



**THE RICH YOUNG RULER**  
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The Crossing Church  
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### OPENING

This week we are continuing our study called **79 Miles With Jesus**. This is the distance from the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus conducted the majority of His ministry, to Jerusalem. He had traveled this road many times, but this would be the final time because He knew that at the end of the road, He would be arrested, tried and crucified. He is literally walking toward the Cross. This series leads up to Easter as we journey with Jesus and His followers during which stories about people they encounter will teach us lessons about the priorities of Jesus' Kingdom.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Luke 18:18-30** A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" <sup>21</sup>"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. **(Mark 10-21** And Jesus loved – agaped -- him. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup>Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." <sup>28</sup>Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!" "Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God <sup>30</sup>will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

### OBSERVATION

Jesus encounters a young, wealthy ruler who seems to have the world at his fingertips. The man, who likes being in the company of influential people, hears that Jesus is in the area and approaches Him with a question. He wants to know how to get to heaven -- a fairly common question asked of priests by Jews for centuries. He begins with, "Good teacher..." We notice that Jesus didn't answer the man's question at that point. He says only God is good. Kind of off the subject, don't you think? But Jesus is going to the real issue – who Jesus really is and the life He is inviting him to. Then Jesus answered the initial question by listing six Commandments that have to do with the outward appearance of a man. So, the man said that he kept those rules. Jesus looked at him with unconditional love – a look of empathy because He knows the man doesn't understand the enormity of the moment. He didn't get the response he had imagined -- Jesus directly told him the price to be required from true believers: "Give up everything you value more than Me. Give Me your

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

entire heart.” The man turned away grieving because the cost was too great for him. It was easier to look at the Son of God and say, “No, thank you. I value my strongholds of stuff and position too much.” This is the only time recorded in the gospels that Jesus called someone to follow Him and they refused. When we fail to surrender, we are responsible for the outcomes.

**QUESTION: When did you come to the understanding that God requires submission, surrender and obedience from you? What was your reaction to this realization?**

**QUESTION: What about the story of the Rich Young Man causes you to rethink your love of worldly things?**

**QUESTION: When in the past have you said, “No, thank you, Lord. I’m not ready.”? Are you ready now?**

**QUESTION: If you were to put yourself in the place of the Rich Young Ruler today, what do you think your answer would be?**

## **APPLICATION**

Everyone listening to Jesus was shocked when He said, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God.” The people listening to this conversation believed that wealth equaled God’s favor toward a person – that God must love the wealthy more – that is why they are rich. Yet the Rich Young Ruler who had everything left with nothing and Peter and His other followers left everything, gained true life.

**QUESTION: What is it in your life that you want to continue to control? What have you replaced God with?**

It is so much easier to choose the temporary outcomes. We may be tempted to choose the easy routes and completely miss what God has for us. God won’t rob us of the responsibilities and the outcomes associated with our decisions. We get to experience the full extent of their consequences. And God doesn’t renegotiate with us when we make our own unwise choices. He has given us all of the information we need to be safe and, if we refuse to listen, it’s on us! **Whatever we fail to surrender, we’ve chosen to take responsibility for.**

**QUESTION: When have you chosen the temporary over the eternal? What was the outcome?**

We may all put our trust in something that will eventually cost us everything. But there is another choice: **When we surrender, God takes responsibility for the outcomes of our lives.** Isn’t that the safest place we can possibly be? Dead center in the will of God? Or do we fear losing our own control? Whatever we have replaced God with is far more risky.

**QUESTION: How does it feel to be out from under the protection of Almighty God?**

When we pray, we can regularly, consciously surrender to God all of the stuff we value too much: Cars, houses, families, jobs, money, reputations, plans, wants, our futures. We really don’t want to lose those things, but we can’t fully follow Jesus if we are putting them ahead of Him. Surrender isn’t one of the options for a follower of Christ – it is the only option.

**QUESTION: When have you listed everything you value in your life? What on this list is more important than Jesus?**

**QUESTION: What are you fiercely gripping in your hands rather than turning them over to the open arms of Jesus?**

**QUESTION: When will you be willing to surrender everything every day in your daily prayer?**

When Peter said, “Jesus, we have left everything. We don’t have houses or jobs or friends. We walked away from all that to be with You,” Jesus replied, “I know you have. **In return you will receive so much more than you ever gave up!**” It is a decision of the heart.

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, we surrender to You again today all of the things we value in this world that distract us from Your Kingdom: Families, jobs, homes, cars, money, reputation, power, control and so much more. Take it all, Father, because we want to follow You all the way to Heaven. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

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**QUESTION:** What about the story of the Rich Young Man causes you to rethink your love of worldly things?

**QUESTION:** When in the past have you said, "No, thank you, Lord. I'm not ready."? Are you ready now?

**QUESTION:** If you were to put yourself in the place of the Rich Young Ruler today, what do you think your answer would be?

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