

Call to Obedience #305
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What Must I Do to Be Saved?

By Reimar Schultze

To this question most evangelical believers in America would say, “Ye must be born again.” One hardly dares quarrel with this answer since Jesus used these same words in his conversation with Nicodemus the Pharisee (John 3:3-7). But to get Jesus’ answer to this, you need to go to the story of the rich young ruler. He is the one, not Nicodemus, who asked, “What must I do to be saved?” Do not put the cart before the horse. Before you can be reborn, I mean, before you can have a sound conversion that makes you show up at the next church prayer meeting, and the next, and the next, you must come to grips with the law, the Big Ten and forsake all, be ready to take up your cross and continually follow Jesus. If all of this is in your heart, then you are ready to become a new creature, to see and enter the Kingdom of God. Effective evangelism, which produces healthy converts, must begin with preaching the law, so we might see the extreme sinfulness of our hearts. This will bring us to a repentance not to be repented of. The first of the 95 theses of Martin Luther is this: “Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when he said *Poenitentiam Agite* [repent] willed that the whole life of the believers should be repentance.” Luther led John Wesley, perhaps the greatest evangelist, to Jesus. Wesley followed Luther’s two-fold evangelical approach, law and Gospel. It is reported that at one meeting, Wesley preached law first, resulting in 1,800 sinners on the ground agonizing in deep repentance over the lost and rebellious state of their souls. Then, Wesley preached the Gospel and, oh, what converts these persons became. The damage, which has been done to the church the last 100 years in refusing to preach law and repentance, will only be revealed on Judgment Day. But now, all we can point to is millions of “born again” believers who in their luke-warmness are unaware of the eternal flames awaiting them.

Let us now look at Jesus’ model for evangelism by how He answered the question, what must I do to be saved? “And when he (that is Jesus) was gone forth into the way, there came one running and kneeled to him and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus saith unto him. . . thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and thy mother. And he answered and said unto him, ‘Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him, loved him and said unto him, ‘one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me. And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions” (Mark 10:17-22). Let us first see how the man came, then let us notice that Christ’s evangelism began with the Law.

Immediately, this man gets our attention. Anytime someone comes running to Jesus, that is good. There were not many people running to Jesus in those Gospel days. But a few, at times, did so. The multitude came running occasionally, but they never came

running to Jesus to be saved, or with the question, "What shall I do to have eternal life?" They always came to see another miracle. It is unfortunate that most of the running that goes on in our religious world today is still a running for miracles. There's not enough running among us to come to Jesus to find eternal life.

So here we have the running of a man who wanted to be saved. Our first impression commends this man because of his running to get eternal life. Secondly, it is commendable because of his kneeling at Jesus' feet. This tells us the man was desperate, he was humble, he was looking for God's mercy. He did not come like the Pharisees came to Jesus with a contentious spirit, seeking to find fault with our Master. No, he came the way all mankind should come to Jesus. Jesus loved him just for the way he came. Jesus loved him for the question that he brought with him.

So then, here is the question. I want you to know this is not a question that he made up at the moment, but this is a question that he had had in his heart for a long time. And he took the question on the run with him on that particular day. Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Oh, I love this question, don't you? I love the earnestness of this young man, don't you? If he did nothing else, other than to ask the right question, he did the world a lot of good.

Now observe how Jesus answered this question. He didn't answer it in a traditional way, such as, "Believe in me and you shall be saved." No, Jesus first took this man to the Law. This is where evangelists should always begin. You see, God gave the Ten Commandments and Jesus wanted this young man to measure himself against those Ten Commandments so he could see his relationship to man and God. Then Jesus would take him from there. Because if you don't have a heart for the Ten Commandments, then you don't understand sin, you don't want obedience, nor do you want holiness, and you cannot get eternal life without all of these. It is not that the Ten Commandments will save you, but how you relate to the them, whether it is with indifference or whether it is with appreciation, and submission to the Righteousness of God, that makes all the difference in whether you'll find your way to salvation or not. For no man can ever get a sound conversion, unless that man is also seeking righteousness. All those who have tried to be saved without seeking righteousness were born by caesarian birth; they were not born of the Spirit, but of man meddling in the affairs of the Spirit. If you want eternal life without loving righteousness you are not a candidate for salvation.

