

The Greatest Impossibility of All – Eternal Life

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Exchanging Difficulties for Impossibilities (Part Four)

*But Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, **but with God all things are possible.**” (Matthew 19: 26 ESV)*

While this sounds encouraging, the disciples were very disturbed over the whole conversation. The preceding verses contained the discourse between Jesus and the rich young ruler who asked Jesus the question, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” He was ill-prepared for Jesus’ answer. Most of us know the story well. (Matthew 19: 18-23) The rich young man did a good job of justifying himself based on his obedience to the law – keeping the commandments.

The Difficulty: When Jesus gave him the final qualification, the rich young man did not like the terms of the deal sheet (as we might say today)—*go sell everything, give the proceeds to the poor, and come follow Me.* We are told he walked away *grieving* because he was very rich. Jesus took this teaching opp to say what has become troubling to many today because of our wealth as individuals and a nation because we are so financially blessed compared to most of the world.

“I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven...it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” (vs 23-24)

The stunned disciples responded by asking Jesus who *could* be saved. They must have thought *the rich man wanted to know the answer to eternal life and lived a good life, obeying the*

commandments. Just because he would not give up his possessions and become a follower of Jesus, he would be kept out of Heaven? Really? Not really.

The Impossibility: In the lesson verse today, Jesus gave His disciples the only correct answer to rich man's question—one asked by millions who want to know how they can live forever — get to Heaven; avoid Hell (if either really exist—get “fire insurance” of a sort).

The rich young man gave the answer many do today. I have been “good” and done “good things”. As Christians, we know our best behavior and works do not qualify us for the Kingdom of God. Jesus said it best, “*with man this is impossible.*” Simply stated, that means *you cannot work your way to Heaven, nor are you good enough to ever get there.*

But Jesus also gave the simple answer to everyone who seeks the Truth with a contrite, repentant heart, “*with God all things are possible.*” That is the great news of the Gospel. When we had no way to God—lost in our sin and without hope, God made THE WAY. It cannot be any more simply stated than the first verse taught to children in Christian churches.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3: 16 NASB)

God made the ultimate *impossibility possible* through Christ. The rich man's issue was his money had become his ‘god’ and stood between him and becoming a follower of Christ. Money is just one of many ‘gods’ that can do that. Are there any in your life doing the same or keeping you from going deeper in your relationship with Him?

Walter