

## Are you for Him?

Over the last two weeks we have talked about how JESUS IS FOR YOU! We looked at two different stories in scripture that showed that Jesus truly is for each and every one of us. No matter where we are, no matter what we are doing, Jesus is for us. Now tonight I want to ask you something personal... are you for Him?

**What is commitment**, and what are some examples of things you commit to?

**[TEACHER NOTE: Give students time to answer and share.]**

When you make a commitment, you are supposed to be “binding or pledging yourself” to something. However, culture has begun to teach that commitment really isn’t all that important.

What is more important is your happiness and entertainment. If you are happy and entertained, then commit to it. If you become unhappy or bored, then don’t worry about it – just find something new.

**Matthew 19:16-26 (NIV)**

**“Teacher, what good things must I do to get eternal life?”**

**[17] “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.” [18]**

**“Which ones?” he inquired. Jesus replied: “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony,**

**[19] honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.”**

**[20] “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” [21] Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

What Jesus says in this passage, then, is shocking to some people. In fact, if he had tweeted it today, many people would be hitting the “unfollow” button!

Jesus says that following Him is a commitment. It's a day-by-day journey. And it is giving control of your life over to Him.

We talked about how Jesus is for you, but are you for Jesus? Are you in this committed relationship with him?  
Are you for Jesus?

Jesus is hanging out and someone asks Jesus THE QUESTION. This guy doesn't ask what kind of clothes he should wear, what church is the best, whether or not he should see R movies or listen to bad music, ... he basically asks WHAT GOOD STUFF DO I GOT TO DO TO GO TO HEAVEN?!!

Jesus doesn't answer the question right away- he quickly asks him a rhetorical question, "Why ask me what is good?" Then he says, "Only God is good." Jesus is trying to emphasize a point here ...

## 1. Give Your All

The man had asked, what do I DO? DO is the wrong question to ask. Because there is nothing anyone can do to earn a relationship with God.

*Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (NIV)*

You see ... good isn't good enough, if you are FOR JESUS, you give it all!

Jesus emphasizes this further when he tells the man to keep all the commandments. The man quickly asks, "which ones?" He's really missing the point. But so do we. We want to know the MINIMUM that we have to do- to make it! Jesus names half of the commandments, the ones that have to do with us getting along with others. The same ones that Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount that many of us THINK we keep, but we break them in our minds.

This man does what we would probably do- he argues that he HAS kept them all. Jesus does something that only Jesus, God in the flesh, can do. He looks in the man's heart and sees what he treasures more than anything else. With this guy- it was money. Notice that the one commandment that Jesus left out was, "Do not covet," which He knew

would be the biggest issue with this young man.

You see- this guy was willing to sacrifice. But he wasn't ready to make a commitment. So how committed are you? What it all came down to for this guy was this ...

## 2. Let Go

If Jesus looked into our heart, like only our Lord can, what would he see. What are we holding on to? Is it money? Is it stuff ... relationships, clothes, etc.? Maybe we are holding on to a group of people that we call friends that are dragging us down.

What's #1 in your life? **ARE YOU FOR JESUS LIKE HE IS FOR YOU?**

If we're like this guy – we have trouble admitting it. Jesus decides to prove what was really #1 in this guy's life. Jesus asks him to go sell all his possessions and give away everything to the poor. And the guy can't do it. Money was #1 in this guy's world. He couldn't let go of it. Not even to save himself.

### Monkey TRAP

Do you know, it is said, that there are some hunters in Africa that can trap a monkey with just a gourd and some fruit & nuts. The hunter simply goes into the jungle and ties the gourd to the ground. You know what a gourd is don't you? It's a hollowed-out shell, shaped like a fat wine bottle. It's got a fat body with a skinny neck and its hollow inside. Well, the hunter simply drops some fruit and nuts inside the gourd and leaves it overnight. The monkey comes up to the gourd, smelling the fruit and nuts, and reaches his little arm in the gourd and grabs the tasty treat. When he grabs the fruit and nuts, his fist will no longer fit out of the gourd. The monkey pulls and pulls, but he can't get away. He will stay overnight stuck to the gourd, unwilling to let go of his prize. In the morning the hunter returns to see the little monkey with his arm in the gourd. As the hunter approaches, the monkey screams and pulls his arm with all his might, actually starting to pull some of the fur and skin off his hand ... but he won't let go. The hunter whacks the monkey on the head and throws the monkey in the dead monkey bag. Why did the monkey die? Right. Because he didn't let go!

What are you holding on to?

A lot of us are holding on to things that we THINK are going to make us happy. Jesus has something better for us. But we have to let go.

So where do you want to go? How committed are you?  
Let's see what happens in this story.

*[22] But when the young man heard this, he went sadly away because he had many possessions. [23] Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. [24] I say it again—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" [25] The disciples were astounded. "Then who in the world can be saved?" they asked. [26] Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible."*

Many of us would like to let go, but feel like we can't. Maybe some of us have tried to make God #1, but can't seem to let go of some of the stuff we allow to control us. GUESS WHAT! Don't be discouraged if it seems impossible to let go ...

### **3. Only Jesus**

There are some other people in this story that we haven't talked about. The disciples. They were standing here watching this whole thing. Notice that none of them jumped in and yelled at the man, "YOU BAD MAN! IF ONLY YOU COULD BE PERFECT LIKE ME!" None of the disciples said a word ... because they all wondered how they could make it! They all wondered how they could be saved. And Jesus reinforces to us the truth that we need to understand tonight. We can't DO anything, but rely on God.

The rich young ruler was a young man who decided to sit back and know Jesus without surrendering to Jesus. Jesus asked the young ruler to take his next step and to surrender his finances completely. The rich young ruler walked away from Jesus because he didn't understand what Jesus was calling him to.

Jesus wanted more for him than just a comfortable, quiet life. Jesus wanted him to have joy and an abundant life. He wanted him to experience the blessing of taking next steps. You see, He didn't just ask for the man to leave his wealth behind. He asked Him to give all of his wealth

to the poor. He wanted Him to bless others, and in return he would be blessed. But the man was gripped with sorrow. He didn't see that as an option, and could only see what he was going to lose rather than what he was going to gain.

We all have a next step; **are we for Jesus like he is for us?**

As Jesus pointed out, there is nothing that we can do that will earn our place in heaven. Jesus says that it is actually impossible. This rich young man was the example of that fact. But do you see what He said to His disciples? He said, "...but with God all things are possible." He is pointing to the Father's plan that Jesus would die for us; that He would make it possible for us to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

We could give everything away, but there would still be something that we are holding onto. Jesus gave everything away, not holding back one thing. That is why we so desperately need the grace of Jesus.

Many of us are already aware of what our next step is but we choose to ignore it rather than face it.

Jesus approaches us the same way He did the rich young ruler, "take your next step and follow me." I hope you will choose a life of joy and fullness over sorrow.