

ALL !N WITH JORDAN EASLEY

The Rich Young Ruler

Encounters With Jesus | Part 6 | Mark 10:17-31

INTRODUCTION

Many of us can remember wanting something desperately as a child, like a prized toy or a rare collector's item. We might have even been willing to trade for it, but when the time came, the cost felt too high. We looked at what we already cherished, what we had worked hard to get, and thought, "As much as I want that, I just can't let go of what I have." In a similar way, we all come to Jesus with hands that are full. They are full of our achievements, our possessions, our plans, and our priorities.

As we encounter Christ, He gently but firmly asks us to loosen our grip and let those things go. In Mark 10, we meet a man who had everything the world says we should want, yet he walked away from Jesus sad and grieving. His story is a powerful reminder that our relationship with God is not about what we can accumulate, but what we are willing to surrender to gain the one thing that truly matters: eternal life through Jesus Christ.

KEY POINTS

1. Salvation Is a Gift to Receive, Not a Reward to Earn

The rich young ruler approached Jesus with urgency and respect, asking, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" His question reveals a fundamental misunderstanding of salvation. He viewed it as a transaction, believing that following religious rules and performing good deeds would secure his place in heaven. Jesus pointed him to the commandments, which the man claimed to have kept from his youth. While his life was morally upright on the outside, his heart was focused on what he could do. Jesus was making it clear that you cannot "do" your way to heaven. Salvation is not a reward you earn or an inheritance you are owed; it is a gift of grace you receive through faith. Good people do not go to heaven, saved people do.

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2. Jesus Requires Total Surrender, Not Partial Devotion

Looking at the young man with love, Jesus identified the one thing he lacked. He commanded him, “Go, sell all you have and give to the poor... Then come, follow me.” This was not a universal command for all believers to sell their possessions. It was a specific test of allegiance for this man, designed to expose the idol that had captured his heart: his wealth. An idol is anything you love, cherish, or depend on more than God. The man’s riches, a good thing in themselves, had become the ultimate thing in his life. Jesus revealed that He will not be one of many gods in our lives; He must be Lord of all. The man’s grief-filled departure showed that he was unwilling to release the one thing he loved more than God. The core issue was not about his wealth, but about his worship.

3. Following Jesus Is Worth More Than Anything We Leave Behind

After the man walked away, Jesus declared, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” Wealth creates spiritual challenges because it fosters self-sufficiency, a false sense of security, and functional idolatry. It whispers that we have everything we need, making it harder to reach a place of desperation and complete surrender to God. When the disciples were astonished, Peter pointed out that they had left everything to follow Him. Jesus responded with a profound promise: no one who gives up things for His sake and the gospel’s will fail to receive a hundred times more in this life and eternal life in the age to come. Jesus never asks us to give up anything that He does not plan to replace with something infinitely better.

The story of the rich young ruler forces us to ask ourselves a difficult question: What are we clinging to so tightly that it keeps us from fully following Jesus? For the young ruler, it was money. For us, it might be control, approval, a relationship, a secret sin, or our own plans for our lives. These are the "nonnegotiables" we hold back from God. Following Jesus requires a total surrender of everything we are and everything we have.

Jesus’s call to “follow me” is an invitation to exchange the temporary treasures of this world for the eternal riches of His Kingdom. This does not mean that possessions, careers, or relationships are evil. It means that our identity must be found in Christ, not in them. When we surrender all to Him, we discover that what He gives in return is far greater than anything we could ever give up. He replaces our idols with His presence, our false security with true faith, and our fleeting pleasures with everlasting joy. True discipleship is an ongoing act of surrender, trusting that in His presence, we will find everything we truly need.

