The Rich Young Ruler

Text: (Luke 18: 18-23)

Introduction

Jesus tells this story of a young man’s struggle with self-sufficient personal pride. He describes the young man’s problems when proposed with the choice of following Jesus or his way.

This account is also listed in Matthew 19: 16-30 and Mark 10: 17-31.

I. He Had A Gospel Problem

a) He desired a works gospel; (vs.18)

What can I do and get it over with! Our works to obtain salvation are a disgrace to Calvary. Human works cannot ever merit salvation. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by His mercy He saved us.” (Titus 3:5)

b) He desired a worldly gospel; (vs. 21)

He claimed he had kept the law from his youth up. James claimed that
if one breaks even one law he is guilty of breaking all the law.

(James 2:10)  The world’s gospel says, like the young ruler, “Just do the best you can.” The problem occurs when God is not satisfied with our best but with his best; Christ! The ruler could not get his focus off of himself and upon Christ; that’s why he left sorrowful.

II. He Had A Greed Problem; (vs. 22-23)

a) His greed kept him from selling out

Jesus pushed his button; part with your treasures. Many will miss salvation clinging to perishable treasures. Nothing God owns is obtainable by money.

b) His greed kept him from serving others

When Jesus said “follow me”, the ruler knew that meant serving him and the twelve as well as any others. He was used to being served, not doing the serving. When one has no salvation, one will not work out their own salvation. (Ephesians 2:10) Salvation worked in by Christ will serve out by gratitude.

III. He Had A Grace Problem; (vs. 22)
a) He refused to give inwardly

He had no worship, adoration, or inner giving toward Christ. His heart was hard and would not release love’s passion. Grace breaks up the heart’s fallow ground and drops in the seeds of tenderness which causes one to give inward praise and thanksgiving.

b) He refused to give outwardly

The young ruler could not see why he should sell his treasures and give to the poor, undeserving peasants around him. He did not have an experience with grace and therefore could not extend grace. He had made his way and the poor should make their own way, was his attitude. Everything God controls is a giver. All nature gives of it’s supply due to God’s control of it. Every believer who has been given grace will automatically give back from their personal supply of grace. Grace does not make giving optional, but expectant.

IV. He Had A God Problem

a) He had a problem with God’s terms

God’s terms for salvation and acceptance are the same to all.
Because he had material wealth did not give him a special set of favored terms. Many have and will miss God’s salvation because of a rejection of God’s terms: His beloved Son!

**b) He had a problem with God’s timing**

The gospel accounts would indicate that the ruler was a young man. The Greek word for youth in verse 21 is nesois, which conveys the picture of a young bird leaving the nest to strike out on his own. He evidently had made a name for himself, lived a prosperous lifestyle and seen no need in forfeiting it to follow Jesus the rest of his life. How many will gamble their best days away in the hopes of giving God the sunset years? God’s timing is always right. 

*(See Acts 24:25)*

**c) He’ll have a problem with God’s throne**

He with all other grace rejecting, Christ denying, sinners will be judged at God’s white throne. *(Revelation 20: 11-15)* Everyone stands or falls with their master, *(Romans 14:4)* When Satan is through with the sinner, there’s no place for them to go but to God who cannot receive them, due to their unbelief in His Son. He spit against Christ’s offer and it has returned to his own face in judgment. Those who will not bow to Christ in grace will be broken by God’s law.

**Conclusion**
God never saves a spectator, only submitters. If you are like the young ruler and only spectating at Christ for salvation, forsake your own carnal reasoning and sell out to him alone.

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