

# The Rich Young Ruler

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[ 0 : 00 ] A warm welcome to our service, and as we come together in this act of worship around the Word of God, let us seek his blessing to be upon his word. Let us pray.

Amen.

We grant unto us the grace to enable us to humble ourselves and to take that place that belongs to us at thine own foodstool, acknowledging our sinnership and giving thee thanks for the provision that thou hast made in and through thy Son to meet with our needs as sinners.

We give thee thanks for the efficacy of his finished work that is able to reconcile us to our God so that we can have peace with God.

[ 2 : 56 ] In the power and demonstration of thy Holy Spirit. In convicting and converting sinners. In bringing sinners to repentance.

And to seek the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. We acknowledge, O Lord, that without thee we can do nothing.

That we are dependent upon thee. And so we pray that it may please thee to manifest thine own right hand of salvation. among us as a nation.

Among us as a people. As a nation that we would, O Lord, come to repentance. That we would come to turn away from our sin. And that we would seek the mercy of God.

We pray, O Lord, that in thy wrath, that thou would remember mercy. We pray for our homes and our families. And pray that thine own everlasting Adams would be around our loved ones.

[ 4 : 02 ] Remember especially those of the number who are indifferent and careless to the claims of thy word. O may thou in mercy look upon them. And in thy love and compassion draw them to thyself.

That they may see their need of salvation. That their eyes may be enlightened. Their hearts been opened. And their wills been renewed.

That they may become a willing people. In a day of thine own power. To come and to embrace Jesus Christ. As he has offered to them in the gospel.

We pray for all thy servants. May they have the unction of thine own spirit upon them. We pray for our young people and our children. O may it please thee to raise up a generation that would fear thine own name.

And who would be thy witnesses in this world. Remember those who are ill. Pray that the bed of affliction may be a bed of blessing unto them.

[ 5 : 11 ] And that thy hand of healing may be upon them. If that is in accordance with thine own sovereign will. We pray for those who mourn. Those who see empty places in their families and in their homes.

And we pray O Lord that thine own comfort may be their portion. For thou art the God of all comfort. And that they may come to lean and rest upon thee.

At this time of grief and pain. We pray for thy people. Those whom thou hast redeemed by thy blood. And we pray that we may indeed be faithful witnesses for thee in this world.

In a world that is so full of temptations. In a world that entices us to leave the path of obedience.

But we pray O Lord that through thy grace. That we would be able to be steadfast. And unmovable. In our obedience to thee.

[ 6 : 21 ] We pray O Lord that thou would remember our communities. That thou would remember all nations of the earth. O that the gospel may prosper.

And that many souls may be saved. We pray O Lord that thou would continue with us now. As we come to wait upon thee. And O Lord we ask with the forgiveness of our many sins.

Is in Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. Let us now read the word of God.

As we find it in the gospel according to Mark and chapter 10. And beginning our reading at verse 13. Mark chapter 10 and at verse 13.

And they brought young children to him. That he should touch them. And his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased.

[ 7 : 25 ] And said unto them. Suffer the little children to come unto me. And forbid them not. For of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you.

Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God. As a little child. He shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms. Put his hands upon them.

And blessed them. And when he was gone forth into the way. There came one running. And kneeled to him. And asked. Good master. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him. Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one that is gone. Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery.

Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Defraud not. Honor thy father and mother. And he answered and said unto him.

[ 8 : 21 ] Master. All these have I observed from my youth. 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. And he was sat at that saying.

And went away grieved. For he had great possessions. And Jesus looked round about. And saith unto his disciples. How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.

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

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. And they were astonished out of measure. Saying unto them among themselves.

[ 9 : 17 ] Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them. Saith with men it is impossible. But not with God. For with God all things are possible.

Then Peter began to say unto him. Lo we have left all and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said. Verily I say unto you. There is no man that hath left houses.

Or brethren. Or sisters. Or father. Or mother. Or wife. Or children. Or lands. For my sake and the gospels. 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. But many that at first shall be last.

