

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

ὁ	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	εἷς	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	keep	G3588	the commandments		
G1525	G1519		G2222	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.