

The Impossible Dream

Reformation Matters, Part 9

Luke 10:25-37

Discussion Guide

Main Idea:

Fixing our problem with God by our own merit is an impossible dream.

Discussion Points:

In Luke 10 Jesus is confronted by an expert of the Jewish Law. This lawyer asks Jesus about how he could earn eternal life. In return, Jesus asks the lawyer to answer his own question.

- How does the lawyer answer his own question?
- From where in the Old Testament does the lawyer get his answer?
- Do you think the lawyer thought he met the criteria he listed for eternal life?

Jesus gives an interesting answer to the lawyer's reasoning about how to earn eternal life in verse 28.

- What is Jesus' answer to the lawyer?
- Does Jesus say that the lawyer has met the criteria?
- Does Jesus affirm that the lawyer has earned eternal life already?

When the lawyer first explained how the Law said he could earn eternal life, the text seems to show that he thought he had obeyed the command. When Jesus replied that his answer was correct, the lawyer likely felt the weight of what it meant to love fully. That is why he felt the need to justify himself and make himself feel better about himself.

- How does Jesus' illustration of the Good Samaritan answer the question: "Who is my neighbor?"
- How does this illustration make the lawyer feel about his own salvation?
- What kind of standard does this illustration set for treating others?

Jesus' standard for love was much higher than the lawyer's. The lawyer had in his mind that because he was good to the people closest to him, he would be saved on the day of judgment. When he proceeded to ask more questions of Jesus, it became clear to him that Jesus was setting a much higher standard for a holy life. Jesus knew that God demanded everyone should be treated with respect and love and there are no exceptions.

- Are there people in your life that are hard to love?
- What does that mean about your fulfilling of the Old Testament Law? Do you measure up?

Discussion Guide cont.

No matter how good we feel like we are in this world, we can never measure up to the perfect standard of God. We all have sinned and are selfish. There is no way that we can ever fulfill the Law and earn eternal life. It is an impossible dream.

- How would you respond to someone who claims they will go to heaven because they are a good person?
- Where else, besides Luke 10, can you point them in the Bible to defend your response?
- Where in the New Testament can you show them what the real price of salvation is?

During Jesus' day, there was a lot of racial unrest and antagonism. There were many different types of people with differing beliefs packed into the same area. The easy reaction for people of that day was to look out for your brother and those like you but to despise and distrust everyone else.

- How does the illustration of the Good Samaritan apply to life today?
- How can you use Jesus' teaching to help overcome different dividing grounds in society and show love to everyone?
- How can you love your neighbor who is antagonistic to God?
- How can you learn from Jesus' example of ultimate, perfect love as he died on the cross, taking the place of people who hated and despised him?

Gospel Connection:

The Impossible Dream is to live your life trying to earn your own salvation. To measure up to God's standard of perfection is an impossible task that no one can ever achieve. The Law cannot give us life. It only exposes our guilt. The only way we can be put into a right relationship with God is through the washing of the blood of the Lamb. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only way to pay the price for sin and the only way we can receive the benefits and blessings of no longer being alienated from him is to believe in him and trust that he has justified us. There is no room for pride or boasting about ourselves. We are utterly helpless and hopeless without faith in Jesus and his atoning sacrifice.

Practical Implications:

- Think:** Are there areas in your life that you are holding back from God? Are you claiming some sort of self-righteousness based on your good deeds that is feeding your pride?
- Pray:** Ask God to reveal any impurity within you. Ask him to search you and expose any self-righteousness or pride in your own good works. Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict you of your sin and your depravity so that you can rely solely on the blood of Jesus to take away the penalty of your sin.
- Do:** Gather with other believers so that you can confess your sins to one another and find the fellowship and forgiveness that the body of Christ can bring. Encourage each other with stories of how God is working and how he has showed himself faithful even when we stray and sin. Pray for each other and thank God for making a way to reconcile you to himself.