

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Mark 10:17-31

LESSON 182 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Mark 10:17-31

¹⁷ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

¹⁸ And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God.

¹⁹ Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.

²⁰ And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

²¹ Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

²² And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

²³ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

²⁴ And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

²⁶ And they were astonished out of

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

I The Momentous Question

1 The rich young ruler came running to Jesus to inquire about eternal life, Mark 10:17, 18;

Matthew 19:16

¹⁶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Luke 18:18

¹⁸ And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

John 6:28

²⁸ Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

John 6:2

² And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

Acts 16:30-31

³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

2 Jesus answered the ruler by referring him to the Commandments, Mark 10:19;

Deuteronomy 32:46-47

⁴⁶ And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

⁴⁷ For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

Proverbs 19:23

²³ The fear of the Lord *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Ezekiel 20:11

¹¹ And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.

3 The young ruler felt that he had kept these Commandments from his youth, Mark 10:20;

Isaiah 58:1-2

¹ Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

² Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

Ezekiel 33:31-32

³¹ And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as* my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness.

³² And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.

II The Price of Eternal Life

measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

²⁷ And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

²⁸ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

²⁹ And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

³⁰ But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

³¹ But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

1 Jesus loved this young man and showed him the way to Heaven, Mark 10:21;

Proverbs 23:23

²³ Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Acts 2:45

⁴⁵ And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

Acts 4:34-37

³⁴ Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

³⁵ And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

³⁶ And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

³⁷ Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

James 2:10

¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

1 John 4:10

¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

2 The young man departed, grieved, when he learned the price of eternal life, Mark 10:22;

Psalms 62:10

¹⁰ Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them*.

Proverbs 11:4

⁴ Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Proverbs 11:28

²⁸ He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as a branch.

Proverbs 23:5

⁵ Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: **but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

III The Peril of Riches

1 Jesus stated that it is hard for a rich man to enter Heaven, Mark 10:23-25;

Psalms 49:6-8

⁶ They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

⁷ None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

⁸ (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

Proverbs 18:11

¹¹ The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

Jeremiah 9:23

²³ Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches:

Zephaniah 1:18

¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord'S wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy:

for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land.

1 Timothy 6:17

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

2 The disciples were astonished at Jesus' words, Mark 10:26;

Isaiah 59:1-2

¹ Behold, the Lord'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

² But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

Jeremiah 13:23

²³ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

3 Those things that are impossible with men are possible with God, Mark 10:27;

Numbers 11:23

²³ And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

2 Kings 7:2

² Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

2 Kings 7:18

¹⁸ And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria:

Job 42:2

² I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee.

Hebrews 7:25

²⁵ Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

4 The disciples who leave all for Jesus have the promise of a bountiful reward, Mark 10:28-31;

Deuteronomy 33:9-11

⁹ Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.

¹⁰ They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

¹¹ Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

Psalms 84:11

¹¹ For the Lord God *is* a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Proverbs 3:9-10

⁹ Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

¹⁰ So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Proverbs 16:16

¹⁶ How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Malachi 3:10

¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now

herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

1 Timothy 6:6

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 John 3:1

¹Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

NOTES:

The Earnest Seeker

The young man in this lesson was a serious seeker for the way that leads to eternal life. He came running to our Lord, not in hypocrisy, but in deep earnestness of soul. He did not lack in regard for Jesus, for he kneeled before the Savior; nor did he lack in regard for the Word of God, for he said that he had kept from his youth all the Commandments that Jesus enumerated. It is possible that he kept these Commandments in a literal sense, but it is apparent that he did not keep them in the spiritual sense. Had he done so, Jesus would not have found it necessary to add the next saying: "One thing thou lackest."

Jesus, who knows the hearts of all men, could see a monstrous disease in the heart of this young man and knew that it would take a powerful remedy to cure. Sin is a monstrous disease; and even though there be only one sin in the heart, the Blood of Jesus Christ must be applied to the heart and that sin washed away. According to the Word of God, "one thing" lacking will keep a soul out of the Kingdom of Heaven for all eternity. How careful must be the walk of those who name the name of Christ and expect to enter Heaven at the end of life on this earth.

Wealth and Youth

The question that this young man asked: "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" shows the unusual disposition that he had. The Scriptures declare that he had great possessions; and rich people too often feel that it is beneath their position in life to concern themselves about the next world. They are too much occupied in taking care of their perishing possessions to think of the future abode of their souls. It was different with this rich man. No doubt he had wondered many times about the future after the grave. He believed in eternal life; but that silent monitor, that conscience in his heart, kept telling him that something more than he was doing was needed to insure eternal life. He realized the truth, that it is necessary to prepare for eternal life here and now, and not to wait until after death to be concerned about the matter, for that would be too late. In whatever condition of righteousness or sin a man leaves this world, in such a state will he awaken on eternity's shores. "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3).

