

# The Rich Man Who Left Empty-Handed

Matthew 19:16-22; Luke 18:18-30; Mark 10:17-22

## Introduction:

1. Why do so many fall away after hearing and obeying the Gospel? The parable of the Sower gives us multiple reasons, but sometimes it is on how we present the Gospel to people.
  2. Sometimes we offer the gospel as a way of peace and psychological prosperity that we ignore the demands of the Cross-repentance.
    - a. Gospel should convict the sinner, not soothe the conscience.
    - b. Gospel should convict unto repentance, not make us feel warm and fuzzy.
    - c. **Matthew 13:20-21.**
  3. When Jesus preached the Gospel He turned away more people than He converted. Why?
    - a. Jesus was not looking for superficial faith, shallow responses.
    - b. He demanded true change.
    - c. He wanted those who would count the cost of true discipleship (**Luke 14:28** - build a tower and does not count the cost) - total surrender or nothing at all (**Luke 9:62**-hand on the plow).
  4. Matthew 19:16-22 is an example of a man who already believed in God and, for the most part did what God wanted him to do, yet Jesus turned him away (he turned himself away). Why?
    - a. Had he heard the wrong message?
    - b. No, he simply was unwilling to make the change that required the commitment that Jesus demands.
  5. Too many view evangelism like a salesmanship, you have to close the deal. If that was the case, then Jesus was a terrible salesman. When we view the Gospel in this way the fallout is predicable, Christians will be shallow and they will not stay faithful, just as Jesus predicted in His soils parable.
- I. Jesus challenges the eager seeker
    - A. He asked the right question (vs. 16)
      1. He asked the most important question any person could ever ask, "...what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
      2. The jailer asked the same question (Acts 16:30) "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
      3. Matthew 7:7; "Ask, seek, and knock..."
    - B. He had the right motive
      1. He was wealthy and young
      2. He was in a position of influence (Luke 18:18)
      3. On the outside he had everything, on the inside though, he knew that neither his money, his position or his religion provided peace.
      4. He wanted eternal life and he knew who could provide it.
    - C. He had the right attitude
      1. He wasn't arrogant, he was humble. He ran to Jesus and kelt before Him (Mark 10:17)
        - a. Nicodemus came to Jesus in stealth, the young man came in public and without any shame or fear.
        - b. The young ruler risked losing face, but he was concerned about eternal life, not losing face.
      2. Imagine what it would have meant for the congregation to convert such a man as this: political ruler, wealthy, youth, etc.

- D. He came to the right source. There were fakes in his day as there are today, yet he had found Jesus, the true source of salvation.
  - E. He listened to Jesus (vs. 17)
    - 1. Jesus told the young man to keep the commandments.
    - 2. "Which ones?"
    - 3. If he had kept the Law of Moses perfectly, then he did not need Jesus, he already had eternal life.
- II. Jesus confronted the sinner
- A. He would not admit his sin (17-19)
    - 1. In spite all he had going for him, he was missing on key ingredient for conversion, repentance. This is what is wrong with modern day conversion.
    - 2. Obeying the Gospel should never be superficial, it should confront people with the reality of sin.
    - 3. Salvation is for those who realize that they are in sin. The only way one can be saved is if that person realizes he is lost.
    - 4. "Keep the commandments," was Jesus' way to make this young man admit he had fallen short and needed grace, but he needed to admit his guilt. (Romans 3:23)
    - 5. There is no way a person can truly understand grace without understanding guilt first, and the Rich Young Ruler refused to do such.
  - B. He would not confess his sins (vs. 20)
    - 1. When Jesus told him to keep the commandments, He listed 5-9, and the ruler said he had already done that.
      - a. Check, check, check!
      - b. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also..." (Matthew 6:21-22; 27-28)
    - 2. The ruler's attitude was, "I've already done that." His attitude was not contrite, it was not broken, it was not a need, but one of-I've kept that Law.
    - 3. He came to Jesus for the same reason many reason come to Jesus today, for an emotional lift.
    - 4. Mark 10:21; "Looking at him, Jesus felt love for him." This man was so close, yet so far. How can one be saved without repentance? (Acts 2:38)
- III. The ruler would not submit to the Lordship of Christ (21-22)
- A. The ultimate test of giving it all up to follow Jesus was for the ruler to love his neighbor as he loved himself, sell his possessions and give it to his neighbor.
  - B. Jesus could have asked him to leave his family, if that had been his god.
  - C. Jesus could have asked him to leave his friends, if that had been his god.
  - D. One of the commandments Jesus did not mention was the first one, You shall not have any other Gods before me. (Ex. 20:3)
  - E. The ruler wanted eternal life, but ONLY on his terms. Therefore, the rich man walked away empty-handed because he refused to repent, to give up his god for the one true God.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Gospel according to Jesus is not a call to superficial commitment and an emotional lift.
- 2. Jesus wants us to understand that we are sinners guilty of sin and in desperate need of a Savior.