

5.19.24 / Riches Material and Spiritual / Mark 10:17-31

To what are you clinging? – write it down

17a Ran / fell on his knees – Last time you did that?

Great wealth / young (from Matthew) / ruler (Luke)

Rich - Assumed to be a blessing from God for obedience.

This is the person that at some point in our lives we have all envied.

17b He figures: *I'm young and successful. I've succeeded at everything else I've put my hand to so I simply need work for that which I want. Like the straight "A" who knows, study = A.*

If I apply myself, I get what I want. What does he want? "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Age to Come/Kingdom of God)

That's a great question. You know how sometimes, we're tempted to villainize/dislike the person we envy (somehow to make ourselves feel better)? That's tough here... because this guy seems great. He's **got everything** the world has to offer **and** he's humbly coming to this good teacher and wisely asking a very important question:

A typical Pharisee's answer to this question was a detailed interpretation of the Jewish law... so this guy wants (desperately) to hear Jesus' answer to this common and important question.

18 So before Jesus answers this question, it seems He's probing something beneath the surface – something deeper in this guy's heart. I wonder if it's this: The man *has himself* in mind. I wonder if Jesus is interested in getting the man's eyes off **himself** and placed elsewhere... we'll find out.

Good was a term used primarily for God alone. Jesus asks, "why do you call *me* good? No one is good – except God alone" - Eyes off man, eyes on God/Jesus. We'll come back to that.

19-20 Jesus mentions some of the law. The man enthusiastically replies, "I've kept those!" (Me & Amanda)

21 – "... and loved him." Wow. (Jesus knows this man completely.) Part of his love for him is the invitation that he's about to extend.

21b **What's the purpose of the law? Point people to Jesus.** Jesus is inviting this man to look up at the one to whom the law has been pointing all along and put the full weight of his trust in Jesus. Let go of that which you've "earned" and follow me.

22 This guy thought he had it in the bag. He was looking for a bit of assurance and now he's facing the reality that he may not have it at all. His world is crumbling before his eyes. He is devastated. **Have you ever been devastated by your failure to achieve something that you had been working towards?** Basketball – wasn't enough!

23-27 – Impossible: let that set in. Not hyperbole but metaphor.

Inadequacy is severe mercy. It's a beneficial handicap that is intended to draw one away from trust in their own abilities to the one who is their Savior.

We contribute nothing to our redemption.

We earn no part of our redemption.

We think the rich young ruler has so much to offer towards his redemption status... and it turns out that the **child**, weak & needy, is in a far better posture for redemption

It's not about what **you** can accomplish, but what **God will** accomplish. It's God's work. It's God's work. **Not ours.**

So... welcome to the world where... (impossible happens with God)

Camel walks through the eye of a needle

Leave boats & nets (Mk1:16-20) / Tax table (2:14)

Bystander, leave comfort (15:21) – Christians choose death over renouncing Christ, they choose prison over disobedience to Jesus, they choose giving their wealth away over keeping it for themselves, they choose mercy over vengeance.

This is the **work of God** in the hearts of men and women.

With man, **this is impossible**, with God all things are possible.

Would it be that **we would let go** of our “greatness”, competence, power, reputation... and follow **Jesus**.

Everyone would have wanted to become like the rich young ruler rather than **going back** to being like little children **but Jesus calls** for the opposite! **Be** the weak and vulnerable child trusting me. **Let go of your “earnings” (rich people) and follow me.**

28-30 Jesus... so patiently affirms Peter and the disciples. They have in fact let go of their earnings and followed Jesus. Jesus encourages them. I imagine in hearing **this encouragement** they recognize the buzzing of life inside their souls that knows they are experiencing **now** a taste of the **Age to Come** as they follow Jesus with their lives.

Before we close, I want to zero in on 2 questions:

1. How are riches an obstacle?

A. They lure us into thinking, “we got this.” Because of our physical wealth, we **feel** like the rich young ruler who is in control of his destiny. But we **fail** to realize that, given our spiritual need, we are far more like **infants – in need!**

B. They fool us into believing that we are owners. Mt 25 teaches that we are stewards/managers of what God has entrusted to us.

Managers of time, talent, treasure that **belongs** to God:

- Time (Hebrews 10:24, James 1, Col 3)
- Talent (Eph 4)
- Treasure (biblical example of tithe, alms, offering. Truth is that equals more than 10%. ([point to Rob's article](#)))

\$48,000/yr - \$4,000/mo – tithe \$400. What else could I do with that? Lease a car, save up for a great vacation, etc.

The Biblical practice of tithing reminds us that we are managers...

We are tempted to think that the **time, talent, treasure** we have is ours – to be used for our comfort, success, and enjoyment. After all I've worked hard to earn some time off. Riches... they **lure us** into thinking "we got this" and the **fool us** into thinking we are owners.

2. How does Jesus' invitation to the rich man apply to me?

I think Jesus is telling us to **let go of our "earnings" and follow Him.**

Jesus asked this specific rich young ruler to sell everything he had and give to the poor.

He asked Peter, James, and John to leave their nets and follow Him.

He asked Matthew to walk away from His tax collecting booth.

These were his custom-fit ways of inviting each of them to **let go of their "earnings" and follow Him.**

He's asking the same thing of each of us and if we listen to the Spirit's movement in our heart, we'll hear His custom-fit way of inviting us to let go of our "earnings" and follow Him. **For some... cling** to (anxiety/bitterness, Financial freedom, comfort, promotion, approval of others, etc.)

It's not about loving the thing less... but loving Him more. i.e. **Disciples...** and receive 100x more

To what are you clinging? Let go of your "earnings" and follow Him.
Him. Him. Him. Put your eyes on Him.

Randy Alcorn *Treasure Principle* - **"God is a giver.**

We're most like God when we're giving.

Gaze upon Christ long enough and you'll become more of a giver.

Give long enough and you'll become more like Christ."

When you meet Jesus, will you wish you had given more or less?

More! Start closing the gap.

Out of gratitude and recognition for who God is... let go of your "earnings" and follow Him.