Again the question is, What must I do to be saved? Jesus said "thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, honor thy father and mother" (Vs. 19). Indeed, some of you might not like the Ten Commandments, but Jesus does. He used them and Paul said they are our schoolmasters to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). You can't get a genuine spiritual birth unless you are willing to stop adultery, unless you are willing to stop killing, unless you are willing to stop stealing, unless you are willing to stop lying and cheating, unless you are willing to honor your father and your mother. In other words, unless you want holiness. As you come to Jesus, you must face up to these moral laws and clean up your act.

Today's popular Gospel is, come as you are, and you can stay as you are for all your righteousness is in Jesus' blood. To the first point of this, we say, yes, come as you are, but then let that righteousness get into your blood. Holiness must be found in us also, it must lead to holy thinking moment by moment, to holy deeds, to holy actions and reactions.

Now notice Jesus only quoted 5 of the Ten Commandments to the young man. He didn't even quote them in the order given in Exodus. First he quoted the 7th, and then the 6th, and then the 8th, then the 9th, then the 5th. He left out the 1st to the 4th, and the 10th. The Ten Commandments can be classified into two segments: the first 4 deal with man's relationship with God and the next 6 deal with man's relationship with man. Notice the commandments that Jesus gave this young man, were those relating to his relationship with man only. So, Jesus, knowing the heart of this man, gave him the commandments he had kept from his youth.

Now, look at these five commandments that Jesus gave him. You can say, as a whole, that people who keep them make good, decent citizens in the kingdoms of man. They're honest, moral people, good neighbors, good taxpayers, and good parents. I believe there are decent people like this in the world and in our churches. The problem is that because they keep a good relationship with their fellow man, they think they are saved. That is what we get at funerals. The preacher, in almost every case, when it comes to the funeral service, will say, "Well, he was a good man. He never hurt anybody, he was a good father, a good neighbor, a good citizen. Therefore, he is going to heaven." Most of the congregation nods in agreement, others know they are being fed a big lie.

But, my friend, Jesus is telling the Church Universal that being good to one another does not save us. We must also have a good, right relationship with God, and that takes the cross. We have cross-less evangelism all over the world. This is not Jesus' Gospel. But I want you to know that the young ruler, even though he had kept these 5 commandments from his youth, he knew in his heart he was not saved. Oh, I wish all of the unsaved would know they are lost. So, when we come to Verse 21, "Then Jesus beholding, loved him and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me!" Would you say Jesus is now calling this man to a right relationship with God? Again, it takes forsaking all and taking up the cross. Jesus said, "there is something, young man, between you and God and that is the love of money. That has to go before you can have life eternal. You are breaking the first commandment, which is, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' Your wealth and money have become a god to you. You, also, young man, have broken the 10th commandment which is, 'Thou shalt not covet.' You covet the things of the earth more than the things of heaven. Now what I want you to do for you to have life everlasting, is to forsake everything you have, I mean everything. It says, "Sell all you have," and take up the cross and follow me. And then you are going to have life everlasting." And now, my friend, I will tell every one of you whether you are a preacher or an usher or a bartender, if you have not repented of your sin for having broken the Law, taken up the cross to follow Jesus continually, you are not saved. Indeed, Jesus did not have to tell this young man to be born again because he was no candidate for the rebirth, but Nico-

demus was. So, we later hear of him having become a disciple. Jesus preached law and Gospel, so did Luther, so did Wesley, and we are to do likewise. Again, in Jesus model for evangelism the beginning point is the Law.

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