

Bite Size Bible Study

Eternal Life Pt2 #163

By Pastor Lee

How Do We Live Eternal Life Now? This is the question that the rich young ruler was asking Jesus – “how can I acquire (obtain or inherit) eternal life?” (Luke 18:18-22)

Traditionally we assume he is asking about eternal life after he dies. While our assumption may or may not be his question, it is interesting to read that story with the idea of *hayei olam* (lasting life) in mind. This man says that he has read and obeyed the Scriptures, but Jesus sees that his wealth is what keeps him bound to *hayei sha'ah* (fleeting life); one that is an empty, focused only on material gain. Jesus says that if he wants a lasting life, he should give away the wealth that binds him to a fleeting and shallow life, and follow after Him as one of his disciples.

In John 17:3 NIV it says: *Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

This would have given him the eternal life (*hayei olam*) he desired. Knowing the Scriptures and following them was not enough (although that should not be left unattended). What was important was to have a knowledge and intimate relationship with Jesus and the Father, in this life and for eternity.

Unfortunately the ruler doesn't see the importance in a relationship with the Father and Jesus and so declines the offer, much to Jesus' sorrow.

We should look at ourselves in the rich man too - are we can become so distracted by our material wealth and other things, that it keeps us living for what will not matter in eternity?

Jesus made another statement in His parable of the seeds, about wealth and eternity that can also give us direction for today. He says: *Others are those sown among thorns, they hear the message; but the worries of the world, the deceitful glamor of wealth and all the other kinds of desires push in and choke the message; so that it produces nothing.* Mark 4:18-19 CJB

We are not obligated to give all our money away, but our focus should be to use it to invest in eternal things like sharing the gospel, deepening our relationships, and helping others in need. We have Jesus' blessing to spend our money extravagantly on things that will show God's love.

Just like our money, we should also be aware of how we spend our time. Is it exclusively on ourselves; or is a healthy portion spent on God and others. Do we fill our extra time with mindless entertainment, empty TV shows

or godless living? Or do the things we do invest in people who will live forever, like nurturing friendships, showing hospitality, raising children, and loving others?

As Paul says: *Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

Galatians 6:8-10 NIV

Is Eternal Life only in the future or is it "Here and Now"? When we only think of eternal life as "going to heaven when we die", and not also as a new life in this world, we actually can distort the gospel's message.

Sometimes the gospel message is presented starting with the question, "Do you know what would happen if you died tonight?" And then the next statement is, "If you receive Christ, you can know where your eternity will be spent." If nothing else is added to this, the gospel becomes a hollow kind of "fire insurance" that has nothing to do with our lives in the here and now.

It is just concerned with what will happen after someone dies. It's an easy thing to offer people, because their lives don't need to change, and it is easier on us too because we can go on as shallow people of *hayei sha'ah*, living only for today.

But that approach has one glaring flaw. The good that we learn in this life will continue with us into eternity beyond the grave. If we have not learned to live the life that Jesus would have us live, we have little to nothing to take with us to the other side of the grave. Jesus was the same person before He was crucified as when He was resurrected. His character did not change. His purpose in living did not suddenly change; it was the same on both sides of the grave. Shouldn't we strive to do the same?

Jesus said, *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* John 10:10. Following Christ is what gives our lives here eternal meaning and purpose. How can we forget to share that with people? The world is full of people who see no meaning in life here on earth. Whole religious culture are based on that premise.

Perhaps we should began investing in eternity on this side of the grave, by being a living example of Jesus and the Father's Love for all.

Ref. Eternal Life by Lois Tverberg

Cornerstone Community Church

PO Box 654 Lemon Grove, CA 91945-0654 – www.cornerstonecommunityonline.org