

# Through The Eye Of The Needle: Requirements of The True Gospel

By Tom Hill

**Bible Text:** Mark 10:17-21

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The Church of Jesus Christ today faces a crisis in understanding the Biblical doctrines of salvation. As a result, scores of those who call themselves Christians do not know the complete true Biblical gospel. On numerous occasions, Jesus unmistakably declared the essential elements of the gospel.

One such instance transpired in His conversation with the rich young ruler. At this time, the young man came to Jesus and asked Him, “Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (See Mark 10.17-22; this account is recorded also in Matthew 19.16-22 and Luke 18.18-23.)

In this setting, Jesus declared each of the required parts of the gospel. From this conversation, I will define the terms of the gospel as Christ presented them. Then, you can examine your own life in light of them to evaluate your condition before God as Scripture directs (2 Corinthians 13.5).

**Condition of the man:** Mark 10.17, 20

When the rich young ruler came to Christ, his questions and statements revealed his true condition and character. Initially, the young man showed several positive traits. He knew that eternal life existed and desired it, sincerely and zealously. Ignoring the crowd around Jesus, he boldly approached Christ, greeted Him kindly, and bowed down and worshiped Him. Not even the Pharisees did that.

In addition, he revealed that he lived a moral life. He considered himself orthodox, obedient to God's law, and he regularly examined himself against that law. He bore many marks of a humble, sincere disciple.

However, he made three crucial mistakes. First, he misunderstood the true nature of Jesus Christ. He viewed Him merely as a good man, a teaching master and not a ruling master, failing to recognize the deity of Christ.

Second, he misunderstood the true nature of eternal life. He looked for something to do, something that he could contribute. He had concluded that eternal life was something earned instead of something given.

Third, he misjudged his own true condition. He valued his own self-righteousness as contributing to eternal life. He believed he only needed to add something more and wanted to know what it was. He erred as to his sinfulness and his offence to a holy God.

In short, the rich young ruler was good on the outside but lost. Morality is not Christianity. Nor is Christianity a lifestyle to copy or practice.

**Content of Christ's message:** Mark 10.18-19, 21

The response of Jesus to the young man's question differs widely from the current popular message to unbelievers. In essence, Christ drew attention to two issues: the exaltation of God, Whom the sinner had offended; and the law of God, which he had broken.

In one short sequence, Jesus exalted God and glorified His character. He presented Him as the source of all goodness. At the same time, Jesus affirmed His own deity. He was not just a good man on human terms, but affirmed that His inherent goodness came from God Himself, equalizing Himself with God.

Then, Jesus preached the law of God to him. He did so to reveal the true character of God, to disclose God's demands upon him and all mankind, to disclose the true nature of his sin (an offense against a holy God), to uncover the knowledge of his sin in particular (covetousness), and to expose the true condition of the young man before a holy God, Who will not wink at nor bypass sin.

Consequently, the young man faced the stark reality of the impossibility of obtaining eternal life through his own merits.

**Commands of Christ:** Mark 10.21

Finally, Jesus issued several demands upon the young man. Without fulfilling them, he would miss eternal life. Christ demanded repentance from his sin, which required a revolution in his life. Jesus commanded faith and obedience along with the demand for repentance.

These demands forced the rich young ruler to acknowledge the lordship of Christ in all areas of his life. Further, Christ insisted upon self-denial, death to selfish interests, as well as taking up his cross and following Him. Christ made it clear that eternal life demanded true affection for Him, regardless of the cost.

At the conclusion of His all or nothing demands, Jesus promised assurance of acceptance. The young man could have realized his desire, eternal life, and complete assurance of his possession of it. But, he went away grieved, because he rejected the content of Christ's message and the commands of Christ involved in obtaining eternal life.

What can the Holy Spirit accomplish in your life with these truths? He can clarify the truth of the gospel for you. False assumptions of the gospel abound. Unfortunately, they evade the whole truth of the gospel. They present parts of it for the whole of it. The requirements for eternal life as Jesus Christ taught it includes a revelation of God's character, the application of God's law to uncover sin in particular and God's righteous demands upon sinners, the demand of repentance, and the denial of self coupled with faith and obedience in Christ. Anything less strips the gospel of its demands and of its power.

With these truths, the Holy Spirit can comfort you with the truth. Jesus said that the truth sets men free. If the Holy Spirit has applied these truths to your life, you can rest in the assurance that Christ promised to the rich young ruler.

Additionally, the Holy Spirit can convict you with them. Has He revealed to you that your true condition before God comes short of His demands? Are you like the rich young ruler, desiring eternal life but unwilling to submit to Christ's requirements? Do you, like him, rely upon your own self-righteousness?

If He has convicted you of your shortcomings, He has done so to correct you with the truth. Recognize your true condition before God. Repent of your sin. Turn to God's provision in Jesus Christ and trust and obey Him to the saving of your soul.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will apply these truths in your life today. May He come in grace and make you assured of eternal life.

“Whatever means you use to get people into the Church is precisely what you must use to keep them. If you get them with a religious circus then you must keep the circus going, keep up the entertainment.” Ernest Reisinger