

Follow Me – The Rich Young Ruler

Introduction:

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all record Jesus' encounter with the "Rich Young Ruler" immediately after He extends an invitation to the children, saying *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:13-22, Mark 10:13-31; Luke 18:15-30).

Why is this? What is at the heart of Jesus' teaching in both encounters? On the one hand, while the disciples try to keep the children off to the side, Jesus welcomes them. Jesus welcomes their questions, their dependence, their desire to learn. Jesus welcomes these children, not because of what they can do or have done, but because *"the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

When we contrast this with the young man who seeks Jesus out and asks him what he must *do*, we get a very different picture. This rich young ruler is trying to highlight how good he is, by not only calling Jesus *"good teacher,"* but also by telling Jesus all the good things he has done. Jesus, however, knows this man better than he knows himself and he knows this man's biggest barrier to the kingdom of heaven – his stuff. It's not an issue of *"doing"* enough, it's a heart issue. What is #1 in this man's life? *"Getting eternal life"* has never been about *"what good thing we must do"* but about what has been done.

Read Your Bible

- Philippians 2:1-11
- Matthew 19:13-22

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. What is your most valued possession and why?
2. What is the rich young ruler's most pressing question and why do you think he's asking this question?
3. What does the rich young ruler's question reveal about his beliefs regarding getting into the Kingdom of heaven?
4. What does Jesus' response to the rich young ruler reveal about himself?
5. How do we tend to fall into the same trap of *"doing"* as the rich young ruler, today?
6. Jesus asked the young man to sell everything and then *"come follow me."* Jesus knew this man's stuff had the #1 spot in his heart. What about you? What is God calling you to let go of in your life, to follow him more fully?
7. What were this young man's consequences for walking away sad? How can you pray for yourself and others, because of this invitation to *"come follow me"*?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Lord Jesus, thank you for your Son Jesus Christ, who did everything so that we might have eternal life with you. Thank you that there isn't anything we can add to the gift and nothing we can take away from the gift of eternal life – you simply invite us to receive it. Help us to eagerly receive this gift, coming to you as children who are eager to spend time with you and eager to live our lives in response to the free gift of grace through your Son. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.