

一位慕道失败者留给我们的功课——马可福音 10:17-22

Lessons from a Failed Seeker—Mark 10:17-22

Introduction / Outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 10:17-22; Luke 14:25-33.

Mark 10:17-22

17 As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 18 And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. 19 You know the commandments, ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” 20 And he said to Him, “Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.” 21 Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, “One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” 22 But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

- **【Analogy】** In the medical field, there's a concept called patient compliance, which refers to whether patients are willing to comply with taking drugs. Some factors that affect patient compliance include: financial cost, self-evaluation of health condition, confidence in the drug's effectiveness, etc. No matter how effective a drug is, if the patient is unwilling to take it, he cannot benefit from its effect. The same principle applies also to spiritual diseases. The salvation of Jesus' cross is the magic cure for all spiritual diseases. However, the bad news is that many people simply won't take this drug, so they can never be healed.
- The rich young ruler is just such a tragic example. He was young and promising, possessing enviable wealth, status, and reputation, yet he was troubled by the sickness of his soul. He came to Jesus seeking the cure for his soul, but in the end, he left without success. What hindered his patient compliance, causing him to throw away the magic cure right in front of him and just won't take it?
- Outline:
 - Title: Lessons from a Failed Seeker
 - 1. Hindrance 1: Low View of Jesus(vv. 17-18)
 - 2. Hindrance 2: High View of Self (vv. 19-20)
 - 3. Only Solution: Follow Jesus (v. 21)
 - 4. Hindrance 3: Wrong View of Treasure (v. 22)

Hindrance 1: Low View of Jesus(vv. 17-18)

- "A man ran up to Him": In the ancient Middle East, men of status would never run in public as they considered it highly undignified. People will laugh at you for running. This shows how earnest his desire for eternal life was!

"To inherit eternal life": He knew he needed eternal life! You'd wish all your seeker friends could ask this question, right? Too many people choose to avoid the topic of eternal life altogether; this guy hits the nail right on the head!

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end."

【Principle】 Although man cannot understand all God's work, God has placed a longing for eternal life in the human heart. Every person is born with an innate longing for eternal life.

【Reality】 Many people deny they have a longing for eternal life because they are hypocritical and dishonest and afraid to admit it. Romans 1:18-23 says they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness", so they deliberately suppress the desire for eternal life, even though they know intuitively that they have the duty to worship God. They dare not face the "God-shaped hole" in their hearts.

"What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness (of Eden), of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself." - One saint

- "Why do you call Me good?": Jesus knew this man's concept of goodness was fundamentally flawed! The biggest flaw is not knowing that good and evil have **absolute standards**. Without an absolute standard of goodness, you can't even begin to talk about relative goodness. **If one does not accept God's absolute standard of goodness, one cannot even use the word "good" rightly.**
- "No one is good except God alone": Absolute goodness is God's attribute. Unless you first acknowledge God's absolute goodness and learn God's standard of goodness, you are not qualified to use the word "good." Taking what belongs only to God and casually attributing it to others is **essentially blasphemy!** Calling Jesus "good teacher" is not wrong, but if you do not know Jesus as God, saying so would be blasphemy!

【Principle】 If you know Jesus as **the only absolutely good God**, you'll naturally trust and follow Him. But the rich young ruler did not know Jesus this way. In his eyes, Jesus was just a good teacher.

【Warning】 According to a 2020 survey, 30% of professing Christians in the United States said, "Jesus is a good teacher but not God." By 2022, this number had increased to 43%.

Hindrance 2: High View of Self (vv. 19-20)

- "You know the commandments...": Jesus quoted the last six of the Ten Commandments. There's a slight change, as explained below.
- "I have kept all these things from my youth up": By these words, we know how distant his heart is from the kingdom of God! I have never violated God's law! If that's the case, then why do you seek eternal life? You already have it. If you are truly this good, then your relationship with God should be perfect, so you should already be living in the joy and satisfaction of eternal life. Why then is there such a great emptiness in your heart, driving you to seek eternal life?

