

Mark 10:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

Analysis

A man asked Jesus, 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?' (Διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ, τί ποιήσω ἵνα ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω;). The address 'Good Master' (Didaskale agathe, Διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ) prompts Jesus' response about goodness (v. 18). The question 'what shall I do' reveals works-righteousness assumption—earning eternal life through personal achievement. The verb 'inherit' (klēronomēsō, κληρονομήσω) oddly pairs with 'do'—inheritance is received, not earned. This theological confusion prompts Jesus' corrective teaching: salvation comes through God's grace, not human merit (vv. 21-27). The man's question represents humanity's universal error—attempting to achieve righteousness through works rather than receiving it by faith (Romans 3:20-28; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Historical Context

First-century Judaism emphasized Torah obedience as path to righteousness, though also recognizing God's grace and covenant mercy. Rabbinic teaching included debates about which commandments were weightiest and how much obedience sufficed. The Pharisaic emphasis on meticulous law-keeping created culture of performance-based righteousness. Jesus consistently challenged this (Mark 2:17; 7:6-13; Luke 18:9-14). Paul, former Pharisee, articulated gospel correction: righteousness comes through faith in Christ, not works of law (Romans 3:21-4:8; Galatians 2:15-21; Philippians 3:7-9). The rich man's question demonstrates sincere spiritual seeking but fundamental misunderstanding—he sought to 'do' what must be 'received' as gift.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the rich man's question 'what shall I do?' reveal the universal human tendency toward works-righteousness?
2. What does the contradiction between 'do' and 'inherit' teach about salvation as gift rather than achievement?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Τί	με	λέγεις	ἀγαθὸς
G3588	And	Jesus	said	unto him	Why	me	calllest thou	good
G1161	G2424	G2036	G846	G5101	G3165	G3004	G18	
οὐδεὶς	ἀγαθὸς	εἰ	μὴ	εἰς	ὁ		θεός	
there is none	good	G1487	G3361	one	G3588	that is	God	
G3762	G18		G1520		G2316			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 19:17 (Good): 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.

Luke 18:19 (Good): And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

1 John 4:16 (References God): And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Romans 3:12 (Good): They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

1 Samuel 2:2 (References God): There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

1 John 4:8 (References God): He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

James 1:17 (Good): Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Psalms 119:68 (Good): Thou art good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.

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