

Luke 10:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Analysis

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. Jesus affirms the lawyer's correct summary of the law: love God completely (Deuteronomy 6:5) and neighbor as self (Leviticus 19:18). The phrase *orthōs apekrithēs* (ὀρθῶς ἀπεκρίθης, "you have answered right") acknowledges theological accuracy. The lawyer knows Scripture intellectually—but knowledge isn't salvation.

The command *touto poiei* (τοῦτο ποίει, "this do") uses the present imperative, indicating continuous, habitual action: keep on doing this perfectly, always, without fail. The promise **and thou shalt live** (*kai zēsē*, καὶ ζήσῃ) echoes Leviticus 18:5, "which if a man do, he shall live in them." Here's the devastating reality: the law's promise of life is genuine—perfect obedience would yield eternal life. But who has loved God with all heart, soul, strength, and mind? Who has loved neighbors as themselves consistently?

Jesus doesn't say, "Try your best" or "Do reasonably well." He demands perfection because the law demands perfection (Matthew 5:48). This drives the lawyer—and every honest person—to recognize their failure and need for grace. Paul later explains this dynamic: the law was never meant to save but to reveal sin and drive us to Christ (Romans 3:20, 7:7-13, Galatians 3:24). The lawyer's next question ("Who is my neighbor?") reveals he's already looking for loopholes—proving he doesn't love perfectly and can't save himself.

Historical Context

This exchange occurred during Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. The lawyer's question about eternal life reflected contemporary Jewish debates about salvation requirements. Rabbinic tradition debated which commands were weightiest, how many one must keep, and whether faith or works secured salvation. Jesus' response follows rabbinic pedagogical method—answering questions with questions—but leads to devastating self-revelation: the lawyer knows what to do but can't do it perfectly enough to merit eternal life.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' command to 'do this' expose the impossibility of self-salvation through law-keeping?
2. Why is the lawyer's subsequent question ('Who is my neighbor?') evidence that he's already failed to love as the law requires?
3. What is the relationship between the law's genuine promise of life and the gospel's gift of life through faith in Christ?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	δὲ	αὐτῷ	ὁρθῶς	ἀπεκρίθη·	τοῦτο	ποίη	καὶ
he said	And	unto him	right	Thou hast answered	this	do	and
G2036	G1161	G846	G3723	G611	G5124	G4160	G2532

ζήσῃ
thou shalt live
G2198

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 20:11 (Parallel theme): And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them.

Leviticus 18:5 (Parallel theme): Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

Matthew 19:17 (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Nehemiah 9:29 (Parallel theme): And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

Galatians 3:12 (Parallel theme): And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Romans 10:4 (Parallel theme): For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 3:19 (Parallel theme): Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Luke 7:43 (Parallel theme): Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.