

The Rich Young Ruler and the Kingdom of God
Mark 10:17-31
What one thing do I lack?

Opening Worship

Psalm 27

My Worth is Not in What I Own

This passage is found in 3 of the 4 gospels (Mt. 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31, Luke 18:18-30) The setting is Jesus last trip to Jerusalem. He has just finished a teaching to the disciples about coming into the kingdom like a little child.

Mark 10:13-16

Jesus is teaching the disciples here that the kingdom is a _____ to be received. It can't be achieved.

Mark 10:17-31

In these two stories we see such an amazing contrast in the confidence of the young ruler and the _____ of the children.

The Question

There is a sense of urgency in the way the young ruler approaches Jesus and humility as he runs up to him, falls to his knees before Jesus and asks what he must **do** to inherit eternal life. His focus is on the external.

The Answer

Jesus informs the young ruler that no one is good except God, possibly leading the young ruler to acknowledge Him as God and then declares some of the commandments which the young ruler says he has kept.

"We are not to determine goodness by the standards of this world. And this is the mistake that is fatal, eternally fatal. We have a world that is full of people who think that they have lived lives that are good enough to get them into the kingdom of God because they are measuring their own behavior by the wrong standard." RC Sproul

vs. 21 - *Jesus looked at him and loved him.*

Jesus looks into the depths of this man and reads his soul.

His wealth has _____ his heart.

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

Matthew 6:24 NIV

The Response

And the young mans face fell and he went away sad, grieved because he had much wealth. He realized that he couldn't lay hold of eternal life and keep hold of his temporal possessions. This man's wealth was the Idol in his heart.

His words demand a response. The response can cause us to bow down and offer up our lives completely to Jesus or we can turn away offended, grieved.

What is an idol? An Idol is the thing that you really depend on for your security, for your contentment. It is where you place your identity, your worth. It may be what you worship. An idol is your greatest treasure that you love more than God.

The Call to Surrender

When asked in Matthew 22 by an expert in the law which is the greatest commandment, **37** Jesus replied: *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* **38** *This is the first and greatest commandment. 39* *And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* **40** *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

To follow Christ means giving up that thing that controls you, consumes you; that thing that has become an idol in your heart that you may not even realize. But out of love, Jesus will always expose it because it can never fully satisfy.

The greatest wealth is nothing compared to God's forgiveness, His righteousness, mercy and grace. Nothing is more precious than being valued as Jesus' beautiful Bride. You are His greatest treasure.

Humanly speaking it is impossible, but nothing is impossible with God. Entering the kingdom of God is not based on achievement or works or goodness, but it is only by the grace of God.

We become _____ by our possessions

But the greatest hindrance is that wealth can rob you of your dependence on Christ for all your needs. Freedom from wealth as the idol of our lives frees us to be generous.

Jesus says that we must be willing to surrender whatever it is we are holding onto. What is it that has your greatest affection? Your dreams, your work, your success, your dress size, your gifting, your family?

“Degrees, bank accounts, followers, accomplishments, possessions...we can blindly measure abundance according to our own means. Or we can behold the great bounty that is ours through faith in Jesus. And just as He did with the Samaritan woman, Jesus replaces our shame with assurance, our endless thirst with true satisfaction, our useless fillers with fullness in Christ. He makes us, who were beggars at the door, children at the King’s table—a table that overflows with the richest fare. And when we, the hungry and forgetful, come to it we find anew that Jesus is the full measure of abundance and life.” Ruth Chou Simons, *Beholding and Becoming*

Jesus wants to be our greatest treasure.

We miss the abundance that Jesus offers us if we have fixed our hearts desires on our own resources rather than the fullness of God’s grace and mercy.

- Is there one thing you lack that is keeping you from the fullness of following Jesus?
- Is there something that has taken over your heart that’s really not part of God’s plan for you?
- Is there something in your life that you believe will give you a life of joy and power without God?
- Is there something that controls you or that you think will help you control your life; something you have put your confidence, or your worth, or your trust in above Jesus?

