

“Why Callest Thou Me Good?”

Mark 10:17-22

A certain rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked, *“Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?”* To his credit, he realized three things every person needs to face sooner-or-later.

1. Death is not the end. After death is the judgment.
2. Eternal life is something you have or don't have (1 John 5:12).
3. Eternal life must be acquired before you die.

Jesus responded to his question with another question, *“Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God.”* Strange response. Let's consider Christ's question to this young man.

I. The INQUIRY of the young man.

- A. The MOTIVATION of the inquiry. What motivated him to ask?
 1. WHY did he address Jesus as “good?” Was he just repeating what others were saying about Jesus? Was he just showing respect? Was he seeking to gain Jesus favor with flattery?
 2. Did he really believe Jesus is “good?” Did he realize what that involved?
- B. The MEANING of Jesus' response.
 1. John 2:25 says Jesus knew what is in man. He knows men's thoughts before they speak (Ps. 94:11; Isa. 55:8). Therefore, Jesus does not answer men according to their words, but according to their thoughts.
 - Jesus knew this young man thought he was self-righteous, as evidenced by what follows in verses 19-20.
 2. By asking, *“What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”* he was unconsciously stating his misconception—Eternal life is obtained by doing something good (Mt. 19:16).
 3. By replying to his question, *“Why callest thou me good?”* Jesus sought to convict this young man of the error in his thinking that a man could be good enough to merit eternal life—And

convict him of a sense of sinfulness and his self-righteousness.

II. The INTERPRETATION of Christ's response.

A. Jesus' question could be interpreted three ways.

1. Was Jesus implying He wasn't good—"Why are you calling me good? I'm not good. Only God is good."
2. Or, was Jesus inferring He was not God, "Why do you call me good, when only God is good, and I'm not God?"
3. Neither! Jesus is making the point—If only God is good, and you are calling Me good, you must believe I am God.

B. The truth stated according to deductive reasoning:

Only God is good (Amen?)

Jesus is good (Amen?)

Therefore Jesus is God (Amen!)

➡ Absolutely logical!

➡ The word "good" is an much overused word— "Good luck"... "Good heavens"... "Good-Bye"... "Good Night" ... "Good Friday."

➡ The original Saxon meaning of the English word "*God*" is "*The Good*."

C. The young man addressed Jesus as "*GOOD Master*." "*Master*" means "teacher." He was calling Jesus a "good teacher." [Remember what Darth Vader said to Obi Wan, "Last time we met, you were the *master*, I was the learner."]

1. The only way Jesus could be considered a "good teacher" would be to believe what He taught was true. No one could be considered a "good teacher," if he were teaching falsehood.
2. Jesus' statement completely undermines the liberal's belief that Jesus was a good teacher, but not God. Jesus is either God, or He's not good. Period.
 - Jesus knew this youth did not believe He was God.

- Notice v. 20—After Jesus repeats the commandments, the young man no longer called Jesus “*Good master*” (v. 17). Now it was merely, “*Master.*” Jesus forced him to decide—“Was Jesus God or just another good teacher?” Evidently, he was not prepared to accept Jesus as God.
- D. Jesus is good—Jesus is God. By definition “good” means something that is favorable... excellent... virtuous... right... profitable... worthwhile. All this describes Jesus.

We have four accounts of Jesus life on earth in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. At the end of John’s gospel he wrote, “*And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*” (John 21:25). One thing I gather from this verse is Jesus was a very, very busy man. He was always on the move. He did so much it could not all be written down.

But Peter summarized the entire life Jesus in just one verse—Acts 10:38. Jesus “*went about doing good.*”

Jesus “*went about **doing good!***” That could not be said of any other person who ever lived. Romans 3:12—“*...there is none that **doth good, no, not one.***” Other men, like Joseph and Barnabas, may be called “good,” but no man, except Jesus, did good all the time... in all circumstances... and to all people (Ps. 145:9—“*The Lord is good to ALL...*” cf. Mt. 5:45).

Jesus is the incarnation of all that is good. He does good because He is good. Psalm 119:68—“*Thou are GOOD, and **doest GOOD...***”)

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1. Jesus LIVED doing good (healing, raising the dead, feeding the hungry, comforting the broken hearted, forgiving sinners, teaching the multitudes).
 2. Jesus DIED doing good. On the cross He forgave His enemies... provided for His Mother... and saved a dying thief.

3. Jesus is in heaven today still doing good as He makes intercession for us.

III. The INCENTIVE for us to follow.

➡ The Lord's goodness should lead us to do two things:

- A. To REPENT— *"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that **the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**"* (Rom. 2:4).
- B. To PRAISE Him — *"Oh that men would **praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!**"* (Ps. 107:8).
 - The fact we are sitting here right now is a manifestation of the goodness of God. If it were not for the goodness of God you and I would be dead and burning in hell right now.

SUMMATION: There is a hymn in our hymnbook (#194) by John W. Peterson that says...

He went about doing good,
And helping where'er He could;
Our example is He,
And like Him we should be,
Who went about doing good.

God has certainly been good to you and I. Amen? But, how much good are you and I doing for Him?

I'll be the first to confess I haven't done as much good for God as I should. The truth be known, I've probably done bad more than good. I confess with Paul, *"I know that in me (that is, my flesh) dwelleth NO GOOD thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is GOOD I find not. For the GOOD that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... O wretched man that I am!"* (Rom. 7:18, 19, 24).

The longer I live, the more I wish I had done more good. More good with how I used my time... how I spent my money... how I treated people.

If there is anything good in me—It's gotta be God, and it's gotta be grace! God help me to follow Jesus' example and go about doing good!