



“But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” Matthew 9:13.

### **Jesus Teaches On Availability**

**Lesson Subject:** To encourage believers to always be available to help people in distress, especially spiritual distress.

**L114. Date:** November 1973. **Text:** Mark 10:17-22.

**Topic:** Jesus: Teachings of.

“God is not looking for your ability, but for your availability.” Amen? Amen! When a believer learns that truth, his whole life will take on new meaning in Christian service.

God is concerned about your availability for His purposes. He wants to use you in His work. If you are available, He will use you. Do not worry about whether or not you are able to do the work of God. You are not and never will be, but God is able to do His work through you. The principle is expressed in II Corinthians 3:5, **“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament . . .”** By an act of the will, the believer makes himself available to God. By an act of grace, God makes His ability available to the believer. What a blessed exchange!

What will God do with a person who is available to Him? God will use him to minister to people. Christian service is based upon the thesis that people are worth our time and effort. No one who does not serve people in the name of God serves God. Are you available for God to use?

There should be no distinction made between those whom we serve in Jesus' name. Jesus taught us to minister to the rich (Mark 10:17-31) and to the poor (Matthew 20:29-34), to the respectable (John 3:1-18) and to the depraved (John 4:1-42). Availability to God will make you available to people. If you are not willing to serve people, do not try to be a committed

Christian. To be a Christian means to be willing to love and to serve those whom He loves and serves. Are you available to Him?

## **I. MAKE YOUR RESOURCES AVAILABLE, Mark 10:17-31.**

If any man could gain eternal life, one would have thought it would be a man like the rich ruler. He had all that the world prizes by way of virtue. Examine his good qualities. (1) He had wealth. (2) He had power, being a ruler. (3) He had religious motivation to gain eternal life. (4) He had moral integrity, having kept the commandments which relate to one's relations with his fellow man. (5) He had reverence for the Lord Jesus, calling Him "Good Master." He was an excellent man in almost every respect. Yet he had a deep conviction that he did not have eternal life; he sought Jesus to find how he could get it.

His question, "**Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?**" (Matthew 19:16), indicates a lack of spiritual understanding. A man does not "inherit eternal life" (Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18) by the good things that he does. It is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast, Ephesians 2:8-9. Jesus dealt with the man at the point of his spiritual comprehension.

The ruler asked, "What shall I do?" Jesus answered him in terms of requirement. "Keep the commandments." If a person approaches God on the basis of works, not of grace, the solemn duty of total obedience is laid upon him, for his account is reckoned of debt and not of grace, Romans 4:4-5. Jesus replied in that manner in order to show the ruler that he was not able to satisfy the soul, by performing deeds in the body. The rich ruler knew that by experience. He replied, "From my youth I have observed all these things. What lack I yet?" Moral integrity, parental respect, truthful speech, and honest business practices do not bring eternal life. They had not satisfied the heart of the rich ruler. "What lack I yet?"

The response of Jesus was motivated by love. Looking upon him, Jesus loved him. "**One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me,**" Mark 10:21. Did Jesus mean to say that sacrifice of financial resources would merit eternal life? Not at all. The rich ruler had religious aspirations, but he was in bondage to his wealth. Jesus called him to break the bondage in devotion to the Lord. In that he would have "treasure in heaven" indeed. The call to sacrifice was motivated by love not a desire to discipline. A man held in bondage to earthly things is a bondsman indeed. Only Jesus can set one free from such slavery.

The rich ruler was not willing to make the break with the world. His countenance fell at the saying” (Mark 10:22), and “he became exceeding sorrowful” (Luke 18:23) so that “he went away sorrowful” (Matthew 19:22). How tragic it is to be bound to the earth.

Jesus explained the problem when He said to the disciples, **“Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God,”** Mark 10:24-25. What a problem, indeed.

Are you willing to make your resources available to the Lord Jesus for His purposes? You cannot be a disciple of Jesus without making all you have available to Him, Luke 14:33. That does not mean that you must sell your property, quit your job, take a vow of poverty, and depend upon others for support. It does mean that all you have must be ready for the Lord's use at any time He calls for it. Have you entered upon the spirit of discipleship that makes all you have, with all you may receive, available to your Lord?

## **II. MAKE YOUR SERVICE AVAILABLE, Matthew 20:29-34.**

Jesus was always ready to serve where there was human need. It is not surprising therefore, to find Him pausing on His journey near Jericho to heal two poor, blind men who resorted to begging for their livelihood. The more prominent of the two was named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus; the other was not named. Both were blind; both called upon the Lord Jesus; both were healed. Jesus meets human need.