And the last first. And so on. May the Lord bless unto us. The reading of that portion of his word. And now seeking his help and blessing.

[ 10 : 17 ] Let us read again at verse 17. That is the gospel of Mark chapter 10 verse 17. And when he was gone forth unto 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? There are many important questions that we ask during the day.

But there cannot be a more important question than the question asked by this young man. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

The question sounds familiar to the one asked by the Philippian jailer recorded in the book of Acts chapter 16. Who asked what must I do to be saved?

Now the account of this young man is recorded for us in three of the gospels. In Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the gospel of Luke we are told that this young man was a ruler.

[ 11 : 22 ] Which means that he must have been in a position of leadership in his local community. Possibly he was one of the officials who managed the local synagogue.

We know that he must have been a wealthy person. For we read in verse 22 that he had great possessions. And Luke says that he was very rich.

This wealthy young man wanted to have eternal life. In other words, he wanted to enter into the kingdom of God. He was very deciduous of entering into heaven.

So he came with his question to Jesus. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? He was a wealthy young ruler.

You could say that he was a young man who had it all. He had great possessions. He had money. Possibly he would have had servants waiting on him hand and foot.

[ 12 : 22 ] And yet there was an emptiness in his heart that all his riches could not fill. There was something missing. There was something that kept him restless.

And he could not have peace or contentment despite all his wealth. This young man was searching for eternal life.

And he was in earnest for the week that he came running. One thing is sure. That this young man was convinced that there was something missing in his life.

Can you just imagine the scene? Along the dusty road, a young man who was a wealthy ruler comes running towards Jesus.

And when he comes to Jesus, he kneels down. He does not care about who is watching him. On that dusty road, he kneels and he asks the question, What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

[ 13 : 25 ] This man was a ruler. This man was a ruler. He was not used to kneeling before anybody. In fact, there was the possibility that others knelt before him.

And suddenly he called no one master. But being a ruler, his servants would call him master. The man had heard about Jesus.

Maybe he heard Jesus preach or perform a miracle. But he was totally convinced of what kind of man Jesus was. And that Jesus was the only one who could help him.

So he came running. He is not lazy or half-hearted. He knelt before Jesus, showing that Jesus was a man who was worthy of respect and reverence.

May I ask you a question? What are you looking for at this moment in your life? This young man was thinking about eternal life.

- [ 14 : 28 ] And it was troubling his heart. Have you ever given any thought to eternal life? Another thing about this young man is that he was outwardly upright.
- He was not living in sin. His life is morally intact. His thinking is right. He was a moral, clean, living young man.
- But he was troubled and concerned about eternal issues. Yet despite his upright lifestyle, he was ignorant about the matter of eternal life.
- Nevertheless, there are some who will immediately criticise and condemn this young man. But there is much in his life that is to be commended.
- He is concerned about his eternal state. And that is good. And he does not linger and put it off.
- [ 15 : 31 ] But when the opportunity came, he came earnestly to Jesus to ask, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?
- This young man came to the right person. Recently, we reflected upon the Queen of Sheba and her journey to seeking Solomon.
- And she came to prove him with hard questions. We are not told what the hard questions were, but whatever was on her mind and whatever hard questions she had, she brought them to Solomon.
- The Queen of Sheba was convinced that nobody could answer her hard questions, but Solomon alone. This young man was convinced that no one could truly answer his question, but the man who was greater than Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Maybe you are listening tonight and you have your hard questions. Those certain questions of the heart. Those questions that leaves you restless.
- [ 16 : 41 ] Those questions that stirs up your conscience. I probably can't answer them to your satisfaction. But you can bring them to the Lord who will answer them.
- Are you convinced of that? I am sure you and I have our hard questions, but where do we take them? As we have said, he came to the right person with his question.
- Jesus always encouraged people to come to him. In Matthew we read these words of Jesus, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
- Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says, And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.
- We made a comment on the ministry of the prophet Isaiah in the morning, and noted that he was sent to preach and warn the tidy nation of Judah and its capital Jerusalem of God's judgment upon their sin and their rebellion against him.
- [ 17 : 54 ] Yet the Lord says to Judah, Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.
- Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with a sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.
- This young man came running, and we find him kneeling before the Lord, and all because there was a deep longing in his heart that needed to be satisfied, which all his possessions could not provide.
- This man on his knees before Jesus said, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?
- To which Jesus replied, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one that is God. Jesus responded in this way because he wanted this man to perceive his true identity.

