

Understanding Conversion

❖ **Romans 10:9-10**

“that if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

These words from the Apostle Paul provide us with an understanding of how a person is “saved”.

Much of the modern church teaches as practices that as long as someone believes in Jesus, they are saved and right with God.

But re-read the passage. What does “Lord” mean?

Is making Jesus “Lord” really necessary?

In the modern church we divide the human race into three groups:

- Deeper Studies #3** {
1. The Lost –
 2. The Committed –
 3. The “Carnal” Christians-

What do you really believe?

Is it “ok” to pray a prayer, yet go on living essentially the same way?

Does God actually require us to make Jesus Lord in our lives?

If we don’t are we really saved?

Mark 10:17-27 helps us to understand how Jesus evangelized, and lays a good foundation to help us understand real or “true conversion”.

❖ **Mark 10:17-27**

“As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, **“Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”** Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. **You know the commandments:** ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not give false testimony,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’” He said to him, “Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth.” **Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross.” But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful,** for he was one who had great possessions. Jesus looked around, and said to his disciples, “How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into God’s Kingdom!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again, “Children, how hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into God’s Kingdom! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter into God’s Kingdom.” They were exceedingly astonished, saying to him, **“Then who can be saved?”** Jesus, looking at them, said, **“With men it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God.”**

I. **“Good Teacher what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 17)**

This young man is an evangelist’s dream.

A man of means and influence, and seemingly hungry for God.

What would you ask Him?

- A. Do you believe in Jesus?
- B. Do you admit you are a sinner?
- C. Do you believe Christ died for sinners?
- D. Will you accept Him as your savior?

Pray this prayer after me...

Such a prize “catch” surely must merit a T.V. interview on Christian T.V., or at least in a magazine.

II. I am surprised at how badly Jesus handled this “opportunity”.

❖ **Mark 10:18-19**

“Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except one—God. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not give false testimony,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

What kind of poor evangelistic tactics are these?

Jesus begins with a rebuke, then brought up the Ten Commandments of all things.

It’s almost unbelievable Jesus did not know how to lead someone to Himself.

Actually Jesus did know what He was doing.

His rebuke came to a young man ready to flatter a religious leader, yet had very little real reverence for God.

Jesus wanted to emphasize God’s character and get the conversation started correctly.

III. Mark 10:20-21

“He said to him, “Teacher, I have observed all these things from my youth.” Jesus looking at him loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack. Go, sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me, taking up the cross.”

Today we seemingly think people (inside & outside the Church) know who God is.

Most of our ministry begins with, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life”.

Love is magnified as the foremost characteristic of God.

To say “God loves you” to a person living for themselves, living life on their own terms, is very misleading information.

People not focused on God, on who He really is, do not realize the gravity of their situation before Him. (ungodliness...)

They will infer that since God loves me, He would certainly never harm me. He would not embarrass me by exposing my sin, and surely not require repentance.

- **Jesus emphasized actual obedience to God.**

A Christian understanding of God: “One who created all things, who alone is Sovereign and who will rule over His creation forever.

The Lost’s concept of God: **“One who has committed Himself to honoring the free will of man at any cost.** God is so flexible, so loving that He would by no means punish such wonderful people”.

- **Eliminating God from our evangelism and church practices is no innocent shift in emphasis; rather it cuts the very heart out of our message.**

Do we do Him a favor by “accepting Jesus”?

Or has He done us one, in commanding us to trust in and live for His Son?

- **“Go and sell all you possess” does not sound like “pray after me”.**

This is a call, a very clear call to an entirely new way of life.

Listen to Paul (Philippians 3:8), “I count all things dung that I may win Christ.”

IV. Jesus actually commanded the Rich Young Ruler to repent and reverse all his priorities.

Conversion means turning from his lust for riches, power and prestige.

Zacchaeus had to repent from thieving and give to the poor he opposed.

Have we changed the definition of repentance?

Today repentance means “to feel sorry about something we have done”, when all through the Bible it meant to change the way we live...because now we live for God and His glory.

See: Mark 1:15; 6:12; Acts 3:19; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 17:30; 26:18-20; Matthew 6:24; Proverbs 28:13.

***Jesus put His finger on the youth’s idolatry and tried to save his soul.**

How many did Jesus say to: “Come and follow me”?

V. Mark 10:22

“But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions.”

❖ **Mark 10:22 (NASB)**

"But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property."

There is a real "decision" to make, and a real commitment required. **This young man would have quickly and easily made the decision to accept Jesus, as long as he could continue living for himself.** But he would not empty his hands of the money that held his heart to really "get saved".

Today we would create a new category for this young man: the "Carnal Christian". He could allow Jesus to be his Savior, yet still continue to live for himself. He could cling to his lust, yet be assured of having eternal life.

Now we must make a real decision that requires real commitment:

❖ **Luke 14:33 (NASB)**

"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

Can you imagine Jesus demanding this kind of commitment? Why would He do so? His love is His motivation! The Rich Young Ruler cannot have both his lust working in his heart and enjoy the reality of God's Kingdom at the same time.

A real Christian is one who has turned from everything and turned completely to Jesus, and in so doing he has fulfilled the condition of discipleship.

❖ **Mark 10:21b (KJV)**

"Come, take up the cross, and follow me."

Come Take Up The Cross And Follow Me:

What does this actually mean, and is this really required?

Repentance for the Rich Young Ruler is: "Sell all you have and give it to the poor".

This is only the first half of our message.

The second half, "Come, take up your cross, and follow Me," is just as important.

To "take up the cross" is to voluntarily die to my way of living and to actually live my life now for the glory of God. The cross is a living reminder that sacrifice and hardship, even difficulty, will come my way if I decide to follow Jesus.

God calls us to real discipleship (a disciplined lifestyle), to *"press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:14). To follow Jesus as Lord of my life is just that...following Jesus as Lord. In Twenty-first century America, the idea of the Lord or King is pretty hard to understand, and even harder to submit to, but it is a reality.

Christianity is: *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20)

My Decision Personally:

My Decision in Evangelism:
