

**February 07, 2010**

**Then Who, Lord?**

In Lk.18:18-27 (Matt.19:16-29; Mk.10:17-30) we have the account of the rich young ruler's encounter with Jesus. The young ruler asked Jesus, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" When he got Jesus' answer, he rejected it and walked away from Jesus. The disciples were shocked and asked with a sense of utter dismay, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus' answer was, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

I am sure you know people like this young ruler. Maybe they are beloved relatives or friends. They have no interest in the things of God. They hear the word of God preached and they are unmoved. They remain unmoved and uninterested when they hear about God's astounding love for sinners in Christ; when they hear that salvation in Christ is free; when they hear that Christ-rejecters are facing eternal punishment in the lake of fire. And like the disciples, you are shocked and utterly dismayed.

The truth is that every sinner, regardless of where you find him or her, has absolutely no interest in the things of God because he or she is spiritually dead. As a matter of fact, this was your condition before God intervened and saved you. The Christian has been commanded by the Lord Jesus to spread the gospel to every person. But the stark reality is that you are sent on "mission impossible". You are sent to preach or share the gospel with dead people, spiritually dead people.

The spiritually dead are just like the physically dead. They lack the ability to hear, to understand and to respond. Unless the Lord God intervenes and first makes the sinner alive (Eph.2:5; Jn.3:1-8), the sinner will never respond to the gospel. From beginning to end the salvation of the sinner is a work of God.

As a Christian, you are a fellow-worker with God. You pray, you preach, you witness, you give out a gospel tract or booklet, you give to a person a gospel sermon on a CD – this is your part of the work. And you must be faithful in doing it. It is God who causes the growth and brings in the fruit. (1Cor.3:5-9). You are on mission impossible. But you are not on a fool's errand. God is with you, the God for whom all things are possible.