

(34) The Rich Young Ruler (Matt. 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Lk. 18:18-30)

1. Right on the heels of Jesus' message regarding child-like faith (Mk. 10:15; Lk. 18:17), the perfect illustration for the opposite came running up to Him (Mk. 10:17).
2. All 3 synoptic gospels call him rich (Mt. 19:22; Mk. 10:22; Lk. 18:23), Matthew calls him a young man (Mt. 19:22), & Luke (Lk. 18:18) calls him a ruler (ἄρχων archōn ^{#758}_{37x}): so we call him The Rich Young Ruler.
3. Many friends and enemies referred to Jesus as Teacher or Rabbi, but this man alone called Him good. ἀγαθός agathos ^{#18}_{102x}.
4. Study on parallel statements.
 - a. Teacher, what good thing shall I do (Matthew) || Good teacher, what shall I do (Mark & Luke).
 - b. That I may obtain eternal life (Matthew) || to inherit eternal life (Mark & Luke).
 - c. Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (Acts 16:30).
5. Jesus' ministry in this episode is extraordinary for its non-evangelistic communication.
 - a. Paul & Silas responded to the Philippian jailer evangelistically (Acts 16:31) but Jesus responded to the rich young ruler legalistically (cf. 1st Tim. 1:8).
 - b. The jailer responded with faith (Acts 16:34) but the rich young ruler responded with sorrow (Mt. 19:22; Mk. 10:22; Lk. 18:23).
 - c. The jailer approached with wonder at men preserved by divine power (Acts 16:26-29) but the rich young ruler approached with the confidence of a man preserved by human effort (Mt. 19:20; Mk. 10:20; Lk. 18:21). Note: such confidence is always shaky (cf. Lk. 18:9,14; 16:15).
 - d. We may conclude that Jesus' prophetic gift and office clued Him into the motivation of this man's question (cf. 1st Sam. 9:15-17; Am. 3:7; Mk. 14:13-16). Jesus undoubtedly was obedient to His Father and obedient to the Scriptures (Prov. 26:4,5; Matt. 7:6; Col. 4:6; 1st Pet. 3:15).
6. Telling this man to keep the law is like telling the unrighteous to keep on doing unrighteousness (Rev. 22:11) as the fruit of their own way is fully eaten (Prov. 1:24-33) and those who refuse to hear are permitted their rebellion (Ezek. 3:27).
7. The specifics of this episode should be viewed as illustrative rather than exhaustive.
 - a. The rich young ruler serves as a type of every human being making human-effort attempts to earn glory.
 - b. This particular example had a particular weakness (wealth) that was particularly highlighted in this story.
 - c. Various other such human-effort approaches have various other weaknesses. Jesus indicates the broadened scope when He expands from the wealthy (Mk. 10:23) to everyone (Mk. 10:24).
 - d. The camel & needle illustration applies to every human-effort approach to righteousness (Mt. 19:23-24; Mk. 10:25; Lk. 18:24-25).
8. Salvation is impossible for human beings, but God is not restrained by human impossibilities (Mt. 19:25-26; Mk. 10:26-27; Lk. 18:26-27).
 - a. With people, this thing is impossible. ἀδύνατος adunatos ^{#102}_{10x}: *powerless, impotent, impossible* (cf. Heb. 6:6,18; 10:4; 11:6).
 - b. With God, all things are possible. δυνατός dunatos ^{#1415}_{32x}: *powerful, able, possible* (cf. Mk. 9:23; 14:36; Rom. 12:18).
 - c. These principles should be obvious to any believer, but the disciples were struggling to comprehend the Lord's ministry to the rich young ruler. They were astonished—struck out of their senses in amazement. ἐκπλήσσω ekplēssō ^{#1605}_{13x} (Mt. 7:28^a; 13:54^b; 19:25^c; 22:33; Mk. 1:22^a; 6:2^b; 7:37; 10:26^c; 11:18; Lk. 2:48; 4:32^b; 9:43; Acts 13:12).
9. Peter & the other apostles felt like they had literally performed what the rich young ruler could not do (Mt. 19:27-30; Mk. 10:28-31; Lk. 18:28-30).
 - a. The Apostles of the Lamb have special reward—both under Israel's blessings in eternity and the Church's blessings in eternity (Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:30; Rev. 21:14; Acts 1:26).
 - b. Temporal life sacrifices have temporal and eternal recompense (Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:29-30; Lk. 18:29-30).
 - c. The inversion of first & last is consistent with God's thoughts and ways (Mt. 19:30; Mk. 10:31; Isa. 55:8-9).