[ 19 : 01 ] He wanted this man to see that he was someone more than just another good teacher, that he was also the Son of God.

Having said that, Jesus still had a question to answer. So he said to him, 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.

Jesus was saying to him, if you want to be saved by doing, then you must keep the commandments perfectly. Jesus only listed six of the commandments, the last six which deals with our relationship to man.

James writes in chapter 2 of his epistle, When a person breaks one commandment, they are guilty of breaking all the commandments.

And Jesus was testing this young man in relation to his keeping of the law, and particularly in his relationship to others. For if he broke any of them, then he was guilty of all, because the law demands total perfection.

[ 20 : 20 ] Now, in his own opinion, this young man was confident that he had met the standard set up by Jesus. Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

J.C. Ryle says that, this was an answer more full of darkness and self-ignorance. It is impossible to conceive. He that made it could have known nothing rightly either about himself, or God, or God's law.

Ryle's observation is worthy to note. This young man knew nothing rightly about himself. He had no knowledge of himself as a lawbreaker or as a sinner.

Paul, writing to the church at Rome, clearly tells us that, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Catechism asks the question, did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

And answers, the covenant been made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity. All mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

[ 21 : 41 ] Then the Catechism asks, and to what he stated, the fall bring mankind? And answers, the fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Sadly, this young man was totally blinded to the fact that he was a sinner. Which is the root problem that leaves him ignorant of God and God's law. This young man knew nothing about God.

The truth about God is that he demands holiness. The writer to the Hebrew says, follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

This young man was totally ignorant about God's law, that it demanded perfect obedience. Notice that all these things in which this young man was ignorant is related to one another.

This young man, because of his ignorance, he saw no need to be saved from sin. No need to be washed from his guilt. Therefore, for our evangelism, it is important for us that if we are going to exhort people to come to Jesus as Savior, then we have to show people why they need a Savior.

[ 22 : 58 ] Why do we need to be redeemed? So many people look to the law and think that if they do their best to keep the law, like this young man did, that that will bring them to salvation, that that will bring them to eternal life.

The fact is that, as we have already noted, for whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. To do our best is not enough.

We must keep the whole law perfectly. And because we are sinners, we cannot keep the law perfectly. And therefore, we are all guilty of breaking the law.

And hence, we come under the condemnation of the law. Again, Paul in chapter 3 of Romans says, Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

You see, a lot of people like this young man think of sin simply in outward or external actions. They have no knowledge that they can sin by having evil desires, evil thoughts, or even by their imagination.

[ 24 : 16 ] This young man thought that as long as he did not break the law outwardly, that he was not guilty before God. We saw recently in our study of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter 7, that there was a time in Paul's life, when he did not look at sin as extending to the thoughts of the heart.

But there came a day, and he came to realise that sin was not merely in outward actions, but an inward reality. In the New Testament, and in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 5, which we call the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, Ye have heard that it was said by them of all time, thou shalt not commit adultery.

But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. You see, many like this young man think that as long as you do not commit the act, that you are not guilty of sin.

But Jesus teaches us that lust is sinful. The problem is a problem of the heart. On another occasion, Jesus said, For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

Sadly, many fall like this young man to fail to understand that the law is spiritual, that the law is concerned with the heart.

[ 26 : 01 ] In other words, its concerns are not merely with outward actions, but with the inward thoughts, and the desires, and our imaginations. This young man failed to realize that an evil desire, or an evil thought, even his imagination, made him as guilty before God as the actual deed.

It is important for me and you that we come to see the true meaning of sin and our own sinful condition, the power of lust within us, that we come to see ourselves as we truly are in the sight of God.

Are we clear in our minds that to lust after an evil thing is sin? Are we clear that to desire to sin is sin?

That we can sin in our thoughts, in our imagination, as well as in our actions. This young man came to the right person.

He came to Christ, but sadly he came in the wrong manner. He came as a man seeking to earn salvation or eternal life by his own works.

[ 27 : 15 ] His manner should have been to come to Jesus because of his need for a deliverer, a saviour, and a redeemer.

The problem with this young man was that he had given himself only a casual glance. He had only superficially looked at his goodness and had determined that he had observed the law.

This young man was about to learn a valuable lesson, a lesson that we all need to learn. It matters not how good a sinner might be, for this young man had worked hard to make his money.

He had probably been diligent and consistent in what he did. He had outwardly kept the commandments. He had lived his life in a clean and moral way. He had been doing all the right things.

He had not wasted his life like perhaps some others around him. And you may conclude, well, this young man has a good argument. But you see, Jesus was going beneath the surface of this young man's shallow goodness and he was going to probe his heart.

[ 28 : 35 ] That Jesus, beholding him, loved him and said unto him, one thing thou lackest, go thy way and 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.

Like so many who puts up the argument by saying, I have not indulged myself in alcohol. I do not use bad language. I give to charity and I attend worship almost every Sunday.

And yet the Lord says to you tonight, one thing thou lackest. Jesus was giving one simple test.

He already probed him with the six commandments in his relationship with man. But about his relationship with God. How was that? That relationship that is contained in the first four commandments.

If this young man was so confident that he had kept the commandments, then he was obviously keeping the commandment that says, thou shalt have no other gods before me.

[ 29 : 53 ] So was God first in this man's life? Or was something else getting in the way? Jesus said, 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.

We are not saved by our generosity or by the giving away of our possessions. But what Jesus was doing here was identifying the one area of this young man's life where he refused to let God be God.

The one area in his life which he was unwilling to give up for following Jesus. Jesus, by asking him to sell all his possessions, was asking him to put away all the things that were standing in the way of his entrance to eternal life.

The man needed to put away everything in his life that was keeping him from giving his life to Jesus. and in his case, it was his possessions.

It's the Lord saying to you tonight, one thing thou lackest. Put away whatever it is and that you know yourself, whatever it is that is keeping you from following me.

[ 31 : 17 ] J.C. Ryle says, many are ready to give up everything for Christ's sake except one darling sin. And for the sake of that one sin, they are lost forevermore.

Well, is that what is true of you tonight? For a moment, quite briefly, a split second, I assume there may have been a struggle in this young man's life.

This young man was down on his knees and quietly on his knees, Jesus looks at him and says, 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.

And you can just imagine the devil coming to this young man and whispering in his ear, look at everything you will have to give up to get eternal life.

If you get saved, nobody will have anything to do with you. You will not be happy anymore. Giving up everything and following Jesus will be the most foolish thing you have ever done.

[ 32 : 33 ] As long as you do not have Jesus, as long as you do not follow Jesus, you can live any way you want to do anything you want to do. Go anywhere you want to go.

And you can have everything that your heart desires. We can just imagine that heaven and hell is poised to see what this young man will do.

And this young man got up from his knees and he looks at Jesus right in the eye. We are not told of any words, but he simply left with tears streaming down his cheeks.

And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions. The words of Agrippa comes to mind.

Almost, thou persuadest me to be a Christian. To which Paul replied, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day were almost, both almost, and all together, such as I am, except these bonds.

[ 33 : 51 ] In other words, that they were fully persuaded. This young man was almost, but there was a stumbling block in his life.

