make it look like priorities are in line. We show the world we're trying to do things the right way, think about the important things, and not make any major mistakes. We figure if we can accomplish that we'll have a pretty good life. We even show up on Sunday mornings and everybody figures we've got our priorities right where they're supposed to be.

This morning we close our series on breaking the huddle. God wants us on the offense, he wants us getting fed here and strengthened so that we can break the huddle and go out there and win spiritual victories. This morning in the gospel Jesus gives us the fundamentals to winning the game. He tells us to...

**Break the huddle for the right priority**  
**Asking the right question of the right person**  
**Valuing the right possessions**

"Teacher, I don't understand question eight. Can you explain it to me?" During a test any teacher would rather get that question than look out and see a student ask another student what the answer to question eight was. There's asking the right question and asking the right person. This man was on the right track. **"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?"** Possibly without knowing the man had asked the most important question, and he was definitely asking the right person.

This man was thinking about his future, concentrating on eternal life. But you notice how he called Jesus a good teacher. It's quite likely this man was asking all the religious teachers about eternal life. He'd probably already predetermined the answer. He figured to be leaving according to the divine playbook already. Now he'd come to Jesus to pad his stats. Sure, there was a little doubt. He couldn't be 100% sure he'd done enough. So he wanted extra credit so he could be absolutely sure.

I don't know how much you think about eternal life. Might be that it hasn't crossed your mind at all this week until this morning when I brought it up. Maybe you've had some emergency lately or close call and suddenly you did think about death. Emergencies do that, they get people thinking about what happens after this life. But if that hasn't happened lately, you might be so caught up in day to day living. Who has time to think about the future, especially the far off future like eternity after death? It's easier to focus on things we enjoy like Saturday afternoon football or the fantasy football rankings and stats. Or we focus on things we're worried about like the latest warnings of disaster on the television or radio. It's not that thinking about these things is wrong, but if they distract you from thinking about the really important question they can be sinful.

He really wanted to earn his own eternal life. So when Jesus reminded him of the commandments the man said confidently, **"Teacher all these I have kept since I was a boy."** Jesus took it up a notch. **"One thing you lack, go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."** Jesus admitted there was a way into heaven by earning it. Keep score and follow every commandment absolutely perfect. Upon further review this man hadn't even kept the first commandment, you shall have no other gods. When the man's face fell with sadness because he was wealthy Jesus made the point. His wealth came before his God. He asked the right question of the right person, but didn't want the right answer.

Your ego wants the extra credit like that rich man wanted. You figure it would be easier. You'd have the breakdown to earn eternal life. We're all about laws and rules. Do this, don't do this. Follow these rules and you'll be in the clear. We might sinfully treat it like some sort of checklist to enter heaven. Follow enough rules by the time you die and it's smooth sailing into heaven. But Jesus dropped the boom on the man and us when he said, **"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God."** If you can't even keep the first commandment what's the point in pretending you've kept the rest perfectly when you haven't? You and me, we're not good enough to achieve heaven. Our sins will always have us walking away sad.

The man did ask the right person. He just walked away and didn't listen. I hope you're listening to Jesus because he's the only right person with the right answer. It's in Jesus' reaction. **"Jesus looked at him and loved him."** Looked and loved. That's our Savior's reaction to us as well. Put your name there. Jesus looked at \_\_\_\_\_ and loved \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus invites us to follow him because he's the only way to heaven. His life, his death, his sacrifice makes it possible. God gives us the way to heaven through Christ. Jesus loves sinners. He loves you and me. Precisely because of this love Jesus had to tell this man to quit trying to earn it and follow him instead. Give up trying to find the checklist or the way in on your own. Follow Jesus, know his sacrifice, and discover through his love you already have your way into heaven and eternal life.

My mind always tries to picture Bill Gates as the rich man. Bill Gates would certainly be sad if Jesus told him to sell everything and give to the poor. But Bill Gates doesn't shock you. Jesus wants this personal for you. See we console ourselves with the commandments we think we can keep and we overlook our possessions. Are you willing to give away your TVs, cars, game systems, clothing, food, homes, everything? If your money or possessions are so valuable that you find yourself working every Sunday morning or Wednesday evening so regular worship and the Lord's Supper are impossible, maybe there's a problem with priorities. How do you feel when the stock market goes up or down? What if your home value plummets? Would you be sad? Angry? Ready to give up or curse God? Keeping our priorities right is harder than we think. Sin is easy. Jesus said. **"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."** Rich is not a checking account balance. It's about priorities. This is about your heart.

**"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."** All things! So getting to heaven is certainly possible. Rescuing you from a dangerous and deadly situation certainly is possible. And not only are these things possible, but through Christ they're accomplished. Jesus met this man while he was on the way, on the way to the cross. On his way to die. On his way to offer the perfect life he earned in our place. Now it's as if you were perfect your entire life. Jesus gave you this as a gift. No need to repay, no need to try and work it off. The gift requires nothing for you to enjoy its benefits other than to believe it's true.

Now reprioritize your life. Believe in Jesus and all your priorities will start to fall into place. Your possessions will start to mean nothing. You'll enjoy them as God's blessings and be ready to lose them all tomorrow in order to keep Christ first in your life. They will never take the place of God. Your good works and your possessions gain you nothing. Only trusting in Christ saves.

Some people just don't think about their eternal life. People get so comfortable or ignore lack of comfort thinking they can put off death and not have to face the hard questions. By God's grace that's not you. You know that getting to eternal life is what this life is all about and only Jesus has the right answer for how that happens. He is the only right answer. He keeps your possessions in line. He gives your life priority. Now you can break the huddle for the right priority.