***‘Getting to Know Pasor Joe’ Columns #14***

**“Common Misunderstandings About Jesus”**

People often misunderstand Jesus, and one person in the Bible illustrates this well. In Mark 10:17-22, a man kneels before Jesus and asks a question. In other passages, he is described as a rich, young ruler. This means he was wealthy, young, and held a position of authority—an enviable position. His question was, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He was young, rich, a ruler, and also interested in eternal life.

However, he addressed Jesus as “teacher.” This is the first misunderstanding. If you see Jesus as just a teacher and not as Lord(Boss), you cannot receive eternal life. Many people today see Jesus as one of the great moral teachers, but not as Lord. Unlike other moral teachers, Jesus uniquely addressed the problem of sin and the fear of death through His crucifixion and resurrection. Saying, “Believe in anything, and it will be fine,” will not lead to eternal life. Believing in anything leads to nowhere.

The second misunderstanding is thinking that we need to do something to gain eternal life. One pastor once met an elderly woman who had been a believer since her youth and lived a faithful life. He asked her, “Do you believe in Jesus?” She replied, “Absolutely, I’ve believed for 67 years.” Then he asked, “Do you have the assurance that you will go to heaven if you die today?” She said, “Not yet.”

Many people, like this elderly woman, think that even though they believe in Jesus, they need to do more good works or achieve a higher level of personal virtue to gain eternal life. While the woman’s humility is commendable, she missed the biblical promise of salvation through grace. Salvation is not earned by our actions but is a gift we receive when we trust and accept Jesus as our Savior.

The third misunderstanding is not recognizing that eternal life is more important than any worldly wealth or success. When Jesus told the rich young ruler to follow certain commandments, he proudly responded, “I have kept all these since I was a boy.” He was confident but also missed the point. Jesus, loving him, showed him his real issue: greed. He was likely young and wealthy due to either inheritance or dishonest means. His real problem was his love for wealth.

When Jesus told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor, he went away sad because he couldn’t let go of his wealth. Many people today reject Jesus because of their love for money, power, or fame. They think they can manage on their own.

Believing in anything is never enough. Jesus Christ is the only way, the truth, and the life through whom we can obtain eternal life. If you have faith but still lack the assurance of your salvation, please listen carefully to today's sermon. Additionally, you can revisit the sermon on our church website during the week for further reflection.