Jesus is writing you into His story and it is beautiful and sometimes excruciatingly difficult to let go of those things that we have let take _____ .

The greatest decision you will ever make is that of total surrender to Jesus Christ.

We all live out what we treasure most. Whatever is on the throne of our hearts rules us. What we love most shapes our hearts. It keeps coming back to phrase we began with in our first week of study, "We become what we behold."

Having idols in our lives often comes down to letting our fears rule us rather than God.

He is calling us to a life of abundance. But the way is through simplicity, choosing Jesus as your one thing, surrendering all to Him. It is only in surrender that we really are able to experience the beauty of intimacy with Christ.

In the letting go we gain the deep privilege of knowing and being known. We learn to release our posturing, our pretense, our fears, our wounds, and all of our desires into the heart of Jesus. We ask, we seek, we wait.

We learn this truth as we come to know the Savior more completely in _____ and _____ to His call.

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2 Peter 2:3

The Lord sees the finished masterpiece on the canvas of your life. He sees what is keeping you from entering into the beauty and fullness of Jesus as your One Thing. Sometimes acknowledging the core fears that we wrestle with can help us identify our idols, our false understanding of what gives us worth and value.

Maybe you fear that you are unredeemable, you can never be perfect enough. Maybe deep down you fear being unworthy of love and that is what really motivates what you do. Perhaps you fear failure, being insignificant, or being incapable. You could fear being abandoned, deprived or trapped in pain. Or maybe you fear conflict or losing control.

These are all real fears that the gospel of Jesus Christ answers and heals.

- *Have you turned to God in absolute surrender? What are you still holding onto?*
 - *Other than God, who or what are you trying to build a life through?*
 - *Ask the Lord to show you. Ask for discernment and the courage to follow Him completely, releasing those things or people in whom you have placed your security and trust; releasing your fears.*
 - *God says, "Will you trust me even in the hard places?"*
 - *What do you really need versus what the world tells you that you need?*
 - *What might He be able to do through your life if you let go and followed Him no matter the cost?*
 - *What is He calling you towards?*
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- ***Write down any idols the Lord is revealing to you in the space below.***
 - ***Write down any fears you have.***

- ***Write the name Jesus in bold letters across the list or beside each one.***
- ***You can choose to behold Jesus as your One Thing above all else. You do not have to turn away lacking. Choose to trust Jesus even in the hard places.***

Communion

Give Us Clean Hands

None But Jesus

How Deep the Father's Love for Us

- **Often we need to be reminded who we are in Christ.....Ephesians 1:3-14**
- **If you are a believer, this is a prayer thanking God for your inheritance in Christ as your Savior. It has been personalized for you to make it your own.**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed (me) in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose (me) in Him before the foundation of the world, that (I) should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined (me) for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed (me) in the Beloved. In Him (I) have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon (me) with all wisdom and understanding.... In Him (I) have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will . . . In Him (I) also, when (I) heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, was sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of (my) inheritance until (I) acquire possession of it.

(paraphrased Eph. 1:3-14)

After this encounter with the young ruler and the words to the disciples, Jesus took twelve aside and spoke about his coming death on the cross and resurrection in three days. His love for you and me took Him there. His supreme act of passion for the lost sinner like you and me required a sacrifice. In return we have the incredible privilege of surrendering our lives to Him. No more idols, no more fears, no more seeking to find our worth in the foolish things of this passing world.

***I Surrender All
All I Have is Christ***

Resources: Sermons and teachings by Spurgeon, Tim Keller, RC Sproul, Ruth Chou Simons, Matthew Henry Commentary

Desire and Seek

Discussion Questions

- *What has the Lord been showing you in this study?*
- *Is there one significant lesson from the Scriptures or follow up Desire and Seek that has made a difference in your faith journey?*
- *What would you like to learn more about? (such as study, disciplines of the faith, ordering your life, character of God, the One Thing, simplifying your life)*
- *What have you learned about how to order your life and days so that they are a true reflection of what you desire and seek? Have you made any changes?*
- *What are your greatest struggles or fears as you move forward?*
- *How can we pray for you?*

Coming soon.....

