

“The Kingdom, Riches, and Eternal Life”

Matthew 19:16-30

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subject: the Kingdom, riches and eternal life

objective: follow Jesus and invest in eternity

I. who is Jesus? (vv. 16-17a)

Discussion Question:

What are some answers you might hear from people if you asked them, “Who do you believe Jesus is?”

A. Jesus is God

II. who am I? (vv. 17b - 22)

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)

A. doing good will never be enough to get to heaven

B. I am, you are, we all are sinners

“And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.” (John 3:23)

III. how do I get to heaven? (vv. 23-30)

A. it’s impossible for us to save ourselves

1. we can’t earn our way into heaven

B. to get into heaven we must believe in Jesus Christ

C. sacrifices made for the Kingdom of God in this life will be rewarded in the next

1. they’re really not sacrifices- they’re investments

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Intro. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the rich young ruler's quest for eternal life [Matt. 19:16-23, Lu. 18:18-23, Mk. 10:17-27]. The young man is wealthy, presumed to be an elder of the synagogue, and is religious. Despite abundant possessions, prominence, position, and practical religion he is aware that something is lacking in his life. Thus he desperately pursues Jesus to ask, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" [16]. Eternal life is a life in relationship with God that transcends temporal life. There is more to life than our time on earth. Have you ever wanted to *know* that you have eternal life and heavenly rewards?

Subject: How to have eternal life and heavenly rewards

Object: Follow Christ and invest in eternal life

Context: Jesus is moving from the Galilee to Jerusalem and the cross [Perea 19:1]

1. What does "good" really mean [16-17]?

The young man approaches Jesus and asks, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God" [16-17]. Jesus' answer affirms that only God is good. Thus, the rich young ruler must recognize that Jesus is God and therefore must submit to Him. This in effect would answer the question what must one do to experience eternal life. Or an alternative discovery that God's standard of "good" is much higher than man's. Jesus' discussion of the commandments begins to reveal God's perfect standard of goodness.

Jesus loved me by revealing that I'm not a good person. The world seeks to affirm that everyone is good, all deserve a trophy, and that no one is really all bad so there must be good in all. This may be how the world seeks to love. But when I consider "good" in light of God's standard I realize that I don't measure up. That realization is critical to growth, development, and discovery of eternal life.

2. What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself [17-20]? The man asks which of the commandments that he should keep [18]. Jesus recites six of the Ten Commandments that focus on the relationship between people [Ex. 20:12-16], "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Do not defraud," "Honor your father and your mother." And Jesus adds the command to, "love your neighbor as you love yourself" [18-19, Lev. 19:18]. The Mosaic Law is not the means to salvation, but reveals God's standard and exposes our sin, and our need for a Savior who is Jesus the Christ.

The rich young ruler was quick to affirm, "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth" [20]. It appears that he was genuinely seeking to do right and be right with God. And

he also realized that something was missing, “What do I still lack?” [20]. He assumes that he loves his neighbor as he loves himself, but also realizes there is something lacking.

It wasn't until I began to contemplate that I don't really love my neighbors that I began to discover what was lacking. Do you ever feel that you might not love your neighbors? Do you ever feel that something is lacking? Do you ever wonder what it might be?

3. What was lacking [21-22]? Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me” [Mk. 10:21]. Jesus' love confronts us, challenges us, and should motivate us.

What was lacking was a supreme love for God and neighbors. Jesus had not referenced the first four of the Ten Commandments related to revering God supremely. Nor did Jesus mention the last of the Ten Commandments related to coveting [Ex. 20:17]. When Jesus challenged the young man to give up his wealth a conflict was revealed. The rich young ruler's external behavior masked a heart that was divided between a love for God, love for possessions, and love for this world. That division was an obstacle to allowing God to fill the void.

Jesus was not suggesting that charity or perfect obedience was the means to salvation. Salvation is by grace through faith [Eph. 2:8-9]. But was seeking to help a man, and mankind, to understand that we must love God and neighbors more than our possessions or this world. The rich young ruler had a choice. He chose his possessions rather than submit to God, and he went away sad [22]. Jesus was sad too for He loved him; and he understood the consequences of his decision. The man was exchanging temporal pleasure from wealth for a relationship with God in this life and the life to come. Thus he would continue to lack. *Which will you choose?*

4. Which is more valuable to you treasure on earth or in heaven [21-30]?

a. Jesus invites us to trade temporal pleasure for eternal treasure [21]

Jesus said to him, “**If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.** Jesus assured the rich young ruler that he could trade earthly treasure for heavenly treasure. Jesus was offering an exchange, temporal pleasure and treasure for eternal pleasure and treasure as His disciple [21].

b. Jesus observed how difficult it is for the wealthy to be saved [23-26] ²³ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “**Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.**”²⁵ When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “**Who then can be saved?**”²⁶ But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, “**With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**” It is difficult to enter the kingdom while holding tight to riches [23-24]. Wealth tends to produce pride and dependence upon riches and self rather than God. The disciples were amazed [25] because they presumed that wealth was evidence of God's blessing. Salvation is impossible without God, you can't purchase it, but only through God is it possible [26].

c. Jesus promises eternal rewards to those who choose Him [27-30] ²⁷ Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?”²⁸ So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹ And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. ³⁰ But many *who are first will be last, and the last first.*

Peter inquired about “treasure in heaven” [21]. He asked the Lord how the disciples would be rewarded in light of all that they had left behind to follow Him. Jesus assured that all who followed Him would receive a hundredfold increase and eternal life [27-29]. Rewards are promised for all disciples. Most investors would be impressed with a hundred percent increase, but Jesus offers a hundred *times* increase. He is appealing to our sense of reason, because He loves us and knows the perverse value we place on earthly treasure. And He assures of eternal life, because He loves us, and understands the eternal consequences to our soul.

d. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also [Mt. 6:21] There is a battle for our hearts between a love for God and love for this world. Kingdom investing is a sacrifice but not really a sacrifice since God’s promised return is so much greater.

Yet the motive is a response to God’s love for us, and love for HIM [not the ROI].

Conclusion: Follow Christ and invest in eternal life

Prayer Groups: gather in groups to pray for our neighbors (@ 3 min.)