

JESUS KNEW HOW TO LOVE

Mark 10:17-24

By Carl MacMurray

Mark 10:17-24 records for us the account of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus seeking eternal life. In response to Jesus' directions to keep the law, v.20 shows us the young man had kept the law since his youth. Vv. 21-22 are the key to this record, however, as we see Jesus instructing the man to sell all and follow Him. We are told that his face fell and he went away grieved, because he owned much property. V.21 must especially catch our attention, however, when we see Jesus' feelings toward the young ruler. We read that Jesus "felt a love for him." Since we are trying to be like our example, surely there is much that we can learn in trying to love others like Jesus did. Look at the love that our Lord had for this young man.

The first thing we must notice is His love was based in righteousness. He didn't love the man because he was polite and called him "Good teacher," nor because he was ambitious and "upwardly mobile" as a ruler. Jesus' emotional response to the man seems to come at hearing that this young man had kept the law from his youth up. If we are not careful we can fall into the trap of admiring and being drawn to people for the wrong reason(s). Do we admire people because they're physically attractive, wealthy, or respected in business? We try to teach young people not to follow the crowd and pant after the star on the team, or the cheerleaders, or the fellow with the new car and then we do the same, in our own way, if we're not careful. When was the last time you admired someone, and wanted to spend time with someone ... because they were serving God? I can readily see why preachers, elders, and young people trying to keep mind and body pure are not going to garner much respect from the world. But far too often, I'm afraid they aren't respected among the saints either. In trying to be like Jesus, let us try to be "lovers of good."

The next thing I notice is that Jesus truly loved this young man. He loved him enough to tell him the truth. He could have just commended him for the good life that he was leading and not hurt him. Obviously, this man was indeed a good man. He could have hinted, or excused, compromised, or put off telling this man the truth until a later time. On second thought, no he couldn't! Jesus' love was a pure love for a good man and that man had a need to know the truth. Jesus could no more ignore that fact than He could have lied to him. We need to learn to love people this much. Some have "loved ones" whom they will not "discipline" when they are in sin. They excuse themselves by saying that this indeed is their "loved one." Some think much of good friends or co-workers for years. They

may even think enough of them to take time off and attend their funeral some day. But, they didn't think enough of them to try and persuade them to be saved, to tell them the truth of their lost condition. We may say we didn't want to "hurt" them . Do you think they'll be "hurt" if they die in a lost condition? Of our loved ones we say, "We don't want to drive them away. " Wake up! They've already left and you're living in the past. Let's learn to love them like Jesus did. Love people so much, we'll tell them the truth.

The last thing I note is that the love Jesus had here was a love which was subject to His love for the Father. If the man grieved and then went away, then that was to be his choice. Jesus did not chase him down or "take it back" or in any other way change the "rules" simply because He loved this young ruler. He understood two things that we sometimes forget. Jesus understood that God and His will come first - before our feelings, before our love, before any thing else in this world. Secondly, He understood why this must be. It is because our heavenly Father knows more about what is best for us than we ourselves do . His instructions are for our good, not His own. We need to trust Him enough to trust His directions for our lives. Far too many of us want to follow God, but then we get into "special" situations and we decide to put God on hold. Our Father's instructions on immorality don't change because we "fall in love."

Warnings about drunkenness, drug use, revelling, and carousing don't go away because "everyone else is doing it. " The sinfulness of malice, gossip, uncontrolled anger, and such like is not lessened because it is a baptized believer that may be committing the sin. We need to understand the principle of submitting ourselves to God. To follow Jesus' example means that we will submit that strongest of all human emotions, love, to God also. Because we love some one, we cannot forget about God. Our Saviour's love was directed by and in submission to the will of God. Our's must be also.

Plainly, it can be seen, Jesus knew how to love. He loved people for the right reasons, in the right way, and without compromising His love for His Heavenly Father. As difficult as it may be, this is also the kind of love we should be striving to develop. I hope that you are and we can be assured that God is patient and will help us along that righteous path.

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