- **Restore Winter Gathering** where we will continue our study through the significant **One Thing** phrases in Scripture.
- **Date: February 7 and 8**
- **Location: Community Bible Church, Baton Rouge.**
- Go to <https://www.restore-ministries.net> for all the details and registration. Mark your calendars now and please invite a friend to join us!

- As you process the deep lessons in this Scripture in the days ahead you may want to spend some time in your own personal prayer of surrender. Below is the one I wrote for our study time together, but personalized. You may want to use it to guide you.

Personalized prayer of surrender.....

Jesus, thank you for the lessons in your Word that challenge me and draw me into your heart of love. Nothing is ever lost when it is given to you, Father. Show me the fears, the idols, the things I still cling to for my value and worth. They are nothing compared to You. You alone are worthy Lord. Give me courage to open my grip on what I have, so that I might receive the abundance you offer. And then in turn Lord, show me how to be an extravagant giver of your blessings for your glory and purposes in this needy world. I let go of my agenda for security, significance, affection and approval, Lord. I choose to rest and trust that I am your Beloved. Jesus, overtake my heart with your love and your truth. Take everything that I am, everything that I treasure and everything I dream about that does not line up with your will and purpose for my life and help me lay it aside. May my motivation to serve You always come from a heart of love and thankfulness. Deliver me from selective obedience. Teach me to consider all my gains as losses compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing and following You. (Phil. 3:7-8)

Thank you for the disciples who faithfully offered their lives as your messengers and living sacrifices to You. They abandoned all comfort and possessions to cry redemption to the lost. Thank you for your sacrifice on the cross that I might have treasure in heaven. I surrender what I have and who I am to You. I come to your cross, Jesus, ready to worship and serve you with my life as it pleases you. May I find my rest in You, secure in my identity in Christ as your Beloved and live expectant of the hope you have called me to in eternal life.

In the powerful name of Jesus, who alone is worthy and for His glory, Amen.

- **You will find in this packet a document entitled Who I Am in Christ. If your identity in Christ is an area where you feel you need confirmation, this would be a great study in the Scriptures for you. They are beautiful truths for all of us to read and savor.**
- **Read your My Beloved Letter and soak your soul in God's truth and love for you. These are Scriptures that I have personalized to be read as a love letter from God to you.**

One of the most helpful ways to quiet our minds and spirits to focus on Jesus is by meditating on the Word. Hopefully, you are continuing to meditate on the Psalms as we did in the beginning of our study using the Lectio Divina Method.

- **Psalms 145:1-9, 139:23 -24 and 86:8-13 would be good Psalms for this time in our study. Read through the entire psalms then meditate on the verses listed or other verses the Lord impresses on your heart.**
- **For further study on meditating on Scripture, read the method described below and then meditate on Mark 10:17-31.**

Scripture Meditation - Ignatian Method

Background teaching

The Ignatian method comes from Ignatius of Loyola who founded the Jesuit order in the 16th century. It is prayerful reflection on Scripture and involves using the sanctified imagination to step into the scene revealed in scripture. This method is most commonly used with New Testament passages and calls us to use all of our senses and try to place ourselves as a bystander or character in the passage. Using our imagination under the guidance of the Holy Spirit can often help us enter into the mind and heart of Jesus more fully. We “experience” the scene and His work in the characters’ lives within scripture and the result is often a transforming work in our own lives. Meditation on the Word and our lives is a definite challenge in our busy world. Yet it is vital that we cultivate a spiritual sensitivity to the words and ways in which Jesus draws us to Himself and His purpose for each one of us.

Spiritual formation occurs as every part of ourselves becomes retrained and purified to obey Christ - tongue, thought, heart, feet, lips, arms and knees and even the imagination. Jesus valued the human imagination and asked listeners to imagine buried treasure, an unjust judge, a mugging on the Jericho road, a house built on the sand, etc. In parables, images and word pictures, Jesus stimulated listeners’ imaginations. As Christ’s present day listeners, it’s our responsibility to respond to Him and let our imaginations be retrained for His purposes.

