

Daily Devotional, July 8, 2021 Not Good, but Better

“Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “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.” Matthew 19:16-17 (NIV)

The Christian faith takes great courage. Much of what we do comes to us naturally. Yet, Jesus challenges us to move beyond what comes naturally, the things that we normally do. Jesus challenged the people that He encountered to move beyond what was simple and easy and to instead, follow Him into a deeper and more challenging faith.

In Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is questioned by a man who wanted to know, “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Jesus returned the question with a question of His own, “Why do you ask me about what is good?” The man who questioned Jesus was no stranger to good deeds. It would seem he had lived a good life. He followed the law and was conscientious about his spiritual life. What was it that he was missing? Why did he approach Jesus with his question?

The man in this encounter has often been described as “The Rich Man.” When he approached Jesus, he was sure of his ability to do the right thing. He had followed the rules all of his life. Jesus challenged him to leave behind what was comfortable and follow Him. The rich man had lived a full life, but now Jesus was calling him into a new life, not just striving after good and fine things, but following the source of all things good. It would be challenging for the young man, because it would be a whole new way of doing things.

The man in this encounter with Jesus gives us all reason to contemplate who we are and who we follow. Following Jesus is challenging. Our faith often calls us beyond what is comfortable and normal. That is what often holds us back from following Jesus. This scripture also reminds us that Jesus is good. We can bring our questions to Him. We can bring our worries, our struggles, our faith to Him, and He will call us to an even deeper faith. It may be something new. It may be a change that makes us nervous, but it will be a new way of life, a new way of being, created by the only One to live on this planet who is truly good.

Father, draw me close to Your heart. I open up my heart to You, and I invite You to search my heart and renew my spirit. Thank you for the work you do in me. Teach me your ways, Father. Reveal to me any area that I am not in agreement with your Word. I pray for a deep revelation and understanding of your truth. I trust you, Father, and I love that I can open my heart up to you. I know that your love is an unconditional, everlasting love. In Christ I pray, Amen.