And he wasn't fully persuaded. This stumbling block in his life kept him from being fully persuaded. What is a stumbling block in your life?

Almost is not to be fully persuaded. This young man would rather have his earthly possessions than eternal life.

When he walked away, he turned his back on the only hope of eternal life in heaven. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

It is clear that this young man's heart was captivated with the love of his possessions. This rich young ruler left the greatest thing that he could have ever had.

[ 35 : 05 ] He left a man who could save him from his sins and grant him eternal life. He left a man who could have given him riches beyond measure. But he turned and he walked away.

What captivates your heart and hinders you from coming to Jesus for eternal life? Tonight, are you doing what this young man did? Turning and walking away from the only one who can give you riches beyond measure?

That is, that can give you salvation. That can give you eternal life. what sin are you not willing to renounce?

What relationship are you not willing to give up? What treasure do you have that you are not willing to relinquish in order to follow Jesus and to receive salvation?

As this young man leaves, we are told Jesus looked round about and said unto disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? And the disciples were astonished at his words.

[ 36 : 21 ] But Jesus answered again and saith unto them, children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus means those who could ask on to riches.

Abraham was a rich man and yet he was a saved man. riches does not hinder a portion from salvation, but when you could ask for to put your trust upon them, they become a stumbling block to salvation.

Jesus said, 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. God. We are told that alongside the main gates of a city was a smaller gate used only by those who walked in and out of the city.

This served a twofold purpose. When at sunset or on the Sabbath, the large gates were closed to keep out those who came by the traditional method of travel with camels, but yet ordinary people could still leave or come by the smaller door.

And this entrance was said to be only about three or four feet high and it was called the needle's eye. The smaller gate was called the needle's eye.

[ 37 : 43 ] 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. We are told that the disciples were astonished out of measure, seeing among themselves, who then can be saved?

And Jesus looking upon them saith, with men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible. This was a great lesson for the young man, though it was not possible for him to merit eternal life.



We cannot save ourselves. Salvation is a gift, and it is a gift from God. So what is impossible for man is possible with God. God. Jesus says all things are possible with God.

Maybe tonight you are doubting that God can ever save a person like you. Well, do not despair, for with God all things are possible.

He can change the heart of the hardest hearted sinner. The apostle Paul, who was a self-righteous Pharisee, where he encountered Jesus, could say, but by the grace of God, I am what I am.

[ 39 : 03 ] You see, salvation is by grace alone. Then we are told that Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

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 sakes, and the gospel.

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.

But many that at first shall be last, and the last first. Matthew in chapter 19 writes, Then answereth Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and follow thee.

What shall we have therefore? Peter, I suppose, on behalf of the descendants, were really asking, is it worth it to give up all and follow you? Is it worth it to give up all and follow Jesus?

[ 40 : 04 ] To follow Jesus means to make a commitment to Jesus. There are certain things that we have to obey, and certain things that we have to let go. There are certain sacrifices that we have to make.

His words to the young Lord, it was, come, take up the cross, and follow me. But whatever sacrifices we do, Jesus promises to give more to us than we give up for him.

Even he promises to give us eternal life. What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? Well, you commit yourself absolutely and totally to Jesus Christ.

You depend totally and absolutely upon his grace. For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourself.

[ 41 : 13 ] us. It is the gift of God. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord, we come to understand that we cannot by our own works merit salvation.

That salvation is a gift from God. salvation is totally through thine own grace.

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God. And we pray, O Lord, that we would all come humbly before thee at this hour, and acknowledge that we are coming empty, that we have nothing at all to merit salvation, that we are sinners, sinners that are needing to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

And we pray, O Lord, that we may come and that we would be willing to be filled by thee, that we would be willing to come dependent upon thy grace alone, so that we can be filled by thyself, that in our emptiness that we come before thee, that thy fullness may be received by us by faith.

We pray, O Lord, that thou would watch over us in coming days, and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore.

[ 43 : 06 ] Amen.