Another commendable thing about this inquirer was that he came while he was still young. How many young people have gone into eternity unprepared to meet God because they believed there was plenty of time in the future in which to seek God. Satan wants nothing better than to have the young people delay seeking God. The years of sin will put scars upon the memory of people that will never be removed, even though the sins are repented of and the guilt is taken away, through the Blood of the slain Lamb. How much more glorious to come to Christ in the glowing springtime of life, and stay with Him throughout all of life, no matter what the cost may be! This man had both wealth and youth, but his testimony was that it did not satisfy. If he had been satisfied, he would not have come running to the Lord to

inquire about the way to eternal life.

Importance of the Word

In answer to the question that the young man asked, Jesus referred him to the Word of God: "Thou knowest the commandments." In other words, if a man obeys all that he absolutely knows of the Word of God, if he walks in all the light that falls across his pathway, he will have eternal life. Can any person do this in his own strength? It takes a new heart, a born-again experience, to enable a man to walk and live with God. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

The Rich Man in Need

Jesus loved this young ruler — He loved him so well that He told him the truth, just as He has given the Truth to all men. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). When Jesus told the young man: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast," He was not necessarily placing a ban upon rich people's going to Heaven. Jesus was pointing out the thing that this man lacked — faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and a complete surrender of his will **to** God.

The young ruler readily admitted that Jesus was a Good Master, but did his faith go any farther? Jesus answered: "Why talkest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Jesus wanted **to** impress upon the young man and the others about him that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Jesus is good and perfect, which is proof positive that He came from the Father in Heaven. This being the case, it was the duty of this young man — and all others who come in contact with the Son of God — to take up the cross and follow Him. If there is anything in a life that would hinder this pursuit of eternal life, Jesus showed that it must be disposed of and put out of the way.

The Necessity of Faith

The thing that Jesus was reaching for in the life of the rich young ruler was not restricted to his physical life alone. It is God's desire that all men have faith in Him and trust Him for everything needed in life and eternity. But how hard it is for people really to yield their lives to God and give up their so-called independence toward Him. All that a man has in life comes directly from God, whether the man gives God the glory or not. The Psalmist wrote: "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. . . . That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Psalm 104:23, 28, 29).

"Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:31-33). The young ruler had no faith of the kind for which Jesus was looking. He was not willing to do the thing that would bring that "pearl of great price" into his life.

No Blessing

"Sell whatsoever thou hast." These words show the absolute insufficiency of any worldly goods, howsoever many

they may be or how great their value, toward obtaining eternal life. The riches of this temporal world are not solvent in Heaven and have no purchasing power there. Jesus said: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Had the rich young ruler been willing to sell all and follow the Lord, it would have revealed a love for God more clearly than anything else ever could have.

The very fact that this young man went away grieved convinces all that he loved his possessions more than he loved God. The first commandment is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). This man had made his money his idol and would not part with it. A man need not have great possessions to fall into the same error. "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:10). "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase" (Ecclesiastes 5:10). **Solomon** sought most of his life for the supreme good which would enable men to enjoy **life** in this present world, and he came to one conclusion: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Reward of Reasonable Service

The Lord desires only our reasonable service; but, as has been aptly said, that reasonable service includes the whole man — his life, ambitions, hopes, plans, and heartfelt service to the King. The price may seem great in the eyes of mortals; but, remember, this is not a question of temporal values. This young man was figuring in eternal values, and so must every other man figure in eternal values who expects to enter Heaven as his eternal Home. The ruler had the price with which to pay, but he went away grieved. He was not willing to pay the price that Jesus asked.

For every condition that a man is asked or required to meet in order to obtain salvation and eternal life, the Lord has given a promise that surpasses by far the cost of that requirement. "Sell whatsoever thou hast . . . and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." There are no riches of earth that can for one moment be compared with the riches of Heaven. There are no honors in this life that can for a single instant be compared with that glory which is to be revealed in the saints in eternity. Can anyone name any pleasure of time that can be balanced with the joys that are to be found at God's right hand? There are none. With such bright and glorious prospects before him, what manner of person ought the Christian to be in all holy living and conversation?

The Cross

One more condition to this young man's salvation, besides selling all, had to be considered. The Lord said to him: "Come, take up the cross, and follow me." Herein lay the young ruler's salvation. He could have sold all and still not gained eternal life, if he had not been willing to follow Jesus. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in that remarkable chapter on the pre-eminence of Love: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3).

There are some people who would be willing to give large sums of money if that would insure eternal life, but they are not

willing to be known as the follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene. They prefer to retain their pride and the so-called respect of men. Jesus said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26). There is a cross to be borne in this world by every Christian, but there is a crown to be worn in eternity by those who will bear their cross. Jesus said, in regard to that cross: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). That testimony is much more pleasant than any given by those who serve the world and sin.

QUESTIONS

- 1 What question did the rich young ruler ask of Jesus?
- 2 Does that question interest us today?
- 3 Was the rich young ruler sincere, or did he ask the question to tempt Jesus?
- 4 How did Jesus answer the rich young ruler?
- 5 When the rich young ruler told *Jesus* he had kept the Commandments from his youth, what did Jesus tell him to do further?
- 6 Did Jesus' second reply make the ruler happy or sad? Why?
- 7 Why were *Jesus'* disciples astonished?
- 8 How did Jesus reassure His disciples that there is nothing too hard for God?