

The Light - Junior Series
Lesson 73

The Rich Young Ruler
Grace vs Works

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



The 'Rich Young Ruler' debates money management philosophies with Jesus Christ. **Matthew 19**

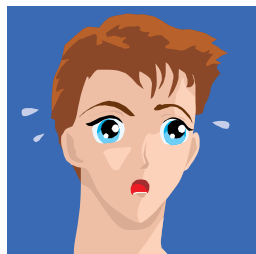
BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If YOU have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have the opportunity to do so right NOW. Simply tell God the Father that you believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He came down from heaven and became a man to take our place and pay for the penalty for all the sin of all mankind. Jesus, the Savior died on the Cross for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Then Jesus was buried but He rose again and He is alive today seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. When you make the decision to believe in Jesus in simple faith based on His work on the Cross, you are now a believer and will always be a child of God. When you die, you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven. *(Acts 16:31) "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." (John 3:16) "God loved the world so much that He gave is One and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*



Lesson

Our lesson is about Grace vs. Works. Here's a young man that had it all wrong in his thinking. Let's get started and look at this story in the Gospels.



Mark 10:17 "As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a young man ran up to Him and knelt down before Him, and asked Him, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'" By looking at all three passages about this "young ruler" in the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke; we find out that this young man was a very important Jewish official, extremely wealthy, and an unmarried man in his 20's or 30's. He was an aristocrat beginning his adult life. He was probably a believer and may have been following Christ for quite some time

listening to His teachings and the question he had for Jesus was personal, and it was urgent! In other words he was sweating it out and needed an answer immediately because he was probably troubled about a few things. His question for Jesus is in Matt 19:16. "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?" He was excited but sincere and he was way off the mark because he actually thinks there is something he can do to earn eternal life...to earn his way into the kingdom. This young man didn't see his own sinfulness and his own helplessness. He didn't learn yet the lesson of John 15:5. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who lives in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." The lesson is we can do nothing apart from Jesus.

Let's see how Jesus answered his questions. Mark 10: 18 "And Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? **No one is good except God alone.** (19) You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS (LIE), DO NOT CHEAT, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" (20) And he said to Him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up.'"

Right here we can see that this young man didn't understand the meaning of the 10 Commandments and why God gave them to the Jewish people. He was immature when it came to the personal sin, corruption and wickedness in his heart from his sin nature. He was unaware of any of it!!!! Mar 10:21 "Looking at him, **Jesus felt love for him** and said to him, 'One thing you lack: go and sell all that you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure (rewards) in heaven; and come, follow Me.'" (22) But at these words **he** (the young man) **was very sad and he went away brokenhearted** for he was one who owned much property (he was rich)."



Kids, this is NOT a salvation passage. The gospel invitation is NOT "go and sell all your possessions and give to the poor, and come, follow me". This passage is emphasizing grace and Jesus is all about grace. "Follow Me" here is discipleship or living in God's plan

after you are saved...following Jesus and relying on grace. The gospel invitation is "Believe on the LORD Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). **"Believe on the Lord Jesus"**. Now THAT is salvation.

Our Lord talks about being made complete in [Matt 19:21](#), which is spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity means that you are a disciple of Jesus' (following Jesus after you are saved). [Matt 19:20-21](#) "The young man said to Him, 'all these things (10 Commandments) I have kept; **what am I still lacking?**' (21) Jesus said to him, 'If **you wish to be complete** (spiritually mature), go and sell your possessions and give to the poor (love one another) and you will have treasure (rewards) in heaven; and come, follow me (be more like me).'"

Our Lord's statement to the rich young ruler was meant as an impossible challenge to wake this silly young man up!

Jesus could say, 'Think you're ready to enter the kingdom? Here's the final exam.'" Jesus spoke to him to shake him up because this young ruler thought he had to do it all himself (works) and he thought he did a great job because he placed his confidence in himself and what he could do NOT what God can do for him...grace.



What this young man needed at this point was to fall flat on his face spiritually. Jesus wanted the young man to realize that there was no way he could ever achieve what he wanted (eternal life) on the basis of his good works. The young man was a man of high moral character. He was not into ritual but he was into obeying the commands of God. He was a really nice young man and very good as far as the world is concerned. He was trying to the best of his ability to live up to the laws of the Old Testament. But inside he was struggling with this and disturbed and he knew something was wrong...something was missing. His conscience was bothering

him. He was seeking the truth. But he was saying to himself: "What am I missing?" 'What am I still lacking?'

Jesus could have hammered him big time by pointing out all the ways this young man had failed to live up to the commandments of the Law. But Jesus didn't do that. Jesus is kind. Instead Jesus gave the young man an impossible assignment that would make Jesus' point about grace much stronger.

The law or the 10 Commandments challenge a man to be perfect and to obey perfectly! THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!!! It's impossible because all mankind have sinned and fall short of the perfect demands of the law. [Rom 3:23](#) "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."

Then why did God give us the 10 Commandments and the Law? To make us realize we are SINNERS and need a SAVIOR and could never live up to the Law!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! This young man missed that.

The Old Testament said that you were to love your neighbor as yourself, and here's this rich kid that's stinking rich that it hurts and yet he is unable to give it away to help his neighbor. Our Lord was trying to get this RICH KID to see the TRUTH and to do the right thing in the eyes of God but in the end the rich young ruler could just not find it in himself to actually DO IT...give up his wealth! He loved his money more than anything. He was blinded by it.



Our Lord purposely set out the challenge to reveal the deceitfulness and self-centered nature of the human heart. The young man went away grieving because he thought he was doing a great job. BUT...HE WASN'T!!! This young man would not let go of his wealth. He loved his wealth and what it did for him in his life.

Don't fall for the lie that the rich young ruler fell for, kids. He relied on his own good works for everything and it just doesn't cut it with God. God doesn't want your works. He wants to pour His grace and blessings on you as His child. He wants you to rely on Him and His grace and divine power from the Holy Spirit. Grace is Jesus' way to go and the only way to go!

Next lesson we are going to see Zaccheus and how differently he was from the rich young ruler. So stay tuned.....

Close in prayer

Prepared from Pastor John Farley's lesson on January 15, 2012
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