

LESSON 10



SEEK TRUE RICHES

Scripture Text: Mark 10:17-27

Many people frequently fail to comprehend our Lord's interest in money and in its effect on moral and spiritual character. He preached as much about money as about prayer. He was very serious in contending that a wrong attitude toward money will destroy a man's soul more quickly than any other vice. Probably one reason why Jesus spoke so often on this subject was that gaining riches is so often mistaken for the virtue of wisdom. Thus many people who are spiritually dead are deceived into believing that they are in good spiritual health. Today we study the life of a young man who was enslaved by money and did not achieve freedom from its powerful grasp.

MEMORY VERSE: *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* — 1 Timothy 6:10

A Hungry Heart

Mark 10:17-18. **There came one running, and kneeled . . .** Perhaps he ran to reach Jesus before He should be gone. He was respectful in that he kneeled. His running indicated a determination to seek something from Jesus. He sought the best gift there is—**eternal life**. We see a young man who appeared as a good model to his generation, whose spiritual health appeared perfect, but who was in great error and was spiritually ill. He called Jesus **Good Master** and asked what he should do to inherit eternal life.

Matthew 19:16-22 tells us that he asked, "What good thing shall I do?" The way to eternal life is not through good works or by accumulating credit for accomplishments and sufferings. See John 6:28-29. Believing opens the way to God. **There is none good but . . . God**. Jesus wanted this man to know that without God, no man is good.

Mark 10:19-21. **One thing thou lackest**. According to earthly standards, here was an almost perfect man—a young man of promise, if there ever was one. Yet deep within were working moral dissolution and death. Jesus' answer to the man's question was that if he wanted to inherit eternal life, he should keep the law given through Moses. Keeping it is not enough to save one. See Romans 3:28; 8:3. Jesus wanted the man to realize this from his own experience of trying to keep it and yet remaining dissatisfied and without eternal life. In Matthew 19:20 the man asked, "What lack I yet?" Jesus said, "**One thing**." Just one thing—but it kept him from the experience he desired. He had not left all; he still loved the world. His morality was self-centered.

This man was to learn one of the greatest of all spiritual lessons: a man begins to live only when he gets outside the circle of himself. This man proved to all that money will not satisfy the soul of man. **Then Jesus beholding him loved him . . .** Jesus proved He loved the man by telling him the truth. Jesus was honest to his soul. One who will not tell you the truth and be honest with your soul, does not love you. If he would do as Jesus directed, he would gain far richer treasures than before—true riches.

The Misfortune of Riches

Mark 10:22-27. **He was sad at that saying**. The young man made a bad decision, as many do today. He **went away grieved**. He went away from Jesus, peace, joy, and life eternal. He went to sadness, grief, remorse, despair, darkness, and death.

Jesus compared a rich man entering the kingdom to that of the impossibility of a camel going **through the eye of a needle**. An impossibility with man, but not with God. What hold possessions can have on one! They have a sort of

intoxicating charm that drives one to get more and more, never to have enough. It is not the money.

The *love* of money is the root of all evil. God does not condemn riches, but the attitude which we hold toward them. One must be able to carry wealth and salvation at the same time. Only God can cleanse the love of money from a rich man's heart and fit him to enter the kingdom. See what James says about riches in James 5:1-5.

It is not only the rich people who are controlled by their love for money; extremely poor folks also love it because of a covetous spirit. Those who have no money, yet continually long for it, are sometimes more bound than those who have great bank accounts. What we cannot control, we must renounce.

Jesus promised this man **treasure in heaven**. He refused in favor of his earthly treasures. In just a few months he lost them all, anyway. In the destruction of Jerusalem, all earthly riches were lost. Treasures in Heaven are the only riches that are completely safe. We call riches a fortune. In the light of the Bible, would they better be called misfortune?

JUST A THOUGHT

The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that our aim is too low, and we reach it.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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