Sermon: **Good teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?** (Mark 10.17)

If you could what question would you ask God? (Problem of evil? Trinity? Inherent selfishness?)

TEXT. Why did this person who came to Jesus ask this question? What do we know about him? Mark tells us he was a man and rich; Luke – a religious leader; Matthew – young.

That he was religious and kept the commandments meant he was good. That he was rich meant he was blessed by God. By normal standards he was acceptable to God.

Clearly he felt uneasy in himself. Maybe he was looking for reassurance. TEXT.

TEXT. This is the wrong question; Paul & Reformation declared that salvation is by faith alone. Jesus came to show this to be true. So it is not about what *we* do but about accepting what *God* does.
This is not earned nor deserved – it is God’s gift.

This is easier for a child to accept; as adults we think we need to earn favours.

Churches think that to get God’s blessing they need an Alpha Course, or large SS, etc
Think of any groups you are in – modify TEXT to suit. So this is the wrong question.

But it is also the right question! – note Jesus reply: Go and sell all you have… he *had* to *do* something.

This was not some condition before receiving, but how the receiving happens.

Chris Cairns – I do not know if he did do it, but if he did he can only be forgiven if he acknowledges he has done so, and that is the *first* step (but only the *first*) towards transformation. True for all forgiveness.

And forgiveness is at the heart of salvation.

How do I need to change to fully receive what God offers? How does this church need to change?

Jesus shows the rich man what he needs to do; this need not be what we need to do.
What is niggling away in the background of your mind? May be that is what needs transformation.