

Commentary and Bible Study on the Bible Passage of the Rich Young Ruler

Commentary on Mark 10:17-31 - The Rich Young Ruler

The first commandment is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. I believe this is what the rich young ruler lacked. Sometimes God gives us gifts - financial, material, intelligence, knowledge, power, talent, skills, whatever...so that when we see a need we can do what's in our ability to meet those needs, sharing with that person; To use for him and give him glory, to show God's love to others so they know there is a great God, and they hopefully some day also follow Jesus. That's one way we might show that we love God. Sometimes we use these things for ourselves (to make ourselves a great name, to prove somebody wrong, to become rich or famous, for our own ego or comfort, to acquire lots of stuff, and our focus is on our own pleasure, safety or comfort: traveling, living in the best places, spending all our money and time to make ourselves safe or on prepping, investing, etc. I'm not saying any of these things are wrong; sometimes they are the right thing or the necessary thing. But what is our focus? Do we have the things of God in mind, or is our focus only to please ourselves?

Jesus didn't directly state what the young man lacked. Mark 10:21. I think Jesus was telling the young man what he lacked was love. Jesus said this out of compassion on the "lost sheep". He wanted the young man to be his child, a part of his flock, and to follow him. He even gave him an invitation and told him how to do it. Notice in Mark 10:22 the man's reaction. The young man chose not to follow Jesus at that time. He was very sad and walked away. The young man didn't understand that giving up all his stuff would be nothing compared to his riches in heaven, just a drop in the bucket!; and nothing compared to a relationship with Jesus! Hopefully later he changed his mind and decided to give up his stuff to follow Jesus.

Luke 12:32-34 Your heart will be with the things that you spend your time, focus and money on, what you invest in. The things we hold dear, what we spend our time and money on, that is what we love. When we invest in something, we care about it. We get angry if someone tries to harm it or take it away, we fight to protect it and hold onto it.

In Mark 10:23-26 And after Jesus explained how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God, the disciples were wondering who could be saved then? But Jesus lovingly reassured them, and us, that though it looks impossible to us, that all things are possible with God. He changes hearts. He helps us follow him by his Spirit after we accept Jesus' death on the cross as payment for our sins, ask for forgiveness, turn from our sin and follow him.

Peter, being true to character, speaks up and reminds Jesus that they left everything to follow Jesus! And Jesus lets them know that they will be rewarded in this life and the life to come for everything they left behind, or sacrificed to follow him. For everything they gave up. Sometimes we lose friends and family when we decide to follow Jesus, or jobs or property. Jesus told them (and us) we will go through much persecution for following him (Matthew 24:9-10). 2 Timothy 3:12 also talks about Christian persecution. Then Jesus goes on to tell them about his own upcoming persecution, death and resurrection. We'll save that for another article.

Related Bible studies:

Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength