

When the Rich Young Ruler Refused to Put God First

June 5, 2021

AUDIO

Putting God first can be difficult. **What can we learn from the rich young ruler**, who refused to put God first?

“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” (Matthew 19:21).

Jesus’ words to the young man might have frustrated some expectations within the group of disciples.

Why didn’t Jesus take advantage of the rich young ruler’s wealth to advance His cause? Why did He risk losing that opportunity?

And the result was just as they feared. When the young man heard Jesus’ words, “he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions” (Matthew 19:22).

But Jesus, the Creator and Possessor of all wealth, was more concerned about the rich young ruler’s eternal life than about his transitory wealth.

With sadness in His voice, Jesus explained to His disciples that it would be “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24).

The disciples were greatly shocked to hear how hard it would be “for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:24). “Who then can be

saved?” they asked (Mark 10:26). Jesus’ answer now elucidates the issue. As it is with all of us, wealthy

people also need a miracle to be saved. Jesus said: “with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

VÍDEO

Images related to text and animation.

sc. 01

AUDIO

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Wealth itself is not bad. "The desire to accumulate wealth is an original affection of our nature, implanted there by our heavenly Father for noble ends."—Ellen G. White, R. & H., March 1, 1887. But as soon as we begin to believe that it is the result of our work, and that it is wealth that will protect us, give us power, or a good future, then it becomes a curse.

The rich young man failed to realize something simple: the experience of salvation and full connection with God and humanity requires the willingness to give away all our wealth, regardless of how small that wealth might be. And sometimes, when Jesus sees that the riches will hurt us, deteriorate our health, our family relations, or even our eternal life, He may kindly ask us to give them away. But Jesus never forces us!

"Jesus does not require of man any real sacrifice; for whatever we are asked to surrender is only that which we are better off without. We are only letting go the lesser, the more worthless, for the greater, the more valuable. Every earthly, temporal consideration must be subordinate to the higher."—Ellen G. White, R. & H., Aug. 11, 1891.

The Bible refers to this experience as Shalom, total harmony and peace with God, humankind, oneself, and nature.

Putting God first means putting our wealth second. Generosity is a non-negotiable characteristic of the Kingdom of God, with eternal consequences!

sc. 03

The young rich ruler refused to put God first. The consequences were terrible for him and the people around him. God's love compels us to put His Kingdom first, while the young rich ruler's example is a warning for us today. As we return our tithes and Promise, we are challenged to put God first.

VIDEO

Images related to text and animation.

Text animation.