

Matthew 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Jesus' response 'Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God' challenges the rich young ruler's superficial address. Jesus isn't denying His deity but forcing the man to consider the implication—if only God is good, and you call Me good, who am I? The follow-up 'but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments' shows that eternal life requires perfect obedience (which no one achieves), leading to recognition of need for grace.

Historical Context

The rich young ruler approached Jesus as a respected teacher, not divine Lord. His question 'what good thing shall I do?' (v. 16) revealed works-based thinking. Jesus' response exposes that no one is good enough to earn eternal life—the law shows our need for a Savior. Only God's goodness (in Christ) saves.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' question challenge your understanding of goodness and deity?
2. In what ways do you still try to earn salvation through good works?

Interlinear Text

ο δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Τί με λέγεις ἀγαθός· οὐδεὶς
G3588 And he said unto him Why me callest thou good there is none
G1161 G2036 G846 G5101 G3165 G3004 G18 G3762

ἀγαθός· εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ Θεός. εἰ δὲ θέλεις
good if G3361 one G3588 that is God if And thou wilt
G18 G1487 G1520 G2316 G1487 G1161 G2309

εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν τήρησον τὰς ἐντολάς
enter into G3588 life G2222 keep G3588 the commandments
G1525 G1519 G5083 G1785

Additional Cross-References

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.

Romans 10:5 (Word): For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

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 4:16 (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.