

# The Rich Young Ruler 2-14-B

**A** man came to Jesus one day with an interesting question. We do not know the man's name, but we know he was young, rich, and called a ruler, probably a member of an official council or court. He rushed to Jesus, so He considered his question urgent. The young man asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

Jesus responded with a question, asking him about his use of the word good. Jesus explained it was not good things he could do, but instead it was about the goodness of God. He carefully explained that there is only One who is good, and even the young man knew that God is the only totally good One. Jesus wanted the young man to understand that God in His goodness has given salvation; it cannot be earned by doing good things. Then Jesus told him the commandments must be obeyed to inherit eternal life.

The young man asked Jesus which commandments he needed to obey so he could be saved. Jesus began to name the Ten Commandments, all that refer to the way we are to treat one another. "All of these I have kept," the young man assured Jesus. He insisted he had never broken any of those commandments since he was a boy. From the time he was 13, in the Jewish culture, he had been responsible to obey the commandments written in the Law. He knew this had not been the answer to his salvation. Then the young man asked Jesus what he still lacked to have eternal life. Jesus knew it was not obedience to an outward set of commandments, but it was a condition of the heart that caused men to obey the rules out of honor to God. So Jesus spoke to the one issue that stood in the way of the young man's heart really following God.

Jesus looked at the earnest young man's face and said, "Go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then, come follow me." When the young man heard these words from Jesus, he went away sad. He had great wealth and he could not give it up. Jesus asks that we put our total faith and trust in Him, but the young man would not allow Jesus to take the place of the faith he had in his wealth.

Jesus turned to His disciples and said, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples were shocked at these words. They assumed that the wealthy, the ones who were most educated and had the most power would surely be first in the church and first into the Kingdom just as they were in the world. But Jesus had just told them it was virtually impossible. The camel was the largest animal known to them. Saying it could go through one of the smallest holes they could think of was as good as saying it was impossible for a rich man to be saved. They immediately asked, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus calmly answered their question, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that wealth cannot buy a place in the Kingdom, nor can anyone work hard enough to get there. By accepting the free gift of God's grace salvation is available to everyone. With faith in God it is possible to see anyone saved.

## Teacher's Notes

- I. **A deep concern.**
  - A. The man.
  - B. The question.
- II. **The concept of good.**
  - A. A good thing to do.
  - B. One that is good.
- III. **The basis of obedience.**
  - A. Commandments to obey.
  - B. Condition of the heart.
- IV. **The problem with wealth.**
  - A. The challenge.
  - B. The promise.

## Activity

Students can create a simple puzzle from today's lesson. Color a copy of the visual from today's story. Cut the picture apart like a jigsaw puzzle. Now mix up the pieces and let the students put the picture back together again. Talk about how the rich young ruler was puzzled about salvation, but with God all things are possible.

## Teacher Growth

Some of the activities suggested in this curriculum may be used as individual projects. The students may make a craft to take home and review the story with family or place in their home as a reminder of the lesson. However, you may choose to make one project together as a class. This may be helpful for young students or in places where the budget or supplies are not abundant. It can also create unity in the class.

## Scripture Passages:

Matthew 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 18:18-27

## Memory Verse:

Ephesians 2:8 – *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."*