【Key Point】 One reason the rich young ruler said this: he thought God's law was merely a set of **simple and superficial external rules**. Such is the teaching he'd received from the Pharisees since childhood: The law says, "Do not murder," and they say, unless you stab someone in the heart with a knife, you haven't broken this commandment. The law says, "Do not steal," and they say, unless you

put your hand into someone's pocket, you're fine. They had no idea that all God's commandments are getting at the heart!!!

【Explanation】 This is why Jesus changed the tenth commandment from "Do not covet" to "Do not defraud", because they're basically the same thing! Coveting is a desire of the heart, manifested in various actions that take advantage of others, or, defraud others. It's the same commandment, only described in different ways, one from the perspective of the heart and the other of external behavior.

Proverbs 4:23 "...For from it [the heart] flow the springs of life."

Proverbs 23:7 "...For as he thinks within himself [in his heart], so he is."

Matthew 5:21-30 "You have heard... but I say to you..."

【Principle】 One cannot taste the sweetness of Jesus' salvation until he tastes the bitterness of his own sin. He cannot see the holy radiance of Jesus until he sees the filthy darkness of his own sin. He cannot love Jesus to a point of totally denying himself and carrying his cross to follow Jesus into salvation, until he hates his own sin to a point of feeling totally disgusted of himself.

Only Solution: Follow Jesus (v. 21)

- "Jesus looked at him": A better translation would be "gazed." It's the same word when Peter denied the Lord three times and then Jesus gazed at him, causing Peter to burst into tears. It's the gaze of intentionality that penetrates the soul.
- "Jesus felt a love for him": The Greek word "agape" refers to a love that seeks the greatest good for the object of love through practical actions. The action of Jesus loving him here is to say the following instruction. So the following words are not an extreme requirement, but a command of love.
- "One thing you lack": The original text emphasizes "one thing" by placing it first: "One thing! You lack only one thing!"

【Ponder】 With so many issues in his life, only one thing is needed to solve them all? Is there ever such a magic cure as this? What is this magic cure?

- "Come, follow me": That's the one thing! Selling his possessions and giving to the poor is merely the necessary preparation for following Jesus.

【Conclusion】 Friends, being a Christian is as simple as that! It's not about who knows more Bible knowledge or who does more good deeds. Being a Christian ultimately boils down to one thing: following Jesus! When a sinner follows Jesus, all the deadly diseases of his soul will be completely healed!

【Examination】 Are you following Jesus? Are you continually seeking Him in His word? Are you relying on the power of the Holy Spirit? Are you beholding His glory through prayer? Are you serving His kingdom in the church? Are you tasting His sweetness through obedience in all things? Are you following Jesus in your life? I'm not asking whether you believe in Jesus, but, do you follow Him? Only by following Jesus can your sinful soul be completely healed.

Hindrance 3: Wrong View of Treasure (v. 22)

- "Sell all you possess": The principle is to abandon all idols. Jesus was applying it to him specifically, for his idol was his earthly treasure! Only by getting rid of idols can one follow Jesus. So, this is a command of love! After all, Jesus didn't ask him to sell something he didn't have. The price was something he could fully afford, but he was unwilling to pay it. And this really reveals the idol of his heart: Money has been his lord that he's been worshiping and serving all this time!

Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

- "You will have treasure in heaven": Which is better, heavenly treasure or earthly treasure? Unfortunately, his heart was inseparably attached to the worldly treasure.

【Examination】 What are the idols of your heart? What price are you unwilling to pay for Jesus? **Money? Time? Career? Entertainment? Relationships? Status and fame? Where is your treasure?** If Jesus asks you to give up all your most cherished treasures for Him and follow Him, would you be willing?

Conclusion

The rich young ruler couldn't serve Jesus because he had a low view of Jesus, a high view of self, and a wrong view of treasure. These are common reasons why seekers fail. To solve all these problems, you only need to do one thing: follow Jesus.