Never lose the sense of the importance of the individual. Jesus was surrounded by His disciples and a great multitude of people as He entered and left Jericho. (That was the same trip into Jericho when Zacchaeus became His disciple, Luke 19:1, 28.) Hearing the crowd's noise as it drew near, one of the blind men began to cry out, **“Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.”** The other joined in the petition, **“Lord, have mercy on us, thou Son of David.”** (See Mark 10:47 and Matthew 20:30.) The crowd thought those blind beggars of little value. They were admonished to remain quiet. Jesus' estimate was quite different.

Jesus stopped on His way. He commanded that the blind men be brought to Him through the multitude. He asked them, **“What will ye that I should do unto you?”** They replied, **“Lord, that our eyes I may be opened.”** Then a remarkable thing occurred. Jesus was moved with compassion. He touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight. From thenceforth they followed Him. Jesus had met their great need in

body and in spirit. Jesus is concerned about individuals.

We will never begin to render effective Christian service until we learn the value of an individual. In the midst of a multitude, Jesus stopped to aid two helpless men. On another occasion, He told the parable of a shepherd which left ninety-nine sheep safe in the fold that he might go to search for one which was lost. That underscored the value of the individual in Jesus' estimate.

It is natural that we want our churches to grow. It is natural that we should be concerned about getting crowds of people to church that they may study the Bible and worship God, but the emphasis upon crowds should not obscure the importance of the individual. A congregation of a thousand people is made up of one thousand different persons. The church will grow when she ministers to individuals, not to men in mass.

Observe, too, that Jesus taught that no man is too high or too low to be ministered to. On the same trip into Jericho, Jesus ministered to two blind beggars who were paupers and to a tax collector named Zacchaeus, who was very rich. Never make the tragic mistake of governing your spiritual ministry according to the economic, social, or cultural level of the person who is in spiritual need. God is no respecter of persons, nor should His children become filled with such a spirit.

Are you available to serve people in Jesus' name? You must be, if your life is pleasing and honoring to the Lord. Whom will God make available for you to serve today? Will you be ready when the opportunity arises?

### **III. MAKE THE GOSPEL AVAILABLE, John 4:1-42.**

One of the most familiar incidents in the life of Jesus Christ is His conversation with the woman at the well of Sychar in Samara. It shows the importance of making the gospel available.

The incident at the well of Sychar becomes the more meaningful when two things are considered. (1) The Jews and the Samaritans were mortal enemies. Their mutual enmity was based upon racial differences, religious prejudices, and continual rivalry. It was so strong that Jews would not even pass through Samaria on their journey from Judaea to Galilee, going far out of their way to cross the Jordan River and journey northward through Perea. The story which Jesus told about the priest and Levite who passed up the injured man and the Samaritan who aided him was sure to stir prejudice among the Jews. They shared a mutual hatred. (2) The woman who was dealt with was of such ill repute that many probably considered her beyond redemption. She had had five husbands (with no inference of wrong doing in

that) but was then living with a man who was not her husband. The disciples were very surprised that Jesus would talk to her, though no one asked Him why He did so.

Racial differences and moral depravity should make no difference when a Christian is sharing the gospel. Those from whom you would feel most inclined to shirk are probably the very ones who need most to hear of the love and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus.

Suppose that the woman at the well had been passed by. The most effective Christian witness which ever spoke of Jesus in Sychar would never have spoken, verses 28,29. Many people of the city, who became disciples of the Lord, would never have trusted Him for “. . . **many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman. . .**” verse 39. Jesus would never have been invited to stay in the city for two days. (Remember that He was a Jew and that was a Samaritan city.) The Bible would never have recorded, “**And many more believed because of his own word . . . that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world,**” verses 21-42. What a loss, if the woman at the well had been passed by.

Who is there in your community who is being passed by? Who needs the gospel, but is not receiving it? What racial group, segment of the society, or economic class is being neglected in your city? Look particularly at the very rich and the very poor. They are commonly neglected. If yours is an average community, someone is being overlooked.

Will you make the gospel available to the neglected? Jesus took the gospel to Sychar just as Simon Peter took it to Corinth. Who will take it to the bankers, university professors, and political leaders of your city? Who will take it to the alcoholics, prostitutes, and derelicts as well? You will, or no one will. Jesus said to preach the Word to everyone. Are you willing to become involved personally in making the gospel available to every person in your community? A Christian would!

Upon hearing a call to Christian service, most believers began to evaluate their ability to serve God. They feel inferior to the task and so give up without attempting service. How very tragic. God has the ability. He wants only your availability.