

### **Matthew 19:16-26**

*“Then someone came to him and said, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “I have kept all these; what do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”*

This has been a hard week for many as together we laid to rest one of our own. Friday afternoon we gathered here to say our goodbyes to our friend in Christ John Mullen. Questions arise during times such as these, often times the main question is “Why?” It’s hard for many of us to come to terms with losing someone, especially someone like John. I struggle with why someone who serves with their entire being? Why someone who epitomizes who and what a Christian is? Why? But that is not for me to know or understand at this time.

Job asked these same questions during his trials and how did God respond? I chose just two verses out of two chapters which I believed answered Job’s question of “Why?” and I believe answers our questions as to “Why?” **Job 38:4-5** says “*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?*” God created and if we truly believe that then who are we to question. I’m not saying we can’t but expecting or worse demanding an answer, well that may be pushing things. We should just feel blessed for having had John a part of our lives, and thankful for all our memories of John.

But as we continue with our current series which I incorrectly stated last week is not Directions but Questions, where we have asked such questions as Who and last week What we come to our next question oddly enough Why?

I this morning's passage the rich young ruler, as he is called, asks in **verse 16**, "*What good deed must I do to have eternal life?*" This guy just wants to know and do the minimum required to get his ticket punched to heaven. We don't do anything like now do we? I have wanted almost from when we began our ministry some 16 years ago, but Patricia won't let me, to purchase a time clock and give every member their own time card. That way every time they came to services or any function they could punch their time card. Then when they passed on to meet their maker we could place all their time cards in the casket with them so when they meet God they had proof of everything they did and how much time they gave for Him. Patricia said that might upset some people. What do you think?

But this morning as we ask the question “Why?” I would like us to ask the question in relation not so much about what we need to do like the rich young ruler, but more about why any of us do what-ever it is we do. Not just what we do but why do we do it. Not just why as an individual we do what we do but also as a church. Why do we, why do you do what you do?

In Acts 7 Stephen is addressing the council and he recaps the Hebrews time as slaves and all they endured. He tells of what they endured and how God stepped in and saved them and how they responded to God’s grace. In **Acts 7:41-43** Stephen talks about what they did when things were going, or how they believed things should be going and he said “*At that time they made a calf, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and reveled in the works of their hands. But God turned away from them and handed them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: ‘Did you offer to me slain victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? No; you took along the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; so I will remove you beyond Babylon.’*” God had had it with what and why they did what they did.

Why do we do what we do? Why do you do what you do? These people created idols and worshiped them. Today we create church buildings, we fill them with stained glass and comfy pews and say this is where we will worship God, but the problem is many times we don't come and worship God; we turn things around and worship the building, we worship the style of worship we like, we worship the music and the instruments, we worship the ministries we do, we worship the programs we set up, we worship each other. Seems we end up worshipping everything and anything about and around worship and the only thing we don't worship is God. Why? Why do we do what we do?

I once spoke at a small church, actually it was a 2 church charge and when Patricia and I arrived at this one church this elderly woman who we first met took us on a tour of the church. She pointed out the fellowship hall and the class rooms and then we entered the sanctuary. The sanctuary wasn't much bigger than this. It was an older building but it had more stained glass windows than solid walls I believed. But after hearing this women tell the story of the windows I fully understood. See the stained glass windows held this church up not God. The windows were the focal point of being there;

you were to look at and worship those beautiful stained glass windows. Then it occurred to me she never mentioned God, ever. Why did they go to worship? Why do we come to worship? Why do we do what we do?

Why do we, why do you come to worship? Why do we, why do you go to Sunday School? Why do we, why do you go to Bible Study? Why do we, why do you serve in any capacity within the church? Why do we, why do you do what you do? Everything we do should be motivated by one thing and one thing only the love of God. Everything we do should be worship of God. Services are worship of God; Sunday School is worship of God; Bible study is worship of God; teaching and/or being in a committee position is worship of God; helping out in any way with community outreach is worship of God. And I will go on record as saying if you are doing anything out of a sense of duty, or see it as a job; just because it looks good on you then you are doing it for all the wrong reasons. Why do we, why do you?

Life is worship; if not it should be. **Matthew 6:21** *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* Where is your heart right now? Is it about lunch? Is it about some game or some person? Is it about your phone? Where is your heart? Is it solely about God?

**Mark 12:30** tells us “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*”

Do you love God that much? **Luke 10:27** goes a step further, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.*”

God desires an intimate relationship with each one of us. Those we have such a relationship with cause us to stop at nothing to do for. Seems we have no problem handing out good money, and precious time for family members who in many cases only come around when they need, and we never hesitate, ever. But come to worship God and that’s a different story; but talk about serving God and that’s a different story. Regardless of what we say about our love for God our actions drown out all our words.

I knew a woman who was a shut-in Ms. Malone and every time someone from the tape ministry; tapes of the service were delivered along with a hand written letter and that week’s bulletin, delivered they would stop and talk with Ms. Malone. Ms. Malone would ask about everyone at the church, she would talk about last week’s service, which she listened to, and she would ask about current ministries at the church.

If we were collecting school supplies she would hand money to the person and ask them to go by the store for her and place it in the basket. If we were collecting for Thanksgiving and/or Christmas meals she would ask the person to go by the store and place it in the baskets. She was adamant about purchasing those items and placing them in the baskets. She did not want the money just tossed in the plate and given to whatever ministry. Anything going on this woman wanted to be part of and she believed she was part of, more than that she believed she was worshipping her God every time she had something dropped in those baskets. Why do we do what we do? Why do you do what you do?

Ms. Malone could not be at services, but yet she was still worshipping her God. When you are out of town do you find a house of worship and gather with fellow believers? Or do you just say I don't need to go I can worship here from my beach chair, or I can worship fine from my seat in the stands, or I can worship fine from my sofa or recliner watching Don Wildon or Joel Osteen, Charles Stanley, or who-ever. Does Scripture have anything to say about skipping worship **Hebrews 10:25** *“not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the*

*more as you see the Day approaching.”* The KJV is harder to read as it reads “*Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together. And provoke one another to good works.*” Assembling together is worship, provoking is encouraging one another which brings us back to our original question “Why do we do what we do?”

Is what we do, what you do about God or are we just punching a clock and putting in time. Do we really do what we do for God? God loves us unconditionally and how do we respond? Do we worship Him by attending service to do just that worship Him, or is it just something we do when we have nothing better to do? Is God the focal point in everything we do or just an after-thought? Is everything done here at Landrum UMC about God? Is everything you do about God? God’s love and grace is unmerited and unconditional is our worship of Him. Not just in here in the church building, but everywhere in everything? Why do we do what we do? Why do you do what you do?

**Luke 10:27** which we saw earlier, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.*” Is this how we love God? Do our actions say this by what we do? Why do we do what we do?