

The Rich Young Man

Mark 10:17-22

A young man comes to Jesus, hears the way of salvation, and he turns away to leave as lost as he came. The same thing continues to happen today. People come in and out of our churches. They hear the Gospel message; they are challenged to repent of their sins and to turn to Jesus for salvation, but many leave the church just like they came in. If they do not repent of their sins they will eventually die and spend eternity apart from Christ.

Read Mark 10:17-22

What do we know about this young man?

He Had Privilege – All three Gospel writers tell us that this man was rich. Matthew also tells us that he was young (Mat 19:22). He lived a life of privilege.

He Had Position – Luke tells us that this man was a “*ruler*” (Luke 18:18); his wealth and status most likely made him an influential leader in the local synagogue (much like Nicodemus – John 3:1).

He Had Prestige – He probably lived a good life (v.20). This young, rich, moral, religious leader was likely well esteemed and looked up to by others.

In spite of everything he has going for him, he found himself unsatisfied. His money had left him feeling unfulfilled. His morality, his clean living and his religious activity had not been able to satisfy the deepest longing of his soul: peace with God.

v. 17-20 - This fellow has a lot going for him, but he knows he is missing something: a saving relationship with Almighty God. Look up: Mark 8:36-37

How did this young man approach Jesus?

Running - This shows that he understands the urgency of his need.

Kneeling - This shows his reverent acknowledgement of Jesus’ authority.

Pondering - He came thinking of eternity. He wants to know how he might obtain eternal life.

Publicly - He comes while Jesus is “*on His way*”. In the middle of the road this fellow comes and bows down before Him. This shows us that he is not ashamed to admit that he has a spiritual need.

v. 17 - This young man is concerned about the right issue, and came to the right Person, (John 14:6). He comes at the right time (Isaiah 55:6); and he came in the right way (1 Pet. 5:5). This man gets a lot of things right in his encounter with the Lord. But, it is the things he gets wrong that cause him all his trouble.

He thinks salvation can be earned - He is looking for a “Do” oriented salvation. He wants to have a hand in it. He seems to think that if he can just do enough good things, then God will give him eternal life as a reward. Salvation is not a reward for faithful service; it is the free gift of God’s grace! Salvation is not a reward for service, but it is the gift of grace. Look up: Titus 3:5

The Philippian Jailer had the same questions for Paul and Silas (Acts 16:30), “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul’s answer to him was that there was nothing more to do but to believe, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31). Nothing has changed! If you want to be saved, you accept what Christ has done and forget about what you can do.

v. 18-19 – Did this man consider Jesus to be merely a great teacher, or does he believe that Jesus is God? After Jesus’ question, the young man (for the last time he speaks in v.20) even then does not call Jesus “Lord”.

We must have a correct understanding of who Jesus Christ is. He is not just a good moral man; a teacher sent to show us the way. He is God in the flesh! He does not just point out the way; He is not merely a dispenser of truths; He does not point out the path to life. He is: “I Am” (Ex 3:14) Look up: John 14:6

"I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." - John 8:24

v. 19 – When Jesus gives this young man list of commands, it isn't to imply that salvation comes by keeping the Law (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus is attempting to get him to be honest about his spiritual condition. Salvation is not just something else he could add to his resume. Jesus wants him to see that regardless of what he may possess materially, he is morally and spiritually bankrupt.

v. 20 - The man responds to the Lord's challenge by telling Jesus that he has kept all of those commandments since his youth. Jesus didn't rebuke him for his claim. But what do you notice about the commands Jesus mentions?

Jesus only mentions the commandments that the young man can say he had kept. All the commandments listed in verse 19 deal with man's relationship to man. It may be that this man was right with his fellowman, but he would never be right with God until he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look up: 1 Timothy 2:5

v. 21 - Despite his sins and improper understanding of the things of God, Jesus loves this poor, lost sinner.

This fellow had a lot going for him. Jesus knew that he still "lacked one thing". He must get rid of the gods he already has before he can receive the true and living God. His gods are his wealth and his self.

Look up: Psalm 4:2

God may not ask you to give everything you own away. But, He does demand that we relinquish our grip on anything that we place above Him.

After instructing this man to turn from everything that had formerly defined him, Jesus calls this man to follow Him. Look up: Isaiah 45:22

v. 22 - The Man's Rejection – This man wanted salvation on his own terms. He wanted to keep all the things (or false gods) he had. He simply wanted to add Jesus to his trophy case. When he heard the Lord's demands he was broken hearted. He came to Jesus with Heaven on his mind, but he walked away with Hell as his destination.

He Made An Earthly Decision - He chose his possessions over Jesus. He loved his money more than he wanted to be saved. Jesus will allow you to make the same choice. He jealously wants you to choose Him.

He Made An Eternal Decision - One day, this man's youth faded and was gone. He likely retired from his prestigious position down at the synagogue. Finally his vast wealth couldn't prolong the inevitable, and he died. His religion and his moral lifestyle were not enough to save him. When he died, he found himself in Hell, lost forever, because he had walked away from the only hope he had ever had: Jesus Christ.

Where is your hope is today?

Notes:
