



The Kingdom Coming

Lessons from the Rich Young Ruler

(Matthew 19:16 – 30)

Sunday, September 17, 2023

Behold a man came up to Him, saying, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life? ... Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

- Matthew 19:16, 21 – 22

Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

- 1 Timothy 6:9 – 10

In the Biblical view, anything created - anything at all that is less than God, most especially the gifts of God - can become idolatrous if relied upon inordinately until it becomes a substitute for God, and thus, an idol. The first duty of believers is to say 'yes' to God; the second is to say 'no' to idols.

- Os Guinness, No God, But God,

Introduction:

In today's Scripture we read about a young man that approached Jesus with an 'LCD Theology' (Lowest Common Denominator). The question behind this approach is always – 'What is the least that I need to believe or do in order to be a Christian?' Like the Pharisees before him, this man was asking the wrong questions.

But Jesus did not cater to LCD theology. He did not turn His gospel into 'easy-believism'. He did not go out of His way to be 'seeker-friendly'. He was not even too concerned about offending someone if it meant getting to the heart of their unbelief. He loved people too much for that.

In the exchange between Jesus and this RYR (Rich Young Ruler) there are at least five lessons:

- i. Though he seemed to have everything, he knew something was missing in his life.
- ii. Though he knew much about the Bible, he did not understand the grace of God.
- iii. Though he had lived a good life, his self-assessment was built on shallow righteousness.
- iv. Though he had convinced himself that he had obeyed the commandments, he had not.
- v. Though he was a religious man, he had other loves in his heart more important than Jesus.



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Discussion Questions:

- i. Do you see the effects of an 'LCD Theology' in yourself and with your friends?
- ii. What are the idols of our times and the culture we live in?
- iii. How much influence has materialism and consumerism had on your life, and your faith?
- iv. How do you identify with the Rich Young Ruler? What do you learn from him?
- v. Do you know someone that resembles the RYR's response to Jesus? Explain.

Application:

According to Paul in 1 Timothy 6:10, it is the love of money that is the root of all kinds of evil. Have you seen that evil in your own life, or in your family? What has it caused?

Is there something you could do this week to re-order your heart's affections and put money and possessions in their proper place under the Lordship of Jesus? (see Matthew 6:24)