

Jesus and The Rich Young Man

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 June 2020

Preacher: John Angus Macleod

[0 : 00] The Gospel of Mark. Mark in chapter 10. And we're going to read verses 17 to 31.

Mark 10 from verse 17. And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commands. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness.

Do not defraud. Honor your father and mother. And he said to him, Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth. And Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, You lack one thing.

Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor and you will have pressure in heaven. And come, follow me. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

[1 : 30] And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle and for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. And they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, Then who can be saved?

Jesus looked at them and said, With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.

Peter began to say to him, See, we have left everything and followed you. Jesus said, Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brother or sister or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions.

And in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last. And the last.

[2 : 58] Amen. May the Lord bless to us that reading of his own holy inspired word. I want us to look at the story tonight of the rich young man.

The rich young man elsewhere spoken of as a ruler, a rich ruler. You'll see it there in verses 17 to 22. As he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked him, Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And I want to look at this from the perspective of the rich young man himself. Five things, really, I want to think about. Very simple.

And this is designed not only for the adults, but for the children as well. I think the first thing that this rich young man was saying was that I wanted the best that God could give me.

I wanted the best that God could give me. He wanted, he says, eternal life. What must I do to inherit eternal life? We all have all sorts of longings.

[4 : 16] When we're speaking to some of the people in the breakout rooms, you learn some of these longings. Some people have very difficult times, of course, as Andy was saying, at home, especially in lockdown and difficult situations and trials.

Other people are moving into school or going into the academy. And it can be really quite a challenge, the thought of going on to a new stage. And that can fill our hearts and minds as well.

Other people are thinking about who they'll spend their life with. What kind of relationship will they have? Will there be marriage or not? Some people may be worried about their jobs.

600,000 people out of job and a lot more to follow, no doubt. That's going to be a huge thing.

Health. What's your health like?

What kind of pains? What kind of diagnoses? These are the kind of things that sometimes can crowd in on all of us, young and old. And we tend not to think of eternal life.

[5 : 22] But this ruler, this rich person, he was different. He had a good home. He was well raised. We know that.

This is somebody who knew what it was to be honoured, well educated, well off. He's very rich. He's got a good job. He's a ruler. And he's obviously got good health as well.

You can see that from the way he ran. I wish I could run. He ran up and left before Jesus. So he's got a lot of things in this world.

And you might have thought, this is the kind of person who should be looked at and envied because he's got everything perhaps that you might want.

But if you ask the man himself, he says, yes, I've got all of these things. But I want to be able to be sure that I can inherit eternal life.

[6 : 18] And of course, if you were in the first century like this man, eternal life was something that you would get later. It was not something that you would perhaps enjoy in this life now.

For the Jews, they began to think that this was in the age to come. So here's this man. He's very wise. He's a thinker. He's really thinking ahead.

He's not just thinking about tomorrow or the next day or his job or his money. He's thinking about eternal life. And he knows that God has promised wonderful things, wonderful things for the future. Things to do with sin being forgiven. Things to do with people being brought into a relationship with God where God is at peace with them. Where God can give them a righteousness that he himself will love.

A real peace in one's life. A relationship with God and evil just not around at all. This is the kind of person, I think, who wanted to be on the right side of God.

[7 : 27] Not only now, but in the future. So that's why he goes up to Jesus and he basically says, I want the best that God can give.

I want eternal life. Nothing that I have will give me the satisfaction compared to receiving eternal life in the future. Now just think about that.

This guy woke up in the morning and this thought filled his mind. I need eternal life. I want the best that God can give.

Second thing I think this man would have said is, I thought Jesus was the answer. I want eternal life. I want the best that God can give.

And I know exactly, I know exactly who can help me to get eternal life. Jesus, he thought, would be the answer. Now why did he go to Jesus rather than all sorts of other people?

[8 : 31] There were priests. There were Pharisees. There were scribes. There were people who knew their Old Testament inside out. But he doesn't go to them. He goes to Jesus. Why?

Well, it may be because Jesus had been preaching about eternal life. He spoke about eternal life. He described what eternal life is.

A lot of what Jesus says about eternal life is found in the Gospel of John. But also some of what he says is found in these Gospels like Mark as well. And he's talking about entering into life at the end. Jesus spoke about these things. He was a teacher on these things. And this rich young person, he probably thought, well, he teaches about it, so he must know something about it.

But there's also the fact that Jesus, I think, had a sense of peace about him. He's somebody that already seemed to know God. He talked a lot about God.

[9 : 32] He had an intimate, close relationship with God. And the rich person, he said, well, if I want to know about eternal life, both now and in the future, it's good to talk to somebody who really knows about eternal life and about God.

So Jesus was the obvious choice. So he goes up to Jesus. And look at what he says to him. Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

Now, when he said good teacher, he wasn't describing Jesus as a teacher who was good at teaching. He was really saying, Jesus, I know you're a teacher.

And I know you're good. And it's that combination that is perfect for what I need today. You are good.

You really are good. I can tell in your ministry. I can see it in the way you speak to people. I can see it in the way you heal people. You are good.

[10 : 36] And you're a teacher. You're able to instruct and train and disciple people. So good teacher. What a perfect combination.

So with that thought in mind, he goes up to Jesus. And notice what he does. He runs up to Jesus, kneels before him, and asks the question.

So Jesus is already on the journey. He's on the road. He's on the move. And it takes a lot of courage to go and stop Jesus when he's on the move. You may think Jesus engaged in all sorts of ministry.

What right would I have to intervene in Jesus' agenda? And yet that's exactly what he does. He runs up to Jesus and he stops Jesus.

He kneels down on the ground so Jesus can't get past him. He kneels down before him. Now, wouldn't you agree that that took a lot of consideration?

[11 : 35] He says, And he can give me.

He can give me the information that I want about being on the right side of God. Well, he thought Jesus was the answer.

And strange, straight away, Jesus says to him, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. Why do you call me good?

I mean, that question is a bit strange, isn't it? Why do you call me good? How Jesus said that to you, I'm sure you could write out pages about why Jesus is good.

You could think of him being a role model in all sorts of ways. The way he healed people, cared for people, compassionate. I mean, you couldn't find a fault in Jesus.

[13 : 00] He was somebody. He really, genuinely was good. But Jesus says, why do you call me good? No one, no one is good except God.

It's as if he's saying to this young man, he says, You know what? You're only thinking on a horizontal. You're comparing me to other people in the community.

And you've looked around at everybody else. And you thought, I'm the best of them all. You're just working on the horizontal. And I'm good compared to others.

But you're not working on the vertical. You're not saying that I'm good in the eyes of God. That doesn't seem to enter into your thinking. I mean, Jesus, he would have towered in any generation. He would have been the one that would stand out in any community. Doesn't matter where he was, he would stand out as good. But this young man, this rich person, He didn't come to Jesus because Jesus was good in God's eyes.

[14 : 17] He came to Jesus because he was good compared to everybody else. He thought Jesus was the answer.

So these are the first two things. I wanted the best that God could give me, eternal life. I thought Jesus was the answer. The third thing, Jesus turned me inside out.

Jesus turned my heart inside out. See, Jesus knew this young person.

He knew this rich young person. He knew all about him. In fact, if you're reading Mark's gospel, you soon learn that Jesus knows about people.

Remember the paralyzed man in Mark 2. He knew about the sins of that man. Everybody else just saw his paralysis. Jesus knew about his sins.

[15 : 19] And he dealt with his sins first and foremost. In Mark 3 and verse 5, he knows the hardness that is in people's hearts. In Mark 5, when he meets the Gerasene demoniac, the one we call Legion, he knew all about Legion before Legion spoke to him.

In chapter 8 and verse 17, he knows that the disciples have hardened hearts. Imagine that. Jesus knows it all. In 933, he knows that they're proud.

They're actually thinking, who is the greatest of us? Who's the greatest of all the disciples? Jesus knows all about people.

And he knows the life story of this rich young man. He knows how he thinks. He knows what he wants. He knows how long he's wanted it.

He knows how he's tried to achieve his goal. And he knows what he thinks of good and being good. He knows all about that.

[16 : 31] And that's true for you too. There's absolutely nothing that he doesn't know about you tonight. Whether you are young or old, whatever secrets you may keep from people, what side of people, what side of you people don't know, Jesus knows everything about you.

And before you come into any service like this, before you come into any new day, Jesus knows all about you. Just as he knows about this rich young person.

And you notice that Jesus challenges this person. He challenges his conception of good. We saw that already. And then he challenges the whole idea of goodness in actions.

Look at what he says to the man. Jesus said, Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

You know the commandments. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Do not defraud. Honor your father and your mother.

[17 : 47] Now notice, he's not saying to the rich young man, keep these commands. He's actually saying to the young man, you know these commands.

I know you know them. You know them inside out. They fill your heart. I know you know these commandments. They fill your heart. They fill your mind.

They shape your life. I know that you know these commandments on a daily basis. They affect the things that you do or don't do. You know these commands.

And the ruler, he responds in affirmation. Yes. Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.

I've kept them all. Every one of these commandments. You know, there are some, some things that you say, perhaps for the first time ever.

[18 : 50] You ever done that? You've used a word that you've never used before. And you've said a sentence. And you know this, I've never said that sentence before. Well, I doubt this rich young person had ever spoken these words before.

All these I have kept from my youth. But he said it that day. And he said it in front of Jesus, who knows all about him.

Knows all about him. See, what Jesus is doing here is, he's turning this rich young man inside out. He's showing this young man, what he is actually like. He's showing him how he's wrong about goodness.

How he thinks about his own obedience that is perfect. He's showing him how he thinks. I know all about you, he says to the rich young man.

[19 : 59] I'm turning you inside out. There's nothing about you that is hidden from me. And I'm fairly sure that this rich young person, later on, he would say, do you know this?

I've never met anybody like Jesus, who knew me so well. He knew all about me. He knew my desires. He knew where to prod. He knew the very place where I was boastful.

All these I have kept from my, you know, there are some things that make you cringe. You said them, and you can't take them back. I wonder if the rich young man, later on, would say, why on earth did I say that?

All these, every one of them, I have kept since I was a young person. And now he's in a, he's a person who's ruling.

He's got a job. He's an adult and so on. So he's got a track record. And he can sum it up. All these I have kept from my youth. But, but that really is the way he thought.

[21 : 10] You see the point? That's what he was like on the inside. And Jesus, that's what he did. He brought what he was like in his heart on the inside.

And he turned it out. So that he himself could see it. Hear himself speaking. And you know, Jesus can still do that today.

He can turn our hearts inside out. You know, many people don't come to Jesus for salvation. And you know why? Because they're mistaken about themselves.

They think such and such about themselves, such and such about Jesus. They've got their own idea of thinking about all of these things. They think that they're secure for the future. They can manage fine.

They don't need forgiveness of sin. Sin's not a problem. Is God even there? I mean, people will have all sorts of thoughts. But you know, when God, through his word, through fellowship with his people, through conversations with Christians, sometimes in the most direct way, the spirit of God just turns your heart inside out.

[22 : 24] And you begin to see yourself and you say, wow, I got that wrong. I got that wrong. So, there's the first three things about this rich young man.

I wanted the best that God could give, eternal life. I thought Jesus was the answer. Jesus turned my heart inside out.

The next thing I think he would say is, Jesus turned my world upside down. He turned my world upside down.

See, Jesus is so, so wise. He's clever. Very wise. So full of understanding. Jesus got this rich young man to affirm his obedience before he asked him for a demonstration of it.

He got the man to say, all these I have kept from my youth, perhaps with a level of boastfulness. And then once he had said that, Jesus then went in, looked at him, loved him, and challenged him. [23 : 44] Go, sell all, give to the poor. You will have pressure in heaven and follow me. That wouldn't have been quite so challenging had the rich young man not first of all said, all these I have kept from my youth.

This is the way I live. I keep the commandments of God. But Jesus turns his world upside down. His world view as well.

What does he do? First of all, he looks at him. And he looks at him directly. This is one-to-one kind of stuff.

You know, there are times when, even on the screens here, when we had poor broadband, we couldn't always have the videos on. But now it's so good.

You see faces, you see people. But whether we see them or not, and there may be reasons you can't, Jesus, Jesus, he can look one-to-one, eyeball-to-eyeball, and he can really get through to you.

[24 : 56] Jesus looked at him. Isn't that a strange thing to say? He looked at him. The second thing, he loved him. Out of all the responses that Jesus could have done, this is the one that is the least likely.

Had Jesus been listening to the man who said, all these I have kept from my youth, I could well imagine Jesus saying, huh, so you think you're holy. Let me explain to you what the holiness of God is like.

Let me explain to you what the sinfulness of your heart is. Let me point out the inconsistencies in your life. He could have done that in public. He could have humiliated the man.

He could have condemned him. And he would later condemn the Pharisees. Woe to you, describes the Pharisees.

But he doesn't do that. He looked at him, and he loved him. Now, the word love there is talking about something that happened in that moment.

[26 : 04] He looked at him, and he loved him in that moment. And there's some things, both scary, challenging, and comforting about that.

When you know Jesus is looking at you eyeball to eyeball, and at the same time, he's loving you. There's something attractive about the loving eyes of Jesus.

Somebody can look with eyes that are filled with hate, or disappointment, or disillusionment. Jesus looked at this man with eyes filled with love.

The man would never forget this for the rest of his life. He looked at him. He loved him. And then comes the challenge.

He says, you lack one thing within his worldview. Go, sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me.

[27 : 14] Go, he says, you came to me. Now I want you to go for a while. And here's your mission. Get every possession you've got, get it together.

Sell it up. Sell it on. And all that you get for your possessions, I don't want you to keep any of it for yourself. I want you to give it to the poor who live in your community.

And here's a promise I'm going to give you. If you do all of that, you will have treasure. Not on earth, but you will have treasure in heaven.

That's the, that's what you wanted, wasn't it? You wanted eternal life. You want the treasure in heaven. You wanted to be on the right side of God in the future.

You wanted the richest of God's blessings. Well, he says, there's the challenge. Go, sell everything you have, give it all to the poor.

[28 : 18] You're a treasure in heaven. I promise you that. And then come back and follow me. Not as a teacher.

I don't want you to follow me as a teacher. I want you to follow me as a master and you'll be in relationship with me as a disciple before a master.

A personal relationship with me. And the man I'm sure would have said, but that turns my world upside down.

I have all this wealth. I have all this rank. I have all this earthly comfort and security. Do you really want me to give all that up?

Yes, says Jesus. And I think the man's life was just turned upside down by this challenge and by that promise.

[29 : 17] I think he would have said, see on that day when Jesus said that, I was devastated. I was absolutely devastated. I'll be honest with you, I couldn't think about giving up everything.

everything. I kept all the commandments, I thought, but I couldn't give up all my possessions. I couldn't do it.

I couldn't do that. And if I couldn't do that, I couldn't follow Jesus. That's the reality. He realized for the first time there's a command here that I cannot keep.

even though there's a promise that would never fail. There he is, called to follow Jesus, total sacrifice, and he's shocked, he's appalled, he's saddened, disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

things. Think of that. Think of how many people in the community, think of how many people of the poor in the community could have been fed by the riches of this man.

[30 : 50] Yes, he says, I could have been a means of feeding the poor, many of the poor, but I couldn't do it. I know I would have treasure in heaven, but I just couldn't do it.

And you know what I did? I ran to Jesus, but then I walked away from him. I ran to him full of hope, he would be the answer, but he turned my heart inside out, and he turned my world upside down. I went away. you might want the story to end there, and there may be many of you who are precisely in that situation.

Maybe you feel, for example, that you're one of the family whose parents are Christians, and that that somehow guarantees that you will have treasure in heaven.

Not at all. Not at all. You have to follow Jesus. You have to give your all to Jesus. That's what he expects. And he looks at you, and he looks at you lovingly as he calls you to follow him.

[32 : 09] And there may be days when you think, I can't do it. I can't do it. Seriously, I can't do it. On a Sunday night, you might go to sleep, and you think, I can't sleep, because I'm thinking about having treasure in heaven, and being right with God when my life ends, and I just can't follow Jesus.

And maybe that's where you are. Maybe you're an older person, and maybe you've used up all the sermons of a lifetime, you've been pled with for decades, and still you haven't come to Christ.

And maybe just like this rich young man, you go away sorrowful every time. It's just too much. See, the rich person didn't say, this isn't true.

He didn't challenge its truthfulness. He just went away. He just couldn't face it. Well, I wanted the best that God could give me.

I thought Jesus was the answer. Jesus turned my heart inside out. Jesus turned my world upside down. But Jesus did not leave me without hope.

[33 : 37] Jesus did not leave me without hope. My story isn't finished yet. see, the man went away.

And he went away disheartened, saddened, because he had great possessions. He didn't say no. He had to go away undoubtedly.

He had to go and count the cost. He had to go and weigh up what all of this would mean. He wasn't an impulsive person.

He wasn't somebody that would just say the word without thought. No. He didn't say no. He definitely went away.

But he didn't say no to the face of Jesus. He didn't look into the eyeball of Jesus and say, no, thank you. He just went away saddened.

[34 : 45] interesting that the next section in Mark's gospel, Jesus is talking about rich people just like that young man. How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God.

In verse 25, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. They were exceedingly astonished and said to him, then who can be saved? Jesus looked at them and said, with man it is impossible, but not with God, for all things are possible with God.

see, that rich young ruler could still be brought.

He was rich and the riches were definitely a hindrance. Poverty can also be a hindrance in a different way, but riches can be a hindrance. And yet, for God, he can bring rich people in.

[35 : 55] he can bring the Zacchaeuses of this world to want to give up their possessions and follow Jesus. I wonder, I wonder if later on this rich man would hear about Zacchaeus or Nicodemus or Joseph of Aramathea.

I wonder if he would have heard about other rich people who actually were brought in. I don't know. I don't know the story.

I don't know how it ended. I don't know will we meet this young rich person in heaven or not. All I know for sure is that it doesn't have to be the end of the story.

I think the rich man was wise to go away and think, to count the cost before making the commitment. Having said that it's a dangerous thing to do.

Time is not always on your side. Keeping God's commands is not enough. Never can be because you'll never be good enough.

[37 : 11] Taking hold of the promise of God, especially when it's given through Jesus, that's everything. And everyone who's ever become a Christian has taken Jesus at his word.

And I do hope that you'll do that. Yet Jesus may well turn your heart inside out, make you feel uncomfortable.

He may turn your world upside down as he brings you to the point of commitment. But listen to him. he looks at you and he loves you.

You really matter to him. May God bless his word. Let's pray. Our heavenly father, we know that you are one who is able to do a work that no one else can do.

With God, all things are possible. There's the word all again. All. Lord, we can't place limits upon you.

[38 : 20] We can't place limits upon whom you will convert, whom you will draw to yourself. You are able, Lord, to bring people's will into line with your own.

You're able to bring them to cry out, I believe, help my unbelief. Lord, will you do that, we would pray. Do that in our own hearts.

Do that in the hearts of our loved ones, in the hearts of our as yet unbelieving loved ones. Please, Lord, do the impossible, because only you can do that.

We ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Let's sing now from Psalm 16. Psalm 16, verses 8 to 11.

It was our anniversary this week, our 38th anniversary. I hope I got the right one. And this was a psalm that was used at our wedding.

[39 : 24] I was listening to the wedding tape where I was trying to digitize. And I said, the Lord always before me, that's what was given to us on our wedding day.

And that's what we want to do with our lives. And that's what Jesus wanted this rich young person to do. And you, he wants you to do it too.

May this be your promise. Wouldn't it be great if the rich young man had said that on that day?

Before me constantly I said the Lord alone. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be overthrown. Therefore my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope

unwavering. To the end of the song.

He is at my heart. He is at my right hand, I will not be overthrown.

[40 : 23] because he is at my heart. I will not be overthrown.

throne. He is at my throne. He is at my throne. Therefore my heart is glad, I am with joy to sing, my body too will rest secure in hope and river day.

for you will not allow my soul in death to stay.

Lord, will you be your holy God to see the truth he him?

Noon H liked room to be The Eat Why the JoeRe vec at may have will shine.

[42 : 02] Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.