

LIFE CHANGING STORIES FROM THE BIBLE

“WHAT ABOUT ALL THE GOOD PEOPLE IN THE WORLD?”

The gospel message is all about sinners needing a saviour. How Christ died for their sins, was buried and on the third day rose again and all those trusting in him receive forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. But what about all the good people in the world? Did he also die for them?

Most people, whether they are Christian or not, whether they belong to another religion or have no religion do this interesting thing. They divide the world up into good people and bad people. The bad people are the murderers, thieves, child molesters, rapists, terrorists, cheats, etc. etc. The good people are the kind, helpful, law abiding good citizens, decent people etc. We usually put ourselves in the good people group. We all do this whether we are Christian or not.

So did Jesus need to die for the good people as well as the bad people? To answer that question let's look at a good person we read about in the bible. We are told he was young, he was rich and he was good. Let's follow the story as we find it recorded in the Gospel of Mark chapter 10.

V 17) “As Jesus started on his way, a young man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

He called Jesus, “Good Teacher,” he knelt on his knees and showed great respect but he did not acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

V 18) “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good-except God alone.”

No one is good! No one is good! But what about all the good people Jesus? No one is good-except God alone and remember, Jesus is God! The young man was talking to more than a good teacher he was talking to a good God. Then Jesus said,

V 19) “You know the commandments: “Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honour your father and mother.” -----

v 20) “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.”

What a great teenager he must have been, every parent would have wanted to have him. Honoured his father and mother, never got into trouble, talk about a good person! He was it! Jesus was quoting the 10 commandments, initially given to Israel and then as a guide to whole world. This good young man was convinced of his own goodness like millions of, so called, good people in the world. He wanted to know if there was anything extra he had to do to get eternal life.

He was living in a bubble of his own goodness and Jesus was about to burst the bubble. But notice verse 21) "Jesus looked at him and loved him." Jesus could see he was sincere, Jesus could see his potential but the young man was totally blind to his own need. Jesus needed to face him up to the truth. The bubble had to burst.

V 21 continued) "One thing you lack, he said, "Go sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." V 22) at this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth."

His face fell. Have you ever seen children's faces when they don't get what they want? We can say their face fell. It's true on the surface he had been keeping the commandments, that is, the one's Jesus mentioned. But Jesus burst the bubble by showing him he was breaking the first commandment, which says in Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other god's before me." His god was his money. By now he must have realized Jesus was more than just a good teacher. He was being challenged to give up his god and follow Jesus , the Messiah, Deliverer, Saviour, Son of God.

It's true when God gave Israel the commandments and the first commandment was to do with the idols the nations around Israel worshipped. But Jesus made it clear that the written commandment was just the tip of the iceberg, most of it was below the surface. Anything or person that came before God in importance to us was an idol. Hate and anger was the same as murder, Adultery meant all immorality and so with the other commandments.

The young man wanted eternal life but he walked away from Jesus the only one who could give him eternal life. He walked away sad and if he kept walking away from Jesus he would be walking into a sad eternity. Jesus also would have been sad because he could see the potential of the young man, the way he could be used for the glory of God.

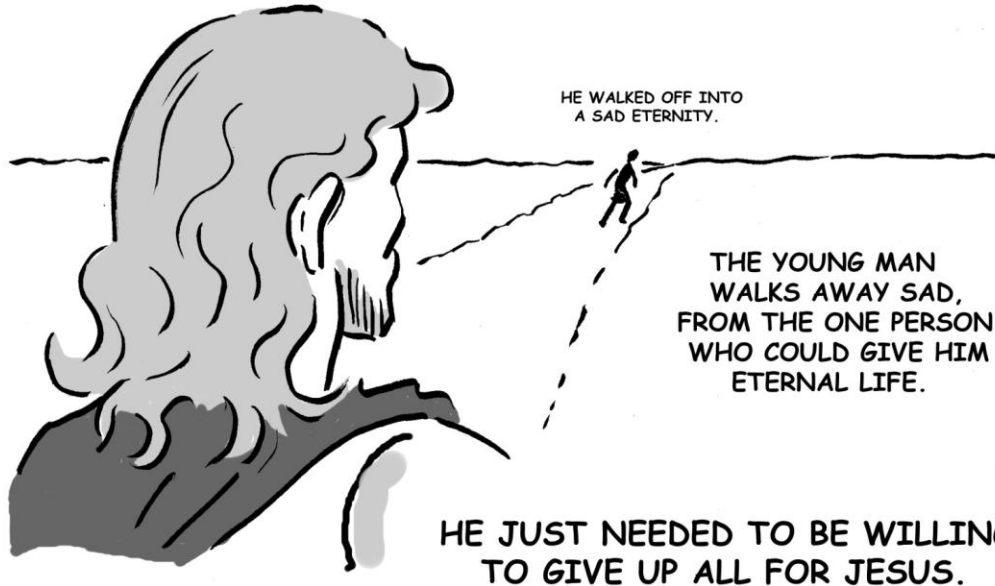
But there is another possible twist to this story. What if the young man had said, "Yes Lord I give up all my wealth for you." "I will follow and serve you for the rest of my life." Jesus might have said, "I want you to keep your wealth and use it for my glory. I just wanted to see if you were willing to do it." On the other hand if Jesus took all his wealth from him, he would find that the Lord would have filled him with joy and power and years of fruitful satisfying service.

We can see from this that Jesus had to die for good people as well as bad people for the Scripture says, "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. All of us need the forgiveness he gives through his dying on the cross. It is the message for the whole world.

A RICH YOUNG MAN COMES TO JESUS



JESUS LOVED HIM



FRANK HUTCHINSON