When using the Ignatian Method of Scripture Meditation it is important to be sure that you have a clear understanding from study of the Scripture including the context of the passage and any cultural or historical settings that are pertinent to your understanding. As in all Scripture Meditation it is vital that you surrender you mind and imagination to the control of the Holy Spirit.

The imagination is the bridge between the heart and the mind, integrating both, allowing us to think/understand with our hearts and feel/emote with our minds. It is a vehicle for truth. Through the use of images, metaphors, stories and paradoxes that demand our attention, it calls for our interaction. The imagination is a powerful means for communicating truths about God, and so God shows an awesome regard for the imagination in his Word. I believe the human imagination is the door at which Jesus says he stands and knocks in Revelation 3:20—a door that we have the freedom to leave closed or open to him. Michael Card, Scribbling in the Sand

Jesus often taught by drawing his listeners into his stories and parables through the imagination. Using images and word pictures to place ourselves into a scene of Scripture can bring the Word of God alive to our hearts and minds. In the Ignatian method of meditation we become a participant in the scripture through our imagination. This requires using our senses to see, hear, touch, taste, or smell as we enter into the Scripture.

“Some have objected to using the imagination out of concern that it is untrustworthy and could even be used by the Evil One. There is good reason for concern, for the imagination, like all our faculties, has participated in the Fall. But just as we can believe

that God can take our reason (fallen as it is) and sanctify it and use it for his good purposes, so we believe he can sanctify the imagination and use it for his good purposes. Of course, the imagination can be distorted by Satan, but then so can all our faculties. God created us with an imagination, and as Lord of his creation he can and does redeem it and use it for the kingdom of God.....To believe that God can sanctify and utilize the imagination is simply to take seriously the Christian idea of incarnation. God so accommodates, so enfleshes himself into our world that he uses the images we know and understand to teach us about the unseen world of which we know so little and which we find so difficult to understand.

Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline

Our goal is to seek intimacy with God, to be transformed into Christlikeness, and be faithful disciples of Jesus. I have personally found this form of meditation a tremendous tool to help me personalize and internalize the Scriptures. If meditation is new to you, you may have to nurture its use. Be patient with the process. Explore and reclaim this creative process for His glory. The imagination is a powerful force when it is devoted to God and used for his purposes and surrendered to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Recommended Resources to guide you in Scripture Meditation

1. Moments with the Savior, Ken Gire (a devotional book with meditation on Scripture)
2. Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline (Book on the Disciplines and workbook)
3. Jan Johnson, Savoring God's Word
4. Jan Johnson, Listening to God

- *Below is a format to guide you to meditate further on our passage this month about the young ruler's encounter with Jesus. Consider using it to deepen your personal understanding and enter the Scripture. This method works best with New Testament Scriptures.*

Scripture Meditation - Ignatian Method

Mark 10:17-31

1. **Study background notes on the passage you have chosen to meditate on today.**
2. **Find a quiet place where you can be alone and listen for God to speak.**
3. **Relax your body and mind.** *Breath in and out slowly. If you find your mind is full of distracting or interrupting thoughts jot them down for later reference so that you can let go of them at this time. Turn over any distractions to the Lord.*
4. **Surrender your mind and imagination to the control of the Holy Spirit and ask the Spirit of God to guide your thoughts.**
5. **Read the Scripture passage.**
It's often helpful to read the passage aloud.

6. **Picture the Passage**

Read the passage again and picture yourself in the passage. Use your imagination and try to experience the emotions of one or more of the characters. Consider choosing one of the characters and try to imagine yourself in the scene as one of those characters. Try to use your senses to place yourself in the Scripture. What did the scene look like? What ways can you smell, taste, see, hear and touch as a character or bystander in the scene? Take your time and soak in the passage.

7. **Reflect on how this passage has touched your life today.**

Is the Lord prompting you to do something as a result of the time spent meditating on this passage? Consider writing down your thoughts or prayers in a journal or the space below.